Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/11
Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses fulfilled the requirements of each question by using precise psychological terminology and presenting logical, well-structured answers. They included appropriate examples from relevant studies when required and demonstrated an ability to apply psychological knowledge to different novel scenarios.
- Comprehensive responses to the extended writing questions (**Questions 9(b)** and **10**) were thorough and were focused on the named issue. Many candidates chose psychological principles to compare studies on and used evidence and examples from the core studies effectively.
- Comprehensive responses to the application questions (**Questions 3** and **5**) were thoughtful and ethical. They showed that candidates could use their knowledge of core studies effectively in order to explain how they related to everyday life.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to read the whole question carefully before starting to answer in order to ensure that their response addressed the precise question asked.
- When a question referred to a study, candidates needed to engage with the study and provide a contextualised answer that included explicit examples from that study.
- Candidates needed to present results of studies accurately. For example, it is important to distinguish whether the data refers to the number of participants who completed a task correctly or the number of trials on which a participant was correct, as this affects how the results are understood. Results needed to be stated as factual data only, without any interpretation or value judgements.
- Some candidates would have benefitted from taking more time to plan their answers before starting to write. Planning would have helped to ensure that their responses were focused on the precise requirements of the questions asked.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified the correct measurement device.

Limited responses

- Some candidates named a different measurement technique, such as MRI, or stated EOG, which was not used to measure brain wave activity.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses addressed the two components of the question clearly, stating that the phrase ‘ultradian rhythm’ means less than 24-hour cycles and giving an example. Common examples included the sleep cycle and REM sleep.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided responses based on circadian rhythms or dream content.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates compared dream and non-dream recall within NREM sleep.

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- Some candidates presented correct data in relation to the number of dreams recalled during NREM.

Limited responses

- Some limited responses directly compared NREM to REM dream recall rates.
- When choosing to present data, it is important for candidates to know if the data is linked to the number of participants or to the number of instances. Some candidates presented the 7% dream recall rate in NREM as being 7% of participants recalling dreams in NREM. This was incorrect.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified three features of the sample used in the study by Piliavin et al. Commonly chosen features included the approximate sample size, the sampling technique, and ethnicity.

Limited responses

- Many responses mentioned a feature that had already been stated in the question (in this case, the subway). It is important that candidates read the question carefully to see if there are any exclusions regarding the features that they can present in their response.
- Some responses contained factual errors, mainly in relation to the sample size and the percentage of black/white participants.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified a specific weakness of the sample and then provided an explanation about why it was a weakness. A commonly chosen weakness was the unrepresentativeness of the sample due to it taking place exclusively in a subway in New York.

Limited responses

- Limited responses tended to simply state a weakness and not provide an example directly from the study. Candidates needed to contextualise their response with an appropriate example from the study.
- Some candidates explained a weakness of the study instead of a weakness of the sample. For example, in some responses ethics was presented as a weakness. Candidates needed to read the question carefully to ensure that they answered the precise question asked.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided clear advice to the local business. Common pieces of advice were to provide the workers with mindfulness-related activities for a set time period.

Limited responses

- Limited responses focused on explaining why mindfulness would be useful. This did not answer the question. It is important that candidates read the command word to ensure that their response answers the precise question asked.
- Some responses provided advice from a different core study, such as ‘sleep well’ or ‘doodle during meetings’.
- Some candidates provided non-specialist advice based on how to relax, without any reference to the study by Hölzel et al.

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses presented one of the main assumptions covered in the syllabus.
- Comprehensive responses contained an appropriate example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman to support the assumption.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates provided assumptions from a different approach or only presented findings from the study by Saavedra and Silverman.
- Limited responses presented a partial assumption and then an example that was not linked to that assumption.
- Some candidates attempted to link social learning to Saavedra and Silverman.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates outlined an appropriate methodological strength. Common choices included standardisation/reliability, collection of quantitative or qualitative data, and the longitudinal nature of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented an ethical strength instead of a methodological strength.
- Limited responses presented the case study as the strength, without any context or explanation.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some responses clearly presented two different applications to everyday life. Common options included using knowledge of personal space to set up a therapy room or a classroom. These responses clearly presented what the application was and how it would be achieved.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not answer the question as they simply outlined what personal space is without applying it to a situation that could help someone.
- Some responses presented generic ideas, for example ‘use it with friends’. Candidates needed to make clear what the application was and who it would benefit.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Bandura et al.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Bandura et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Bandura et al.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Bandura et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Bandura *et al*.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Bandura et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

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- Some responses contained factual errors, with the most common being that they used the initials of the participants when presenting the results.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses defined both explanations clearly and included clear examples from the study by Hassett et al.
- For the 'individual' element, a common example was the different frequency of toy choice shown by the male monkeys.
- For the 'situational' element, a common example was the toys being new and exciting and the social rank shown by the female monkeys and how that affected toy choice.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided tautological definitions from both explanations.
- Some candidates mixed individual and situational with the examples that they chose to present.
- Some candidates chose examples that were not from the study by Hassett et al.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the background to the study clearly by focusing on previous research and/or the role of children in eyewitness testimony.
- Some responses focused on the relevant cognitive and social factors that affect children's ability to recall what they had previously witnessed.

Limited responses

- Common errors included writing about the study by Pozzulo et al. instead of the background to the study. These responses did not address the question.
- Candidates needed to understand that the background to a study includes any information presented in the introduction section of the original paper.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the feedback given by the victim clearly. Common choices included the voltage at which banging was heard and that it was scripted/standardised.

Limited responses

- Some responses contained significant factual errors, including the wrong study by Milgram. This core study did not have Mr. Wallace or the victim 'screaming' in pain. Candidates need to ensure that they write about the correct core study in their responses.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses presented two similarities based on psychological principles/methodology. Common choices included ethics, the collection of quantitative data and standardisation of procedures.

Limited responses

- Responses to the 'similarity' elements needed to be based around psychological principles instead of basic analysis or elements of the study that did not show any psychological knowledge.
- Candidates needed to choose comparison points that could be developed and explained, using examples from both studies to explain the similarity. For example, explaining the quantitative data would involve explaining why it is a similarity and presenting a clear example from both studies.
- Some candidates provided complicated responses about ethics in an attempt to cover all guidelines in one similarity. Responses needed to be focused on one explicitly outlined similarity, for example both studies breaking the ethical guideline of protection from harm.

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- Some responses referred to the sample of participants. It is important that candidates read the requirements of the question; in this case, the question instructed candidates not to refer to the sample.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses evaluated the study by Andrade in depth and in terms of two strengths and two weaknesses, with at least one of these points covering the issue of ecological validity as required by the question. Common choices included generalisability, reliability, ecological validity, and quantitative data.
- Many candidates explained each strength and difference using examples from the study by Andrade to support their argument.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided unbalanced or incomplete answers. Candidates needed to follow the requirements of the question, covering two strengths and two weaknesses and covering each of these points in similar depth. Some responses only covered the four evaluation points briefly. Other responses did not use the study by Andrade as examples.
- Many candidates presented real world application as a strength, which was inappropriate.
- Many candidates stated that Andrade broke the ethical guideline of deception, which was incorrect. The surprise recall test was integral to the study and caused no stress/anxiety (the scores for both groups were very similar). Candidates need to understand the difference between breaking an ethical guideline and sound research methodology. There is an important difference between being deceived and breaking the ethical guideline of deception.
- Some responses followed a GRAVE approach to this question (Generalisability, Reliability, Application, Validity, Ethics). The ‘A’ element (Application) and the ‘E’ element (Ethics) were not applicable to this question.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/12
Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses fulfilled the requirements of each question by using precise psychological terminology and presenting logical, well-structured answers. They included appropriate examples from relevant studies when required and demonstrated an ability to apply psychological knowledge to different novel scenarios.
- Comprehensive responses to the extended writing questions (**Questions 9(b)** and **10**) were thorough and were focused on the named issue. Many candidates chose psychological principles to compare studies on and used evidence and examples from the core studies effectively.
- Comprehensive responses to the application questions (**Questions 3** and **5**) were thoughtful and ethical. They showed that candidates could use their knowledge of core studies effectively in order to explain how they related to everyday life.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to read the whole question carefully before starting to answer in order to ensure that their response addressed the precise question asked.
- When a question referred to a study, candidates needed to engage with the study and provide a contextualised answer that included explicit examples from that study.
- Candidates needed to present results of studies accurately. For example, it is important to distinguish whether the data refers to the number of participants who completed a task correctly or the number of trials on which a participant was correct, as this affects how the results are understood. Results needed to be stated as factual data only, without any interpretation or value judgements.
- Some candidates would have benefitted from taking more time to plan their answers before starting to write. Planning would have helped to ensure that their responses were focused on the precise requirements of the questions asked.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified the correct toy category.

Limited responses

- Common errors included naming a toy from the ‘plush’ category or providing several responses.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses outlined the two elements clearly, namely that ‘play’ is a fun activity and it is voluntary.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided responses based only on the ‘fun’ element of play or listed activities that could be considered as ‘play’.

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(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates provided three of the main four components of the conclusion. These tended to be about preference, biology and socialisation.

Limited responses

- Limited responses included just one of the components, mainly biology.
- Some responses provided directed results of the study. This was not appropriate.
- Candidates needed to know the difference between a result and a conclusion. A result is factual data that was collected in the study. A conclusion is a judgement based on the analysis of the results.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified three features of the sample used in the study by Dement and Kleitman. Commonly chosen features included the sample size, the number of males/females, and how many were studied intensively.

Limited responses

- Many responses mentioned a feature that had already been stated in the question (in this case, adults). It is important that candidates read the question carefully to see if there are any exclusions regarding the features that they can present in their response.
- Some responses contained factual errors, mainly in relation to the sample size and the distribution of sex in the sample.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified a specific weakness of the sample and then provided an explanation about why it was a weakness. The most commonly chosen weakness was the unrepresentativeness of the sample due to it being predominantly male.

Limited responses

- Limited responses tended to simply state a weakness and not provide an example directly from the study. Candidates needed to contextualise their response with an appropriate example from the study.
- Some candidates explained a weakness of the study instead of a weakness of the sample. For example, in some responses ecological validity was presented as a weakness. Candidates needed to read the question carefully to ensure that they answered the precise question asked.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided clear advice to the local business. Common pieces of advice were to provide the workers with a manager who wore formal clothing, have prompts/prods that can be used with the workforce, and for the manager to use a stern voice.

Limited responses

- Limited responses focused on explaining why obedience would be useful. This did not answer the question. It is important that candidates read the command word to ensure that their response answers the precise question asked.
- Common errors included providing advice that was unethical or impractical. Punishments and withholding wages are not ethical ways to make the workforce more obedient.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses presented one of the main assumptions covered in the syllabus.
- Comprehensive responses contained an appropriate example from the study by Baron-Cohen et al. to support the assumption.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates provided assumptions from a different approach or only presented findings from the study by Baron-Cohen et al.
- Limited responses presented a partial assumption and then an example that was not linked to that assumption.
- Some candidates attempted to link biological assumptions. This was inappropriate.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates outlined an appropriate methodological strength. Common choices included standardisation/reliability, collection of quantitative or qualitative data, and how the revised version had improved validity.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented an ethical strength instead of a methodological strength.
- Limited responses presented 'standardisation' as the strength, without any context or explanation.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some responses clearly presented two different applications to everyday life. Common options included using positive reinforcement in the classroom, training of service dogs, and teaching pets to comply with veterinary procedures using treats.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not answer the question as they simply outlined what rewards are, without applying it to a situation that could help someone or an animal.
- Some responses presented generic ideas, for example 'use it with children'. Candidates needed to make clear what the application was and who it would benefit.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman, without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Bandura et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.
- Common errors included incorrectly presenting the ratings for the buttons during the imagery and/or behavioural parts of the study. For imagery, the distress went lower, but for the behavioural part, the distress went higher.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Saavedra and Silverman, without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.
- Some responses contained factual errors, with the most common being that they used the initials of the boy when presenting the results.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses defined both explanations clearly and included clear examples from the study by Pozzulo et al.
- For the 'individual' element, a common example was the different success rates for children and adults in the target-present and target-absent line-ups.
- For the 'situational' element, a common example was the role of social pressure, especially for children, in affecting their choosing a target in a target-absent line-up.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided tautological definitions from both explanations.
- Some candidates mixed individual and situational with the examples that they chose to present.
- Some candidates chose examples that were not from the study by Pozzulo et al.
- Some candidates presented everyday examples of behaviours.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the background to the study clearly by focusing on previous research and the role of boredom and information processing on memory and attention/concentration.

Limited responses

- Common errors included writing about the study by Andrade instead of the background to the study. These responses did not address the question.
- Candidates needed to understand that the background to a study includes any information presented in the introduction section of the original paper.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described clearly how and how often the brain was scanned in the study. Common statements included the timeframe between scans and that the MRI scan was used to assess changes in grey matter concentration.

Limited responses

- Some responses contained factual errors, such as stating that the participants had their brain scanned for activity, that they had a brain scan every week, or that an MRI or EEG was used.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses presented one similarity and one difference based on psychological principles/methodology. Common choices included the collection of quantitative data, the standardisation of procedures and the experimental designs used.

Limited responses

- Responses to the 'similarity'/'difference' elements needed to be based around psychological principles instead of basic analysis or elements of the study that did not show any psychological knowledge.
- Candidates needed to choose comparison points that could be developed and explained, using examples from both studies to explain the similarity. For example, explaining the

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quantitative data would involve explaining why it is a similarity and presenting a clear example from both studies.

- Some candidates provided incorrect information about the studies. For example, they used experimental designs as a similarity.
- Some candidates presented two similarities or two differences rather than one similarity and one difference.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses evaluated the study by Piliavin et al. in depth and in terms of two strengths and two weaknesses, with at least one of these points covering the issue of quantitative data as required by the question. Common choices included generalisability, ethics, ecological validity, and quantitative data.
- Many candidates explained each strength and difference using examples from the study by Piliavin et al. to support their argument.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided unbalanced or incomplete answers. Candidates needed to follow the requirements of the question, covering two strengths and two weaknesses and covering each of these points in similar depth. Some responses only covered the four evaluation points briefly. Other responses did not use the study by Piliavin et al. as examples.
- Many candidates presented real world application as a strength, which was inappropriate.
- Many candidates stated that Piliavin et al. had inter-observer reliability. The two observers were coding different behaviours. In addition, some candidates presented situational variables as a problem, which would have been appropriate, and then provided examples that were not temporal, for example stating that some passengers might not have seen the collapse as they were on their phone or listening to music on headphones.
- Some responses followed a GRAVE approach to this question (Generalisability, Reliability, Application, Validity, Ethics). The ‘A’ element (Application) was not applicable to this question.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/13
Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses fulfilled the requirements of each question by using precise psychological terminology and presenting logical, well-structured answers. They included appropriate examples from relevant studies when required and demonstrated an ability to apply psychological knowledge to different novel scenarios.
- Comprehensive responses to the extended writing questions (**Questions 9(b)** and **10**) were thorough and were focused on the named issue. Many candidates chose psychological principles to compare studies on and used evidence and examples from the core studies effectively.
- Comprehensive responses to the application questions (**Questions 3** and **5**) were thoughtful and ethical. They showed that candidates could use their knowledge of core studies effectively in order to explain how they related to everyday life.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates needed to read the whole question carefully before starting to answer in order to ensure that their response addressed the precise question asked.
- When a question referred to a study, candidates needed to engage with the study and provide a contextualised answer that included explicit examples from that study.
- Candidates needed to present results of studies accurately. For example, it is important to distinguish whether the data refers to the number of participants who completed a task correctly or the number of trials on which a participant was correct, as this affects how the results are understood. Results needed to be stated as factual data only, without any interpretation or value judgements.
- Some candidates would have benefitted from taking more time to plan their answers before starting to write. Planning would have helped to ensure that their responses were focused on the precise requirements of the questions asked.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates stated the correct maximum voltage level on the shock generator.

Limited responses

- Common errors included stating the voltage that all participants delivered or stating a voltage number that was not on the shock generator.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided a clear outline of the two ways in which participants were deceived. Common options were that the shocks were not real and believing that the other person was also a participant.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided only one way in which the participants were deceived.

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- Some candidates repeated the example given in the question.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates provided one reason for why obedience was high in the study by Milgram. Common reasons included the setting, the authority figures, or the prods used.

Limited responses

- Limited responses provided only a brief reason.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified three features of the sample used in the study by Perry et al. Commonly chosen features included the sample size, that they were all male, and that they gained course credit.

Limited responses

- Many responses mentioned a feature that had already been stated in the question (in this case, university candidates). It is important that candidates read the question carefully to see if there are any exclusions regarding the features they can present in a response.
- Some responses contained factual errors, mainly in relation to the sample size and stating that the sample was all females.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified a specific weakness of the sample and then provided an explanation about why it was a weakness. The most commonly chosen weakness was the unrepresentativeness of the sample due to it being predominantly male.

Limited responses

- Limited responses tended to simply state a weakness and not provide an example directly from the study. Candidates needed to contextualise their response with an appropriate example from the study.
- Some candidate explained a weakness of the study instead of a weakness of the sample. For example, in some responses ecological validity was presented as a weakness. Candidates needed to read the question carefully to ensure that they answered the precise question asked.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided clear suggestions of the therapy that the young boy could have. Common pieces of advice were to create a fear hierarchy, use imagery-based interventions, and ask about the background/cause of the phobia.

Limited responses

- Limited responses focused on explaining why therapy would be useful. This did not answer the question. It is important that candidates read the command word to ensure their response answers the precise question asked.
- Common errors included providing advice that was unethical or impractical.
- Some candidates wrote about exactly what the boy who had button phobia did in the study by Saavedra and Silverman.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses presented one of main assumptions in the syllabus.
- Comprehensive responses contained an appropriate example from the study by Dement and Kleitman to support the assumption.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided assumptions from a different approach or only presented findings from the study by Dement and Kleitman.

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- Limited responses presented a partial assumption and then an example that was not linked to that assumption.
- Some candidates attempted to link learning assumptions. This was inappropriate.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates outlined an appropriate methodological strength. Common choices included standardisation/reliability, collection of quantitative data, and the use of objective measures such as the EEG.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented an ethical strength instead of a methodological strength.
- Limited responses presented 'quantitative data' as a strength, without any context or explanation.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some responses clearly presented two different applications to everyday life. Common options included improving the way that the police interview children, and how line-ups can be improved to allow children to give more valid responses.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not answer the question as they simply outlined what happens in a line-up, or what a target-absent line-up is.
- Some responses presented generic ideas, for example 'use it with children'. Candidates needed to make clear what the application was and who it would benefit.

Question 6

(a)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Piliavin et al.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Piliavin et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Piliavin et al.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Piliavin et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.
- Common errors included incorrectly presenting the ratings for the buttons during the imagery and/or behavioural parts of the study. For imagery, the distress went lower, but for the behavioural part, the distress went higher.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly outlined the ethical guideline with an example from the study by Piliavin et al.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only provided an example from the study by Piliavin et al., without explaining the guideline. Responses to this question needed to explicitly show knowledge of the stated ethical guideline.
- Some candidates presented tautological definitions of the guideline.

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Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses defined both explanations clearly and included clear examples from the study by Andrade.
- For the 'individual' element, common examples were the different rates or recall between groups, and the individual differences in the number of doodles within the doodling group.
- For the 'situational' element, a common example was the role of the boring, monotonous telephone message.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided tautological definitions from both explanations.
- Some candidates mixed individual and situational with the examples that they chose to present.
- Some candidates chose examples that were not from the study by Andrade.
- Some candidates presented everyday examples of behaviours.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the background to the study clearly by focusing on previous research and the role of mindfulness in alleviating mental health problems.

Limited responses

- Common errors included writing about the study by Hölzel et al. instead of the background to the study. These responses did not address the question.
- Candidates needed to understand that the background to a study includes any information presented in the introduction section of the original paper.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described clearly how the model was expected to behave in the aggressive condition. Common statements included kicking the Bobo doll, saying verbally aggressive phrases and sitting on the Bobo doll.

Limited responses

- Limited responses were not specific enough about the actions of the model. For example, some candidates stated 'punched' or 'hit', without the detail.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses presented one similarity and one difference based on psychological principles/methodology. Common choices included the collection of quantitative data, the standardisation of procedures and the lack of mundane realism.

Limited responses

- Responses to the 'similarity'/'difference' elements needed to be based around psychological principles instead of basic analysis or elements of the study that did not show any psychological knowledge.
- Candidates needed to choose comparison points that could be developed and explained, using examples from both studies to explain the similarity. For example, explaining the quantitative data would involve explaining why it is a similarity and presenting a clear example from both studies.
- Some candidates provided incorrect information about the studies. For example, they used experimental designs as a similarity.
- Some candidates referred to the sample and/or the approaches. It is important that candidates read the requirements of the question; in this case, the question instructed candidates not to refer to the sample or the approaches.

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Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses evaluated the study by Hassett et al. in depth and in terms of two strengths and two weaknesses, with at least one of these points covering the issue of generalisations as required by the question. Common choices included generalisability, standardisation/replicability, and quantitative data.
- Many candidates explained each strength and difference using examples from the study by Hassett et al. to support their argument.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided unbalanced or incomplete answers. Candidates needed to follow the requirements of the question, covering two strengths and two weaknesses and covering each of these points in similar depth. Some responses only covered the four evaluation points briefly. Other responses did not use the study by Hassett et al. as examples.
- Many candidates presented real world application as a strength, which was inappropriate.
- Many candidates stated that it would be difficult to generalise to toy choices in wild monkeys. This could not happen and it was not the purpose of the study. Evaluations needed to be focused and meaningful.
- Some responses followed a GRAVE approach to this question (Generalisability, Reliability, Application, Validity, Ethics). The ‘A’ element (Application) was not applicable to this question.

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Paper 9990/21
Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates used accurate psychological terminology throughout their responses.
- Many candidates demonstrated accurate knowledge of studies that were included in the paper, such as Pozzulo et al. and Dement and Kleitman. Many candidates applied their knowledge of these studies well in their responses.
- Many answers to **Question 9(a)** (which was a 10-mark extended response question) showed good knowledge of field experiments, with accurate use of appropriate terminology.

What candidates needed to improve

- Explanations of research method terminology often repeated a term instead of explaining what it meant. For example, when talking about volunteer samples, some candidates stated that it was something to do with when a person volunteers to take part.
- A number of responses were generic instead of focusing on the precise question asked.
- When a question contained the words 'in this study', candidates needed to ensure that they related their response to the specific study mentioned.
- Some candidates did not understand the command word 'suggest'. This command word meant that the response needed to contain an element of assessment/evaluation.
- Some candidates did not demonstrate understanding of animal ethical issues. In particular, many candidates did not demonstrate understanding of the issues of species and replacement, which was the focus of **Question 5**.
- When suggesting closed questions, candidates needed to ensure that they provided answer options.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates outlined that the aim relates to the purpose/goal of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood the term 'aim' and outlined a hypothesis instead of an aim.
- Some candidates referred to questions or testing, which were not related to the aim.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates could accurately describe an aim of the Saavedra and Silverman study, such as the use of exposure therapy to treat/reduce a boy's button phobia.

Limited responses

- Limited responses were vague and did not give any specific detail about the study, such as referring only to phobias in general.
- Some limited responses provided detail on an incorrect study such as Freud (Little Hans).

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to give generic information about EEGs, such as their ability to measure brain waves.
- Some candidates were able to apply their knowledge of EEGs to Dement and Kleiman, such as the ability to know when participants were in REM sleep to know when they could be dreaming.

Limited responses

- In many limited responses, candidates referred only to the function of EEGs and did not relate this to Dement and Kleitman.
- Some candidates wrote about equipment other than EEGs.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates could suggest a similarity between the sample of adults and children. The most common responses were the idea of having similar groups in terms of size and gender, and that the two samples were from Ontario, Canada.

Limited responses

- Limited responses were generic instead of specific, such as 'participants were from the same place' instead of stating where that place was.
- Some candidates focused on sampling methods.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed good knowledge of the sample in the study and potential similarities, such as experience of line-ups.
- Some candidates provided thoughtful suggestions, such as the need to have similar eyesight due to poor eyesight affecting who they may pick in the line-up, and whether they were left- or right-handed due to brain lateralisation.

Limited responses

- The most common error was giving potential similarities that already existed within the sample, such as the same number of adults and children, and gender. The samples were similar enough in terms of these characteristics for them not to be an issue.
- Many candidates suggested similar socio-economic status. As the children were from private schools and the adults were from university, it would be expected that the socio-economic status would already be similar.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates showed accurate knowledge of ecological validity. The most common idea was that the results of the study could be applied to real life.

Limited responses

- Some responses were too simplistic, such as stating that it was not possible to apply results from the lab to the real world.
- Some candidates wrote in general about the relevance of the setting, without indicating the effect of this on results.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates described that the researchers used a computer simulation and pressed a space bar and explained that this is not like real life because you would meet actual people. The most common idea was the use of oxytocin, which would not be used in real life.

Limited responses

- The most common error was providing a response that considered only the problem, without considering the effect of that problem on participants. These responses therefore did not explain why the results may not apply to everyday life.

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Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates described the necessary information in relation to both 'replacement' and 'species'.
- Some candidates showed some understanding of 'species'. A common idea was not using endangered species in research.
- For 'replacement', a common idea was using videos or simulations instead of animals. Comprehensive responses discussed how these could be used.

Limited responses

- Many responses demonstrated little knowledge of 'species' other than not using endangered species. Some responses included irrelevant content about other ethical guidelines, such as housing or number.
- When discussing 'replacement', many candidates suggested replacing individual animals in a study. Other candidates attempted to relate this idea to human ethical guidelines such as the right to withdraw.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates suggested a range of suitable measures, including duration (time), frequency, volume, rating scales and self-reports to measure laughter.

Limited responses

- Some candidates described a procedure for a study instead of ways of measuring laughter**.**
- Some candidates described a measure that was too vague, such as observing how much a person laughs.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses often referred to the idea that timing the duration of laughter is more objective than a rating scale, which can be subject to social desirability bias.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not compare the two ways that they had suggested in response to **Question 6(a)(i)**.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates drew a suitable scatter graph and labelled it appropriately.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not draw a positive correlation and scattered their points all across the graph. This suggested no correlation instead of a positive correlation.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses often included the idea of happiness/sociability/extroversion.

Limited responses

- Many candidates misinterpreted what the question was asking. Limited responses focused on age as a reason for the positive correlation. This was the focus of the original question and not the focus of **Question 6(b)(ii)**.
- Some candidates focused on professionals such as nurses/teachers being more helpful. They then did not suggest why this may be the case, such as professionals in these jobs needing more of a sense of humour because they are difficult or stressful professions.
- Some responses mentioned asking for help. This was not the focus of the question.

Question 7

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed their knowledge about the meaning of open questions and gave appropriate open questions in terms of emotions, behaviour and thoughts. The most common

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response was to ask questions that talked about asking Jilbert to describe how doodling made him feel or behave.

Limited responses
- The most common error was using 'what' or 'how' as the command word for the questions. These command words were not appropriate for open questions. They would have been more appropriate for closed questions.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates gave appropriate closed questions alongside answer options such as 'yes/no' or rating scales.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not include the answer options with their questions.
- Some candidates wrote questions aimed at Jilbert instead of at his teacher.

(c) Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates suggested a suitable reason. The most common responses related to ideas of social desirability, demand characteristics, lying and exaggeration in relation to Jilbert and his teacher's responses.

Limited responses
- Many candidates gave a generic response, such as suggesting why information from self-reports in general may not be valid. They needed to link their point to the specific self-reports given to Jilbert and his teacher.

(d) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates identified a relevant ethical issue. The most common responses included the idea of not being able to achieve valid consent as Jilbert may feel that he has to consent as he is in school, and the idea of confidentiality being breached as people within school would be able to identify Jilbert with the information obtained or his named being used.

Limited responses
- Some candidates gave a generic response.
- Some candidates discussed the school, teacher or Jilbert in general.

Question 8

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates demonstrated clear and accurate knowledge of volunteer sampling.

Limited responses
- The most common error was repeating the word 'volunteer' instead of outlining what was meant by the term 'volunteer sample'.
- Some candidates outlined an incorrect sampling method such as opportunity sampling.

(ii) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates suggested a relevant way to obtain a volunteer sample of teenagers. The most common suggestions were that he could place an advertisement in a newspaper and ask for 17-year-olds or place a poster in a place where young people would see it, such as in a school.

Limited responses
- Some candidates had not considered the age range needed in the study and just focused on the advertisement itself.
- Some responses used an incorrect sampling method and described an opportunity sampling method technique such as going to school and choosing people who were available.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates suggested an appropriate type of contact such as emailing, phoning or text messaging.

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- Some candidates justified the type of contact that they had suggested. For example, they justified the use of email instead of a phone number because an email address remains more constant throughout life.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not justify their suggestion.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates showed good knowledge. The most common explanation was that results would become biased due to the results that were not able to be obtained, or that the results were not representative of the people who could not be contacted.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made a vague statement such as 'there would be less data'.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed some knowledge of all four major features for a field experiment.
- Some candidates produced procedures that, in the main, were replicable both in terms of practicality and in terms of level of detail.

Limited responses

- Many candidates misdescribed the type of experimental design that would be appropriate for the independent variable that they identified.
- Some candidates did not provide enough detail for one or more of the four elements described, such as the standardisation or the experimental design element.
- Some candidates did not know all of the required features of each research method.
- Some candidates wrote about sampling and ethics. The question instructed candidates not to describe these elements.
  Some candidates were confused by the fact that there were two possible independent variables (IV) in the study. They suggested that their independent variable was gender and then went on to explain the dependent variable for a different independent variable such as type of toy.

(b)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided an appropriate ethical issue that could arise with the study. The most common appropriate responses included the idea of the use of children and valid consent, privacy and protection from harm.
- Many responses linked the ethical issue to their study, such as suggesting that the child might be disappointed or distressed if the toys are taken away from them after the study.

Limited responses

- The most common error was identifying a generic ethical issue and then not linking that ethical issue to the candidate's chosen study.
- Some candidates chose ethical issues that were not relevant to their chosen study, such as deception, despite the candidate stating that parents were told about the aim of the study.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates provided an appropriate solution to the ethical issue that they had provided in response to **Question 9(b)(i)**. The most common appropriate responses included the idea of going to the parents of the children involved in the study as they are under the age of 16 so cannot consent themselves or providing protection from harm by allowing the children to play with some toys afterwards.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not read the question carefully enough and therefore did not realise that their responses to **Questions 9(b)(i)** and **9(b)(ii)** needed to be about the same ethical issue.

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Paper 9990/22
Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates used accurate psychological terminology throughout their responses.
- Many candidates demonstrated accurate knowledge of studies that were included in the paper, such as Bandura et al.
- Many answers to **Question 9(a)** (which was a 10-mark extended response question) showed good knowledge of longitudinal studies.
- Many candidates were able to draw a frequency table accurately and to identify a bar chart and a histogram.
- In response to **Question 5**, many candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of the two terms ('confidentiality' and 'privacy') and made good use of key studies to exemplify their points.
- Many responses demonstrated good knowledge of the case study methodology.

What candidates needed to improve

- Explanations of research method terminology were often vague. This was particularly the case when talking about subjectivity and triangulation.
- A number of responses were generic instead of focusing on the precise question asked.
- Candidates' ability to operationalise variables was generally poor and these were often not quantified.
- When a question contained the words 'in this study', candidates needed to ensure that they related their response to the specific study mentioned.
- Some candidates did not understand the command word 'suggest'. This command word meant that the response needed to contain an element of assessment/evaluation.
- When suggesting closed questions, candidates needed to ensure that they provided answer options.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided accurate and measurable ways to measure attention. The most common response was that attention could be measured through the use of a surprise test after watching a lecture.

Limited responses

- The most common error was suggesting a measure of attention that was not measurable. Some candidates wrote 'observing how much attention a person is paying to a task', which was not measurable.
- Many responses were vague, such as 'give them a memory test' or 'use a self-report to measure attention'.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated accurate understanding of the phrase 'sampling technique'. The most common response was 'the way in which participants are chosen out of the target population'.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates repeated the term that was mentioned in the question, such as 'it is the method of choosing the sample'.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates named the correct sampling method.

Limited responses

- The most common error was 'opportunity sampling'.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates named the correct sampling method.

Limited responses

- The most common error was 'random sampling'.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained how one independent variable was operationalised in the Pozzulo et al. study. The most common response was that the line-ups were separated into target absent and target present.

Limited responses

- Many responses were vague and did not operationalise the independent variable. For example, some responses mentioned children and adults and then did not specify that age was the independent variable.
- Some candidates used the wrong study to operationalise. The Perry et al. study was often used in error.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates showed good knowledge of the dependent variable of the Pozzulo et al. study. The most common response identified that the dependent variable was the correct identification or correct rejection.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified the dependent variable of the Pozzulo et al. study and then did not operationalise it.
- Many candidates suggested that the dependent variable was when a participant chose a foil in the target absent condition. This was not correct as in the target absent condition the participants chose a black silhouette if they did not believe that the target was present in the picture.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified that Figure 3.1. was a bar chart/bar graph.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote that Figure 3.1 was a histogram.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified that Figure 3.2 was a histogram.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote that Figure 3.2 was a bar chart/bar graph.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates drew an appropriate table using the data.

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Limited responses

- The most common error was that candidates did not read the plots on the graph correctly and therefore the frequency data was incorrect.
- Some candidates did not label the table accurately.
- Some candidates drew a graph instead of a table.

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates defined 'subjectivity' accurately. The most common response was 'subjectivity is when people use a biased viewpoint/interpretation'.

Limited responses

- Some responses were vague.
- Some responses focused on the type of data that would produce subjectivity instead of on the term itself.
- Many candidates did not attempt this question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates suggested how subjectivity could have occurred in the Bandura et al. study. The most common response was that the experimenter and teacher may have rated the child differently at the beginning of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood what 'subjectivity' meant and therefore could not provide an appropriate response to this part of the question.
- Some candidates focused more on the procedure of the study, such as the children feeling angry when the toy was taken away. This did not have anything to do with subjectivity.
- Many candidates did not attempt this question.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates described the necessary information in relation to both 'confidentiality' and 'privacy'.
- Some candidates showed excellent understanding of 'confidentiality'. A common idea was keeping data anonymous, such as not saying a participant's name, location or employment.
- Some candidates used relevant examples from key studies such as Dement and Kleitman. They identified that they used initials instead of names.
- For 'privacy', the most common ideas were that participants should not be observed in places that they would not expect to be observed and that people's personal space should not be invaded.

Limited responses

- Many responses demonstrated more knowledge of 'confidentiality' than of 'privacy'.
- Some candidates did not include any appropriate examples in their response.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates operationalised two of the behaviours specified, as required by the question. The most common responses were the ideas of the animal using its paws to dig a hole (for 'digging') and the animal turning its head left and right (for 'looking around').

Limited responses

- Some candidates repeated the terms given in the question. For example, some candidates suggested that one way to operationalise was to see how many times the animal looked around. This was just a repetition of the term given in the question.

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(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates suggested another suitable category that could be included about the different ways that animals find food. The most common responses were 'hunting', 'climbing', 'stealing food' and 'chasing'.

Limited responses

- Some responses were too similar to terms already given in the question, such as 'smelling', which was too similar to 'sniffing', and 'observing', which was too similar to 'looking around'.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates identified accurate and appropriate ethical issues that related to animals and then linked the ethical issues to the study.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not link their chosen ethical issues to the study.
- Some candidates wrote about human ethical guidelines, such as harm to participants or the right to withdraw. These ideas were inappropriate.
- Some candidates linked the ethical guideline of housing to the amount of food and water given and ensuring that it is close to the animals' natural environment. This was incorrect because the housing guideline relates to space and temperature rather than to not isolating social animals.

Question 7

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates explained accurately what is meant by triangulation.
- Some candidates linked their knowledge to Gill's study and suggested at least three different methods that could be used. The most common response was 'triangulation is when a number of different methods are used within one study'.

Limited responses

- The most common error was not identifying at least three different methods that could be used in the study.
- Some candidates did not link their knowledge of triangulation to the study.
- Some candidates did not understand the term 'triangulation' and therefore provided an irrelevant answer.
- Many candidates did not attempt this question.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates understood that the use of triangulation increases reliability or validity.
- Some candidates provided a justification for why triangulation increases reliability, such as comparing all of the results gained through different methods and if they are consistent then they can increase reliability.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a very basic strength of triangulation in terms of reliability and validity.
- Some candidates wrote about achieving consistent (and all the same) results and then linked this to an incorrect methodological term such as generalisability.
- Some candidates did not attempt this question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave excellent responses to this question. The most common response was the idea of being able to study unique cases/behaviours in depth, which means that it is possible to have a greater understanding of behaviours and the motivations behind them.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a very basic response, such as 'it is able to achieve in-depth, detailed data'. The response needed to mention that this method researches one person or one group in depth.
- Many candidates did not justify their chosen strength or just provided a vague response, such as 'it increases validity'.

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(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified a relevant weakness of the case study methodology linked to the study of helpfulness. The most common idea was of the methodology not being generalisable as it only uses one man who was known to be helpful, which may not be the same as other people who are helpful.

Limited responses

- Some responses were generic instead of focusing on Gill's study.
- Some responses mentioned the case study methodology taking more time or being difficult to replicate. These factors could apply to many other research methods too.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed excellent knowledge of how to measure sleep quality within the home. The most common ideas were using an application on a smart watch/phone and giving the participants a questionnaire in the morning for them to rate their sleep quality.

Limited responses

- The most common error was suggesting methods of measuring sleep quality that would not be ethical, such as the researcher being in the participants' bedrooms and observing them. Candidates could overcome this limitation by suggesting that a camera be placed in the participants' homes with the participants' consent.
- Some candidates suggested using an EEG/EOG/scanning machine. This would not be practical within a participant's own home.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates suggested an appropriate practical advantage of measuring sleep quality in the home compared to measuring sleep quality in a laboratory. The most common idea was that measuring sleep quality in the home would increase ecological validity due to participants being able to sleep naturally as they are in their own home and own bed.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided generic responses.
- Some candidates suggested a practical disadvantage of using a laboratory instead of an advantage of measuring in the home.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified a practical disadvantage of measuring sleep quality in the home compared to measuring sleep quality in a laboratory.
- Many candidates included a suitable example to illustrate their point. The most common idea was the issue of extraneous variables that cannot be controlled in a home environment such as noise, light and temperature.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only used a term such as 'validity' to justify their disadvantage.
- Some candidates identified an appropriate disadvantage and then did not provide enough detail.

Section B

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates showed some knowledge of all four major features of a longitudinal study.
- Some candidates produced procedures that, on the whole, were replicable both in terms of practicality and in terms of level of detail.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates did not suggest a way to re-contact the participants each year.
- Some responses did not contain enough detail for one or more of the four elements described, such as the standardisation or the re-contacting of the participants.
- Some candidates did not know all of the required features of the longitudinal research method.
- Some candidates wrote about sampling and ethics. The question instructed candidates not to describe these elements.
- Some candidates suggested independent and dependent variables that were not relevant to the longitudinal research method. They described a field experiment methodology instead of longitudinal research.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided an appropriate strength of the measures that they had described in response to **Question 9(a)**. The most common responses were the ideas of standardisation of the procedures and of ensuring consistency of measurements each year.

Limited responses

- The most common error was identifying a strength and then not providing any detail.
- Some candidates provided a strength of a measurement that they had not mentioned in their response to **Question 9(a)**.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates provided an appropriate weakness of the measures that they had described in response to **Question 9(a)**. The most common responses were the ideas of not being able to control participant variables, the fact that there was only one rater and the issues of social desirability if self-reports were used.

Limited responses

- Many responses did not contain enough detail.
- Some candidates referred to the sample of children that they had used. The question instructed candidates not to refer to this.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/23
Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates used accurate psychological terminology throughout their responses.
- Many candidates demonstrated accurate knowledge of studies that were included in the paper, such as Baron-Cohen et al. Many candidates applied their knowledge of these studies well in their responses.
- Many answers to **Question 9(a)** (which was a 10-mark extended response question) showed good knowledge of correlational studies, with accurate use of appropriate terminology.
- Many candidates demonstrated good understanding of how to operationalise categories in order to make them measurable.

What candidates needed to improve

- Explanations of research method terminology often repeated a term rather than explain what it meant. For example, when talking about participant variables, some candidates suggested that it was a difference between the participants.
- A number of responses were generic rather than focusing on the precise question asked.
- When a question contained the word 'in this study', candidates needed to ensure that they related their response to the specific study mentioned.
- Some candidates did not understand the command word 'suggest'. This command word meant that the response needed to contain an element of assessment/evaluation.
- When a question asked candidates to explain, the response needed to contain more than just a brief statement.
- When suggesting closed questions, candidates needed to ensure that they provided answer options.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates gave an accurate definition of what is meant by 'participant variable'. The most common response was 'a participant variable is an internal/individual characteristic that may affect results'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood the term 'participant variable' and made suggestions that were not related to participant variables.
- Some candidates just re-worded the question and wrote 'they are variables that are specific to the participant'.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates made an appropriate suggestion of how one other participant variable could have affected levels of aggression. The most common response was that age could have affected levels of aggression.

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Limited responses

- A common error was giving a suggestion such as 'how the child has been treated at home by their parents'. This was a situational rather than a participant variable.
- Some candidates did not attempt this question.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- A number of candidates outlined an appropriate way that the Baron-Cohen et al. study was standardised. The most common idea was that every participant was given a glossary at the start of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood the word 'standardised' and instead discussed how the different IVs were operationalised.
- The most common error was using the wrong elements of the Baron-Cohen et al. study, such as level of IQ, suggesting a control group, or the use of two different groups such as one with autism and one without.
- Many candidates did not attempt this question.

Question 3

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates identified the experimental design used in the study and used their knowledge to justify this design. The most common idea was that a matched pairs design was used because twins are similar in a number of important characteristics.
- Some candidates suggested an independent measures design. They mentioned how opposite gender groups meant that there would be differences.

Limited responses

- The most common error was using an incorrect experimental design for the study. Some candidates suggested that the design was repeated measures, which was incorrect because the participants did not complete both conditions of the study.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed good knowledge of their identified experimental design and provided a strength and a weakness of the design identified. The most common response was that a matched pairs design overcomes the issues of individual differences, which may affect results.

Limited responses

- If candidates had not provided the correct experimental design in response to **Question 3(a)(i)**, they often did not provide an appropriate response for this part of the question.
- Where candidates had suggested the correct experimental design in response to **Question 3(a)(i)**, they often gave an appropriate strength and weakness and then did not justify the strength and weakness that they had identified.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified the correct sampling technique of volunteer/self-selected sample.

Limited responses

- The most common errors were 'opportunity sampling' and 'random sampling'.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided an accurate explanation of what is meant by 'subjectivity'. The most common response was the idea of subjectivity being about the interpretation of the researcher.
- Some candidates suggested an example from the Milgram study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not understand the term 'subjectivity' and therefore provided an irrelevant answer.

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- Some candidates understood the term 'subjectivity' and then were unable to identify an example from the Milgram study.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Some candidates described the necessary information in relation to both 'counterbalancing' and 'random allocation'.
- Some candidates showed some understanding of 'counterbalancing'. A common idea was the use of the ABBA method, with many using the Hassett et al. study as an example.
- For 'random allocation', the most common response was the idea of everyone having an equal chance to be in each group.

Limited responses
- Many candidates demonstrated little knowledge of 'random allocation'. Many responses described 'random sampling' rather than 'random allocation'.
- Many candidates could not provide examples for the two terms.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Some candidates explained the correct type of hypothesis and the reasons why this was the correct hypothesis. The most common response was 'it is a directional hypothesis because it states which way the difference would be'.

Limited responses
- Some candidates identified the correct type of hypothesis and then did not explain why it was that type of hypothesis.

(ii) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates provided an appropriate conclusion from the results given in Table 6.1.

Limited responses
- Some responses just repeated the results from Table 6.1 instead of stating a conclusion.

(iii) Comprehensive responses
- Some candidates showed some knowledge of standard deviation and applied this knowledge to the results given in Table 6.1.

Limited responses
- Many candidates showed very limited knowledge of what is meant by standard deviation.
- Many candidates did not attempt this question.

(iv) Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates drew an appropriate bar chart, including the correct bar heights and correct labelling of the axes.

Limited responses
- Some candidates drew a histogram instead of a bar chart.
- Some candidates did not providing adequate labels for the x and y axes.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of control of variables and applied this knowledge in order to suggest how Callum could have controlled at least two of the variables given in the question. The most common idea was that sleep could be operationalised by taking people who had a similar amount of sleep.
- Some candidates provided a justification for the control of categories, such as suggesting that people who do not sleep a lot are likely to have a smaller number of dreams.

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Limited responses

- Some responses were vague, such as suggesting asking participants to write down how old they are or to write down when they went to bed and when they got up. This did not suggest how they controlled the categories. It only suggested a possible method of doing so.

Question 7

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates operationalised two of the behavioural categories. The most common idea suggested that yawning was participants having an open mouth for more than a second while putting their hand over their mouth.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not provide responses that were measurable.
- Some responses were vague, such as saying that yawning is a sign of boredom and that smiling is a sign of enjoyment. These responses suggested what the categories were instead of operationalising them.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates gave an excellent response to this question. The most common responses related to the fact that because it is usually dark in a cinema, the researcher may not be able to see whether someone smiles or yawns, and that someone may be smiling due to something that someone has said instead of the film.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave two explanations that were very similar.
- Some candidates suggested that people did not smile/laugh because it was not their favourite film. This was not to do with incorrectly categorising a behaviour; it was more that the behaviour would not occur in the first place.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates provided an appropriate suggestion of how Kirra's procedure could be changed. The most common ideas were that the researcher could use a laboratory and that the researcher could observe people through a one-way mirror using specific behavioural categories.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misunderstood what a controlled, non-participant observation entails.
- Some candidates gave limited responses that did not contain enough detail.
- The most common error was suggesting that the film could still be shown in the cinema while controlling more variables.

Question 8

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed excellent knowledge of different question formats.

Limited responses

- Some candidates suggested actual questions instead of question types.
- Some candidates suggested specific question types that were linked to closed questions such as Likert scales, and ranked scale questions.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates suggested a relevant closed question. The most common response was 'on a scale of one to ten, how much do you feel that mindfulness has helped you'.

Limited responses

- The most common error was not giving the answer options for the closed questions.
- Some candidates produced two questions that were both of the same type, usually both closed questions.
- Some candidates produced a question that did not relate to mindfulness, such as 'how old are you'.

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(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified an advantage of one of the questions that they had written in response to **Question 8(b)**.
- Some candidates gave a reason for why one of the questions was more advantageous compared to the other type of question.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not compare one type of question to the other, only giving a strength instead of a comparison.
- Some candidates suggested that one question was more straightforward than the other, without saying which question type this was.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed some knowledge of all four major features of a correlational study.
- Many candidates operationalised the two co-variables successfully.
- Some candidates produced procedures that, on the whole, were replicable both in terms of practicality and in terms of level of detail.

Limited responses

- Many candidates suggested that a correlational study has independent and dependent variables. This was not accurate.
- Some responses did not contain enough detail for one or more of the four elements described, such as identifying the two co-variables specifically or how the results would measure the nature of the relationship.
- Some candidates did not provide an effective way to measure musical knowledge and instead just measured ‘the amount of music listened to’.
- Some candidates did not know all of the required features of the correlational research method.
- Some candidates wrote about sampling and ethics. The question instructed candidates not to describe these elements.

(b)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided an appropriate strength of the measure of musical knowledge that they had chosen. The most common appropriate response was the idea of the measurement achieving quantitative data which was objective and reliable.
- Many candidates linked the strength to their study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified a vague strength for the measurement and then did not link it to their specific study.
- Some candidates provided a strength of a measurement that was not relevant to their study and that they had not mentioned in their response to **Question 9(a)**.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates provided an appropriate problem with their measurement of musical knowledge. The most common response included the idea of socially desirable answers such as not wanting to share their specific genre of musical knowledge.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not read the question carefully enough and therefore did not realise that their responses to **Questions 9(b)(i)** and **9(b)(ii)** needed to be about the same measurement.
- Some candidates provided a problem of a measurement that they had not mentioned in their response to **Question 9(a)**.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/31

Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Some candidates contextualised their responses effectively in the applied (AO2) questions.
- Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the syllabus content in their responses to **Questions 2(a)** and **6(a)**, providing accurate explanations of relevant knowledge. Some candidates also showed an understanding of how syllabus content could be applied to issues and debates. This was particularly evident in responses to **Question 10(b)**, where many candidates explained how the clinical interview about a patient's pain demonstrated an idiographic approach.
- Some candidates gave detailed descriptions of the relevant studies, theories, Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale, contracts and prompts in their responses to **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**.
- Most candidates provided relevant and accurate evaluation points in their responses to **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b)** and **16(b)**. In some responses, these points were developed in depth, with supporting details drawn from the material presented in response to part **(a)** of the question. Some responses also demonstrated effective analysis of the issues raised.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to provide greater contextualisation in their responses to the applied (AO2) questions.
- Some candidates were unable to apply the issue or debate to the syllabus content presented in part **(a)** of the question. This was evident in the responses to **Questions 2(b)**, **6(b)** and **14(b)**.
- Some candidates demonstrated limited knowledge of the relevant studies, theories, Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale, contracts and prompts in **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**.
- For **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b)** and **16(b)**, candidates needed to include some form of analysis in their responses. They could have discussed the strengths or weaknesses of the issue being considered, they could have presented a counterargument or they could have compared the issue across two studies and/or theories. Any comparison, strength, weakness or counterargument needed to be explained using relevant examples from part **(a)** of the question.
- Many candidates stated that two theories or studies were 'similar' or 'in contrast', without explaining why they could be compared in this way. These responses demonstrated little analysis. Analysis could have been developed further by providing several contextualised examples to support the evaluation points.
- Including a conclusion at the end of each issue would also have helped to demonstrate a more developed understanding of the issue under discussion. Responses would have benefitted from being structured around the issue instead of around individual studies and/or theories. It would also have been helpful for responses to begin with the named issue to ensure that this requirement of the question was directly addressed.
- Some candidates did not evaluate the named issue. Some responses were structured around individual studies, theories or self-report methods instead of around the issue itself. This often resulted in responses that were superficial and repetitive.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

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- Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of explanations for blood phobia and linked the explanation directly to Richard's circumstances.
- Genetic explanations appropriately identified Richard's mother as the relevant genetic link. Some responses also used findings from Ost et al. to support the explanation.
- Responses using classical or operant conditioning generally used appropriate terminology and linked the explanation to details from the stem, such as Richard's fall from the chair and his avoidance of blood.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not link the explanation clearly to the stem and were too generic.
- Genetic explanations sometimes identified Richard's mother and then did not explain the genetic link sufficiently.
- Some responses attempted to use social learning theory, without using appropriate terminology.
- Some candidates confused social learning theory with classical conditioning.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified an opioid antagonist, such as naltrexone or nalmefene, and explained how the treatment reduced the desire to gamble.
- Comprehensive responses linked the action of the opioid antagonist to the reduction in gambling behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified the opioid antagonist and then did not explain how the treatment worked or why this would help to reduce gambling behaviour.
- Some responses described other techniques/treatments, including imagery, cognitive behavioural therapy or systematic desensitisation instead of the drug treatment that was investigated by Grant et al. (2008).

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of why the findings from Grant et al. may not be applicable to everyday life. These responses identified a relevant reason, such as the treatment not being equally effective for all gamblers or the side effects associated with the drug treatment, and provided further detail to explain this.
- Some responses contained specific information from the study, such as the greater efficacy of the opioid antagonist for participants with a family history of alcoholism.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a basic reason for why the findings may not be applicable and then did not provide further detail.
- Some responses incorrectly stated that the participants in the study had a history of alcoholism instead of recognising that the greater treatment response was associated with having a family history of alcoholism.
- Some candidates confused applicability to everyday life with generalisability, giving reasons such as the small sample size or the fact that participants came from one location.
- Some responses were too general, such as stating that not everyone is a gambler, without explaining why this would affect the applicability of the findings.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated good knowledge of methods that could be used to diagnose generalised anxiety disorder, including the GAD-7, BAI and ICD-11 criteria.
- Some responses identified a relevant diagnostic method and explained how it could be used with Jade. They included details such as the features, example question or scoring of the GAD-7 or BAI.
- Some responses demonstrated good understanding of the ICD-11 criteria by explaining what information the doctor would need in order to establish whether or not Jade met the criteria for generalised anxiety disorder.

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Limited responses

- Some responses only named a diagnostic tool, without explaining how it would be used to diagnose Jade.
- Some responses identified generic symptoms of anxiety from the scenario, without referring to a specific method or diagnostic criteria.
- Some responses identified diagnostic measures that were not relevant to generalised anxiety disorder, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) or Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS).

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of why the diagnosis of generalised anxiety disorder could be considered valid. These responses referred to a specific feature of the diagnostic method, such as the good concurrent validity of the GAD-7, or they explained how the ICD-11 has been developed and regularly reviewed by specialists.
- Comprehensive responses linked the reason for validity directly to the method used by the doctor in diagnosing Jade.

Limited responses

- Many responses recognised that the diagnostic method needed to have validity and then did not explain why the method was valid.
- Some responses used Jade's symptoms to explain why the diagnosis was valid instead of referring to a feature of the diagnostic method or criteria.
- Some candidates did not refer to a specific diagnostic method mentioned in the answer to **Question 3(a)**, which made it difficult for them to explain why the diagnosis was valid.

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the question and provided detailed descriptions of both an appropriate study of OCD and the Y-BOCS.
- Comprehensive responses described Rapoport (1989) or Lehmkuhl et al. (2008) and included specific details of the participants' obsessions and compulsions, as well as other relevant details from the case.
- Comprehensive responses described the Y-BOCS effectively. They included accurate details of the semi-structured interview, the assessment of obsessions and compulsions, and features such as the items/questions, scoring system or examples of categories.
- Some responses demonstrated accurate and appropriate use of psychological terminology throughout.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided limited or inaccurate detail about the OCD case study. Some responses merged details from the cases of Charles and Jason.
- Some responses used an incorrect study, such as Lovell et al.
- Some responses gave only a generic description of OCD, without providing sufficient detail about a specific obsession and compulsion from an appropriate study.
- Descriptions of the Y-BOCS were sometimes brief or inaccurate. Scoring, scales or the example of a question were confused with other measures.
- Some responses incorrectly described the Y-BOCS as having no qualitative data or gave inaccurate information about its method.
- Some responses demonstrated limited knowledge of the material and used psychological terminology inaccurately.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses addressed the named issue of psychometrics effectively. They identified strengths and weaknesses of the Y-BOCS and applied these to relevant features of the measure. These responses discussed issues such as reliability and validity. Some candidates explained how standardised or quantitative data from the Y-BOCS can allow comparisons between individuals or changes in OCD symptoms over time.
- Comprehensive responses considered potential weaknesses such as social desirability and explained why individuals may be reluctant to give truthful responses when discussing personal obsessions and compulsions.

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- Some responses evaluated the case studies effectively. They included issues such as the limited generalisability of findings from individual case studies and the detailed, longitudinal information that they can provide.
- Some candidates used examples from their response to **Question 4(a)** to support their evaluation. They developed their analysis by considering a strength and a counterargument or a weakness and a counterargument within the same issue.
- Some responses made effective use of other relevant issues and debates, such as idiographic versus nomothetic approaches, by supporting these with appropriate contextual examples.

Limited responses

- Some responses contained superficial evaluation of the OCD study and Y-BOCS, with limited analysis and little application to the material described in response to **Question 4(a)**.
- Some responses identified general strengths and weaknesses that could have been applied to almost any psychological research, without explaining how they related specifically to the OCD study or Y-BOCS.
- Some candidates discussed psychometrics and did not develop their points beyond identifying a strength or a weakness. This limited the analysis.
- Some responses incorrectly stated that the Y-BOCS provides no qualitative data.
- Responses that were structured around the study and then the Y-BOCS were sometimes repetitive, with brief evaluation points for each instead of development of comparisons or strengths and weaknesses around the named issue.
- Some responses used issues and debates that were not appropriate to the material, including nature versus nurture, free will and determinism, and individual versus situational explanations.

Section B – Consumer Psychology

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of utility theory and applied this appropriately to choosing a new mobile phone. These responses recognised that utility theory involves comparing available options and selecting the option that provides the best expected outcome or greatest utility for the customer.
- Appropriate contextual examples included comparing features such as storage, camera quality and price across different phones before selecting the option that best meets the customer's requirements.

Limited responses

- Some responses demonstrated limited understanding of utility theory and did not make clear that the customer would compare different options to select the one with the greatest utility.
- Some responses focused on a phone meeting the customer's needs, without explaining how the customer would identify the best option.
- Some responses described the process of searching for a phone in a way that was more consistent with satisficing.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of satisficing and applied this appropriately to choosing a new mobile phone. These responses recognised that the customer would consider a limited range of available phones and that they would stop searching once they found one that met their minimum requirements or was 'good enough'.
- Some responses identified an important feature, such as screen size or camera quality, whilst accepting that other features might not be the best available.

Limited responses

- Some responses described a customer choosing a phone that met their needs and did not make clear that satisficing involves accepting an option that is 'good enough' instead of searching for the best possible option.
- Some responses suggested that the customer would simply choose the first phone that they saw, without explaining that it needed to meet the customer's minimum requirements.
- Some responses did not clearly apply satisficing to the choice of a new mobile phone.

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Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the term 'reductionism' and applied this to the North et al. (2003) study. These responses defined reductionism as explaining behaviour in terms of its most basic elements and identified the type of music as an element used to explain customers' spending behaviour.
- Appropriate examples included explaining increased spending in terms of the classical music played in the restaurant instead of considering other possible influences on customers' spending.

Limited responses

- Some responses gave an inaccurate or incomplete definition of the term 'reductionism'.
- Some responses described reductionism as simply 'reducing something to one part' or 'ignoring other factors', without explaining how behaviour is reduced to its basic elements.
- Some responses mentioned an appropriate example from the North et al. study and then did not explain how the example demonstrated reductionism.
- Some candidates confused the term 'reductionism' with the term 'determinism'.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of a strength of reductionism. They supported their explanation with an appropriate example from the North et al. (2003) study.
- A common response was that reductionism allows researchers to isolate a variable and investigate its effect on behaviour, making it easier to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.
- Comprehensive responses applied this to North et al. by explaining how the type of music could be isolated to investigate its effect on customers' spending.
- Some responses also identified practical applications. They explained that restaurants could use classical music to increase customers' spending.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a strength of reductionism and then did not provide sufficient further detail or link the strength to the North et al. study.
- Some responses mentioned an example from the study that demonstrated reductionism and then did not explain why this represented a strength.
- Some candidates demonstrated limited understanding of reductionism in their response to **Question 6(a)**, which affected their ability to explain a strength and apply it to the North et al. study.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses gave two appropriate suggestions for improving Jing's retail atmospherics and supported each suggestion with relevant research. The most common suggestions were the use of scents, particularly citrus smells based on Chebat and Michon, and lighting, with some candidates also suggesting reducing crowding based on Machleit.
- Comprehensive responses demonstrated good knowledge of the relevant studies and accurately described the effects found. For example, citrus smell was linked to a better perception of the shopping environment.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often gave only one appropriate suggestion or provided suggestions that were not related to retail atmospherics, such as landscaping, window displays or general store layout.
- Some responses referred to an appropriate study and then gave an incorrect description of its findings. For example, some stated that Chebat and Michon found that citrus smell increased sales or spending, whereas the study investigated perceptions of the shopping environment and product quality.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified a relevant problem and explained it in the context of investigating the effects of retail atmospherics. A common response was the difficulty of isolating the effect of one atmospheric feature because many other factors may influence the customers' shopping experience or spending.
- Comprehensive responses also identified individual differences or extraneous variables and explained how these might influence customers' responses to the atmosphere, such as a customer's personal preference for a particular smell or type of lighting.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often identified a relevant problem and then did not provide sufficient detail or explain why it would create a problem when investigating retail atmospherics.
- Social desirability bias was a common response. Some responses simply identified 'bias', without explaining how it could affect the information collected from customers about their perceptions of the retail atmosphere.

Question 8

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the study by Becker et al. (2011) in sufficient detail, including the participants, the two independent variables of package shape and colour saturation, the procedure and measures, and relevant result(s).
- Comprehensive responses accurately described important procedural details, such as the pre-test to identify appropriate yoghurt container shapes, the 20-second video showing the package design rotating, and participants tasting lemon yoghurt before completing the questionnaire.
- Comprehensive responses also accurately described findings, in particular that angular packaging was perceived as more potent or intense and produced more positive product evaluations and higher price expectations than rounded packaging.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often described some aspects of the procedure and/or results, without including other relevant details.
- Some responses included information about the sample that was not relevant or that confused the independent and dependent variables.
- Some responses included inaccurate details about Becker et al. or confused the study with other research from the topic area. A common error was describing the taste of the yoghurt as the independent variable instead of the shape and colour saturation of the packaging.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses addressed the named issue of objective and subjective data in some detail and used specific examples from Becker et al. to explain both perspectives. For example, the numerical responses from the 7-point rating scales could be considered objective because the researchers did not have to interpret each participant's response, whereas the participants' ratings reflected their individual perceptions of the packaging and taste.
- Comprehensive responses also recognised that the use of an independent measures design and the fact that participants were not told the true aim of the study reduced the likelihood of demand characteristics, supporting the objectivity of the data.
- Comprehensive responses applied other issues, including cultural differences, reductionism versus holism, and individual versus situational explanations, directly to Becker et al. For example, the sample of 151 customers from one German supermarket could be considered a strength because of the relatively large sample and age range, and it could be considered a limitation because the findings may not generalise to other cultures.
- Comprehensive responses demonstrated analysis by considering both sides of an issue instead of simply identifying a strength or a weakness. These responses contained details from the study to explain why the issue was relevant to the conclusions that could be drawn.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often identified relevant evaluative issues and provided superficial evaluation, with little application to Becker et al. This prevented otherwise-valid points from developing into effective analysis.

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- Some responses focused heavily on ecological validity, without explaining how the specific procedures or findings of Becker et al. affected ecological validity.
- Some responses included several issues and contained only brief comments on each issue instead of developing one or more issues in sufficient depth. A lack of contextual detail, such as referring to the 151 participants or the German supermarket when discussing generalisability, was a common limitation.

Section C – Health Psychology

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses suggested appropriate ways of reducing pain using gate control theory, such as rubbing the painful area to increase large-fibre activity and close the gate.
- Other appropriate suggestions included attention diversion, imagery and the use of analgesics, with comprehensive responses explaining how these could reduce the experience of pain.
- Comprehensive responses linked the suggestion to gate control theory, such as explaining that rubbing the painful area increases large-fibre activity, which inhibits small pain-fibre activity and reduces pain signals reaching the brain.

Limited responses

- Some responses described gate control theory and then did not apply it to how a doctor could advise a patient to reduce their experience of pain.
- Some responses contained suggestions for reducing pain, without linking them to gate control theory.
- Some responses demonstrated limited understanding of gate control theory, particularly the role of large and small nerve fibres in opening and closing the gate.

Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses defined a clinical interview and explained how it could be used to measure pain.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that a clinical interview involves a conversation between the practitioner and the patient and allows the patient to describe their pain in their own words.
- Comprehensive responses contained a range of appropriate examples, including asking open questions about the type, location, intensity or duration of pain and using follow-up questions to obtain further information.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not define what is meant by a clinical interview and instead described generic methods of measuring pain, such as asking a patient to rate their pain from 1 to 10.
- Some responses identified that the patient could describe their pain and then did not explain how this would be achieved through a clinical interview.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses defined the idiographic approach in terms of understanding the uniqueness of an individual and their subjective experience.
- Comprehensive responses explained how a clinical interview allows the practitioner to obtain an in-depth understanding of the individual patient's experience of pain, such as by asking follow-up questions about the intensity, location, duration and psychological effects of the pain.

Limited responses

- Some responses were able to describe the idiographic approach and then did not make a clear link to how a clinical interview is idiographic when measuring pain.
- Some responses focused on the individual experience of pain and did not explain how the use of an interview allows the practitioner to obtain detailed, individual information.

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Question 11

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses applied the use of a token economy to improve the health and safety of workers in Rabia's grocery store.
- Comprehensive responses explained when tokens could be awarded, such as for following safe working practices (often giving specific examples that are appropriate to a grocery store), and how these could be exchanged for desirable goods or rewards.
- Some responses also recognised that the suggestion needed to focus on health and safety, for example awarding tokens for using equipment safely, for wearing appropriate protective equipment or for following procedures to prevent accidents.
- Many responses made direct reference to the Fox et al. study.

Limited responses

- Some responses gave general suggestions about improving workers' health instead of improving health and safety in the grocery store.
- Some responses identified a token economy and then did not explain how it would be implemented or applied to Rabia's workers.
- Some responses gave anecdotal suggestions, such as providing healthier food, without linking the suggestion to a study investigating health promotion in workplaces.
- Some responses made direct reference to the Fox et al. study, without any suggestions linked to a grocery store.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified a practical problem with the suggestion made in response to **Question 11(a)** and explained its implications for Rabia's grocery store.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that a token economy could be expensive if rewards had to be purchased and that rewards may not be sufficiently desirable to motivate workers.
- Some responses recognised that workers might only demonstrate safe behaviour when Rabia or another manager was present to award tokens, meaning that safe working practices might not become part of their natural behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a practical problem with a token economy and then did not explain how this would affect Rabia or the health and safety of her workers.
- Some responses mentioned a problem that was not clearly linked to the suggestion made in response to **Question 11(a)**. This resulted in a brief or unclear response.

Question 12

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses provided a detailed and accurate description of a study about improving adherence to medical advice in children. Many candidates used the Chaney et al. study, with responses including relevant details of the sample, procedure and result(s) relating to the Funhaler.
- Comprehensive responses described contracts and prompts, including relevant details about how each technique can be used to improve adherence. Some responses used Yokley and Glenwick to illustrate the use of prompts.

Limited responses

- Limited responses varied in the detail included about the study, with some inaccuracies concerning the sample, location and procedure. Some responses described Chaney et al. as having a separate control group.
- Some responses described research that did not investigate adherence in children and therefore did not address the requirements of the question.
- In limited responses, descriptions of contracts and prompts included a brief example of one or two techniques used to improve adherence, without giving examples of their application to patients.
- Some responses gave a detailed description of how a practitioner could set up a contract with a patient, without explaining why or how contracts would improve adherence in patients.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- The issue stated in the question was reliability. Comprehensive responses addressed reliability in detail and used relevant examples from the study, such as the consistent use of the Funhaler and procedure of the study, or the consistent administration of prompts in Yokley and Glenwick.
- Comprehensive responses also considered how reliability could be affected when contracts and prompts are personalised to individual patients, meaning that the same procedures may not be used for every patient.
- Comprehensive responses mentioned other issues, such as application to everyday life, generalisability, validity, ethics and the use of children in research. Candidates who included relevant details from the studies and/or contracts and prompts developed these issues further.
- Some responses provided effective analysis by explaining how and why the study or techniques in **Question 12(a)** could be seen to support an issue and also considered how they might not. For example, when discussing experiments, responses could analyse Chaney et al. as a field experiment, considering how the use of controls and a standardised procedure could increase reliability, while the natural setting could increase ecological validity. Responses could then consider limitations, such as the potential for other variables to influence adherence.
- In comprehensive responses, similar analysis was applied to other issues too, with responses explaining how and why the evidence from the study or the use of contracts and prompts supported one side of a debate and how it could be seen to support the other side of the debate.

Limited responses

- In limited responses, evaluation was often superficial. Some responses identified strengths and weaknesses, without developing the implications of these points.
- Some candidates included relevant evaluation and then did not provide sufficient context from the studies and/or contracts and prompts to support their points.
- Some responses stated that the study or technique supported an issue, without explaining how or why. For example, some responses stated that Chaney et al. was reliable because the same Funhaler and procedure were used and then did not explain why keeping procedures consistent increases the reliability of the measure of adherence.
- Some candidates confused reliability and validity.
- Some responses identified many issues and then did not develop each issue sufficiently.

Section D – Organisational Psychology

Question 13

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses suggested two appropriate ways that Hari could help his workers to meet their ‘love and belonging (social)’ needs at work. Suggestions such as team-building activities, social gatherings, parties and team dinners were common. Other appropriate suggestions included working together on team projects and providing opportunities for peer support.
- Comprehensive responses explained how these activities could promote interaction and a sense of belonging among members of the sales team.

Limited responses

- Some responses described Maslow’s hierarchy in general instead of suggesting ways that Hari could help his workers to meet their ‘love and belonging (social)’ needs.
- Some suggestions were not relevant to the ‘love and belonging’ level or could not be applied appropriately to the workplace, such as spending time with family.
- Some candidates provided an appropriate way and then did not provide sufficient detail to explain how it would meet the workers’ need for ‘love and belonging’.

Question 14

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses defined the term ‘groupthink’ and made a clear link to faulty decision making.

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- Some responses used features of groupthink, such as an illusion of invulnerability, self-censorship or an illusion of unanimity, to explain how groupthink can result in faulty decision making.

Limited responses

- Some responses just repeated the wording of the question, describing groupthink as a faulty decision-making process, without explaining what groupthink means.
- Some responses confused groupthink with social conformity.
- Some responses simply described groupthink as a desire for harmony, without explaining how this can lead to faulty decision making.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses outlined the situational explanation and explained how groupthink can be understood as a situational explanation of faulty decision making.
- Comprehensive responses explained that groupthink results from factors within the group or the environment, such as pressure to conform, self-censorship or a lack of challenge to the views expressed by other group members.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not outline what is meant by a situational explanation before applying it to groupthink.
- Some responses simply used the word 'situation', without explaining how environmental or group factors can influence faulty decision making.
- Some responses used diffusion of responsibility to explain why groupthink is situational, which did not directly address the question.

Question 15

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates suggested two stages from Tuckman's stages of group development and linked these to the advertising campaign. Storming and norming were the stages most frequently described.
- Some comprehensive responses outlined the stage and then explained how the marketing team would work together during that stage, such as how members might disagree about ideas for the advertising campaign (during storming) or how members might develop ideas into action points such as developing visual media, writing advertisements, creating a poster/billboard (during norming).

Limited responses

- Some responses identified stages and then did not describe them accurately or did not apply them to the marketing team and/or advertising campaign.
- Some responses used other models, such as Belbin's team roles, instead of stages of group development.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified relevant weaknesses of the stages of group development and provided further detail in context. A common response was that the model is deterministic because it suggests that groups progress through the stages in a particular order, although groups may not go through all five stages or may move back to an earlier stage.
- Some comprehensive responses explained that the model may not apply equally to different types of groups or tasks. For example, a marketing team working on a short advertising campaign may not experience all of the stages.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a generic weakness and did not explain why it was a weakness of the stages of group development.
- Some responses gave weaknesses that were not relevant to the model, such as reductionism or social loafing, without explaining how these related to stages of group development.

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Question 16

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses described the different reasons for workplace sabotage and the types or methods of sabotage. Knowledge of the Giacalone and Rosenfeld study was also included in some responses.
- Comprehensive responses that described Blau and Boal's absenteeism and organisational commitment model included the different levels of job involvement and organisational commitment and explained how these relate to absenteeism and turnover.
- Comprehensive responses included relevant detail from the model and/or study and used appropriate psychological terminology to describe workplace sabotage and Blau and Boal's model.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided general or vague descriptions of workplace sabotage and did not clearly distinguish between the methods and reasons for sabotage.
- In limited responses, absenteeism and organisational commitment were sometimes omitted or only described briefly.
- Some responses included aspects of Blau and Boal's model and did not provide sufficient detail to show how job involvement and organisational commitment relate to absenteeism and turnover.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- The issue stated in the question was reductionism versus holism. Comprehensive responses addressed this issue in detail and used context from workplace sabotage and Blau and Boal's model to explain both sides of the debate.
- Some candidates carried out effective analysis by explaining how and why workplace sabotage could be considered holistic because different types of sabotage and a range of reasons for sabotage are considered. In contrast, Blau and Boal's model could be considered more reductionist because absenteeism and turnover are explained in terms of two main factors: job involvement and organisational commitment.
- Comprehensive responses also considered the alternative explanation. For example, workplace sabotage could be considered reductionist if other factors, such as individual personality characteristics, are not considered. This shows how the same research area can be considered from both sides of the debate.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of other issues, such as individual versus situational explanations, idiographic versus nomothetic, and generalisations from findings. They explained how and why the concepts or study supported each side of the issue. For example, workplace sabotage can be considered situational because an employee may feel the desire to sabotage following events or experiences at work. In contrast, it can also be considered using an individual explanation because employees may respond differently to the same situation, with some choosing sabotage and others not doing so.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of generalisations from findings by considering the Giacalone and Rosenfeld study of 38 unionised factory workers. Comprehensive responses argued that the findings may have limited generalisability because the participants were all factory workers, meaning that the reasons and methods of sabotage identified may not apply in the same way to employees in other types of workplaces such as offices. In contrast, the findings may still be generalisable to factory workers more broadly because the study examined workers in a real workplace setting and the types of sabotage identified, such as production slowdowns and destruction, remain relevant to factory environments. The findings may also have continued relevance today, although changes in the location and nature of manufacturing, including much manufacturing moving outside the USA/the 'West', may limit how far the findings can be generalised to present-day workers.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of application to everyday life by explaining how understanding the reasons for sabotage could help organisations to reduce it, for example by providing employees with opportunities to raise grievances.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified relevant evaluative issues and then did not develop the points using context from workplace sabotage or Blau and Boal's model.
- Some responses stated that a concept or model was reductionist or holistic, without explaining how or why it could be considered this way. For example, simply stating that Blau and Boal's

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model is reductionist because it focuses on job involvement and organisational commitment did not provide sufficient analysis unless the response explained that these two factors are used to explain more complex behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover.

- Some responses stated that workplace sabotage was holistic because there were different reasons or types of sabotage and did not explain why considering these different factors makes the explanation more holistic.
- Some responses identified several issues and provided little development or analysis of each point. Responses needed to focus on explaining how and why the evidence from **Question 16(a)** supported the relevant side of the issue.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/32

Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Some candidates contextualised their responses effectively in the applied (AO2) questions, with relevant application to the scenarios provided.
- Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the syllabus content in their responses to **Questions 2(a)**, **10(a)** and **14(a)**, providing accurate explanations of relevant knowledge. Some candidates also showed an understanding of how syllabus content could be applied to issues and debates.
- Some candidates gave detailed descriptions of the relevant studies, theories, the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for kleptomania and pyromania, and the Kleptomania Symptom Assessment Scale (K-SAS) in their responses to **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**.
- Most candidates provided relevant and accurate evaluation points in their responses to **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b)** and **16(b)**. In some responses, these points were developed in depth, with supporting details drawn from the material presented in response to part **(a)** of the question. Some responses also demonstrated effective analysis of the issues raised.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to provide greater contextualisation in their responses to the applied (AO2) questions.
- Some candidates included definitions of the relevant issues and debates and did not always apply these to the syllabus content presented in part **(a)** of the question. This was evident in the responses to **Questions 2(b)**, **10(b)** and **14(b)**.
- Some candidates provided descriptions of the relevant studies, theories, ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for kleptomania and pyromania, and the Kleptomania Symptom Assessment Scale (K-SAS) in their responses to **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**, with some responses including less detail about the relevant material.
- For **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b) and 16(b)**, candidates needed to include some form of analysis in their responses. They could have discussed the strengths or weaknesses of the issue being considered, they could have presented a counterargument or they could have compared the issue across two studies and/or theories. Any comparison, strength, weakness or counterargument needed to be explained using relevant examples from part **(a)** of the question.
- Some candidates stated that two aspects of the material, for example the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria and K-SAS, were ‘similar’ or ‘in contrast’, without explaining why they could be compared in this way. Analysis could have been developed by providing contextualised examples to support the evaluation points and by explaining how these examples related to the issue under discussion.
- Including a conclusion at the end of each issue would also have helped to demonstrate the overall implications of the analysis. Responses would have benefitted from being structured around the issue instead of around individual studies and/or theories. It would also have been helpful for responses to begin with the named issue in order to ensure that this requirement of the question was directly addressed.
- Some responses addressed a range of evaluation points, without consistently focusing on the named issue. Responses structured around individual studies, theories or assessment methods instead of the issue itself often resulted in repetition and less developed analysis.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A – Clinical Psychology

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates identified Beck's cognitive triad and explained how each element (self, world and future) interact and how this explains depression.
- Many responses included clear, specific examples of each element from Tara's life.
- A few responses gave an outline of negative 'self' schemas, sometimes with an example from Tara's life, and how these could lead to depression.

Limited responses
- Some candidates confused the cognitive triad with CBT.
- Some candidates did not provide sufficient context relating their suggestions to Tara's descriptions of herself, her life and her future.
- A few responses gave examples relating to Tara, without outlining the cognitive triad.
- Some candidates identified symptoms of depression instead of applying Beck's cognitive theory.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Most candidates identified the required elements of applied tension, usually tensing muscles, raising blood pressure and preventing fainting.
- Responses that showed clear understanding connected the physiological process of tensing muscles with increasing blood pressure to prevent fainting.

Limited responses
- Some candidates confused applied tension with muscle relaxation.
- Some responses referred to trying to stay calm when exposed to the phobic stimulus instead of describing the use of muscle tension.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of reductionism by accurately defining the concept and then explaining how applied tension is reductionist.
- A few responses focused on reductionism as a breaking down of complex behaviour into component parts, then identified the sole focus of applied tension on the physiological processes involved in avoiding fainting.
- Some candidates also identified other relevant factors that were not included in this physiological focus.

Limited responses
- Some responses did not include a definition or explanation of reductionism.
- Some candidates confused reductionism with other issues such as determinism.
- Some responses focused on the factors omitted from applied tension, without first explaining how this demonstrated reductionism.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Some candidates correctly identified the ABCDE model and contextualised these using Samuel's social experiences and beliefs.
- Many candidates identified or described 'disputing' as a key feature of REBT, sometimes with an example linked to Samuel.

Limited responses
- Some responses were vague and described general features of CBT instead of REBT.
- Some candidates misidentified A, B or C components in relation to the scenario.
- Some responses included the ABC factors, without addressing D ('disputing') and/or E ('effect').

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- Some responses focused more on describing REBT generally with one or no examples from the scenario.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates discussed the issue of the confrontational nature of REBT and the possibility that this could be difficult for a person experiencing a very low mood.
- Some responses discussed the issue of the motivation that is required to attend multiple sessions and to continue with therapy.
- Comprehensive responses that developed a weakness identified a problem and then explained or elaborated on why this was an issue for REBT.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on the qualities or competence of the therapist instead of evaluating REBT itself.
- Some candidates discussed therapist performance, without explaining how characteristics of REBT as a treatment affected its suitability or outcomes.
- Many responses identified a weakness such as reductionism or cost, without explaining why these represented a weakness of REBT.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates described the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for kleptomania and pyromania.
- Comprehensive responses included the key diagnostic features for both disorders and distinguished between the two conditions using appropriate psychological terminology.
- Comprehensive responses that described the K-SAS included the number of items, the rating scale and examples of questions/items.
- Some responses also explained the levels of severity associated with K-SAS scores.

Limited responses

- Some responses included information, such as age of onset or details from the Glover case study, instead of the required diagnostic criteria.
- Some responses did not mention one of the two disorders.
- Some responses provided general descriptions that could have been from a variety of disorders, such as anxiety, without sufficient diagnostic detail that was specific to kleptomania and/or pyromania.
- Some responses gave one correct detail about the K-SAS.
- Some candidates confused K-SAS with other psychological measures.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates evaluated both the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria and the K-SAS using the named issue.
- Some candidates explained why a patient might provide inaccurate information about kleptomania on the K-SAS, for example because stealing is illegal.
- Some candidates used quantitative and qualitative data in their responses, with discussion of strengths and weaknesses and contextual examples.
- Some responses mentioned cultural differences and nomothetic versus idiographic approaches, with some candidates applying these directly to the material described in part **(a)**.
- Some responses mentioned a strength and a weakness within the same issue in order to develop analysis and make comparisons.

Limited responses

- Some candidates selected issues or debates that were not directly relevant to evaluating the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria or K-SAS, such as nature versus nurture or determinism versus free will.
- Some responses evaluated the ICD-11 diagnostic criteria as though they were an interview or assessment procedure instead of evaluating the criteria themselves.
- Some responses gave general evaluation points, with little contextual application to the methods described in part **(a)**.
- Some responses used issues such as questionnaires and demand characteristics in a general way, without applying them specifically to the K-SAS or ICD-11.

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Section B – Consumer Psychology

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the mere exposure effect. They explained how repeated exposure to the mobile phone or blue square logo during the film could increase familiarity with the product without conscious awareness.
- Comprehensive responses often linked the mere exposure effect to the consumer's subsequent choice when shopping for a mobile phone.
- Some responses explained how the product placement could act as a reminder of previous exposure to the brand or logo, making the consumer more likely to notice the blue square when shopping.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of appropriate psychological terminology, such as 'mere exposure', 'familiarity' and 'unconscious influence' by linking these terms directly to the mobile phone or blue square logo.

Limited responses

- Some responses described the consumer consciously remembering the mobile phone or logo after watching the film instead of explaining the unconscious nature of the mere exposure effect.
- Some responses focused on consumers liking the mobile phone because a celebrity used it in the film instead of explaining the psychological process involved in mere exposure.
- Some responses referred to familiarity or repeated exposure, without linking this clearly to the consumer's subsequent choice of mobile phone.
- Some responses described the product placement as a reminder, without explaining how this previous exposure could influence the consumer when shopping.

Question 6

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated a clear understanding of appropriate guidelines for creating an effective slogan. They explained how the guidelines could contribute to the effectiveness of the slogan.
- Common suggestions included using a jingle, linking the slogan to the brand, using the slogan consistently across different types of advertising, keeping the slogan memorable and using an appropriate level of complexity.
- Comprehensive responses often contained an example to illustrate how the suggested guideline could be applied.
- Some responses explained how a jingle could improve recall of the slogan or how consistent use across different advertising media could increase familiarity with the slogan.

Limited responses

- Some responses gave examples of well-known slogans, without explaining a guideline for creating an effective slogan.
- Some candidates confused slogans with logos. They described features of a logo instead of a slogan.
- Some suggestions were expressed in general or common-sense terms, without explaining why the feature would make the slogan effective.
- Some responses identified a feature, such as keeping the slogan short, without providing an appropriate explanation of why this would contribute to its effectiveness.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses explained why the guideline identified in response to **Question 6(a)** may not apply to everyday life. They made a clear link between the guideline and a factor that could affect its applicability.
- Some responses explained that other factors, such as price, competition or consumer preferences, could influence purchasing decisions alongside the slogan.
- Some responses considered difficulties involved in applying particular guidelines, such as creating a slogan that remains appropriate as a company or product changes.

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- Comprehensive responses used a contextual example to illustrate why the guideline may not always be practical or effective in everyday advertising.

Limited responses

- Some responses evaluated the product or advertising practices instead of the applicability of the specific slogan guideline identified in response to **Question 6(a)**.
- Some responses focused on factors such as colour, design or whether the slogan was heard instead of considering the content or guideline identified in response to **Question 6(a)**.
- Some responses discussed consumer behaviour in general, without explaining why the particular slogan guideline may not apply to everyday life.
- Some responses considered a different guideline from the one identified in response to **Question 6(a)**, resulting in limited development of the relevant issue.

Question 7

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses generally identified appropriate categories of response to queue intrusions, including verbal, physical and non-verbal responses, and supported these with findings from Milgram's research.
- Some responses used quantitative findings, such as the proportion of queues in which verbal, physical or non-verbal responses occurred.
- Some responses used qualitative findings from Milgram's research, including examples of what customers said when objecting to an intruder.
- Comprehensive responses directly linked the type of response to a finding from the study of queuing behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided inaccurate descriptions of the responses observed in Milgram's research or gave inaccurate details of the findings.
- Some responses described the procedure of Milgram's study, including which customers were more likely to respond to the intruder, without identifying an appropriate response and supporting it with a relevant finding.
- Some responses stated that customers would feel angry or annoyed, without explaining how this response would be observed.
- Some responses described a response, without including a relevant finding from Milgram's research.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified an appropriate problem that a psychologist may encounter when investigating the responses of people queuing and explained how the problem could arise in the context of the research.
- Some responses focused on problems associated with conducting an observation, such as observer interpretation of behaviour or difficulties recording responses accurately in a busy public environment.
- Some responses considered ethical issues, including observing people without their informed consent or the possibility that an intrusion could cause frustration or distress.
- Comprehensive responses directly applied the methodological or ethical issue to observing responses to queue intrusions.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a general methodological problem, without applying it specifically to investigating the responses of people queuing.
- Some responses referred to lack of control, without explaining how this could affect the investigation of queueing behaviour.
- Some responses suggested that customers might behave differently because of other factors, such as having a bad day, without explaining how this would present a problem for the psychologist.
- Some responses focused on the possible emotions of customers instead of identifying a problem for the psychologist who was investigating their responses.

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Question 8

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of a study investigating point of purchase decisions and a study investigating the application of heuristics to decision-making styles.
- Comprehensive responses that described Wansink et al. accurately identified relevant features of one of the studies, including the aim, method and findings.
- Comprehensive responses that described del Campo et al. included relevant details of the investigation into decision-making styles and the use of different heuristics.
- Some responses included specific findings from the studies, such as the effects of different purchase quantities or the differences between participants from Madrid and Vienna in their use of heuristics.
- Comprehensive responses used appropriate psychological terminology and clearly distinguished between point of purchase decisions and decision-making styles involving heuristics.

Limited responses

- Some responses described consumer decision-making in general instead of focusing specifically on point of purchase decisions or the application of heuristics to decision-making styles.
- Some candidates confused point of purchase decisions with consumer decision-making style.
- Some responses described heuristics generally, without linking them to decision-making styles investigated by del Campo et al.
- Some responses focused mainly on the procedure of the studies, without describing relevant findings.
- Some responses included inaccurate or confused details about the findings of Wansink et al. or del Campo et al.
- Some responses described more than one Wansink study in considerable detail instead of developing a clear description of one relevant study.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses addressed the named issue of experiments and developed evaluation of the studies investigating point of purchase decisions and the application of heuristics to decision-making styles.
- Some responses compared laboratory and field experiments effectively. They considered issues such as control, ecological validity, demand characteristics, reliability and the presence of confounding variables.
- Many candidates used relevant details from Wansink et al. and from del Campo et al. to contextualise their evaluation.
- Some responses discussed application to everyday life, explaining how findings from the studies could be used by companies or shops to influence consumer purchasing decisions.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of other issues and debates, including cultural differences, objective and subjective data, qualitative and quantitative data, by supporting them with appropriate examples from the studies.
- Comprehensive responses developed the analysis by comparing the two studies within the same evaluative point and considered how a strength or weakness applied differently to each study.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided evaluation of the studies, with limited development or application to the research described in response to **Question 8(a)**.
- Some responses identified general methodological strengths and weaknesses, without explaining how they applied specifically to the studies of point of purchase decisions and heuristics.
- Some responses focused extensively on ecological validity, without considering a wider range of relevant evaluative issues.
- Some responses identified issues and debates such as reductionism versus holism or individual versus situational explanations, without providing sufficient contextual detail from the studies.

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- Some responses discussed cultural differences, without clearly applying the issue to the findings from Wansink et al. or del Campo et al.
- Some responses identified strengths or weaknesses of experiments, without developing the implications for the conclusions that could be drawn from the studies.

Section C – Health Psychology

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified appropriate reasons for why Ken may have delayed seeking treatment. They supported these with relevant examples relating to his headaches.
- Comprehensive responses often used two different components of the Health Belief Model, such as perceived barriers and perceived seriousness, to explain why Ken may have delayed seeking treatment.

Limited responses

- Some responses suggested appropriate reasons for delaying treatment, without directly applying a component of the Health Belief Model or relevant research to Ken's situation.
- Some responses gave reasons such as fear of receiving bad news from a doctor, without explaining how this would result in a delay in seeking treatment.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified the doctor/practitioner-centred style and explained its relationship with higher levels of patient satisfaction.
- Comprehensive responses described features of the doctor/practitioner-centred style, such as the doctor taking control of the consultation and directing the interaction. This demonstrated a clear understanding of the practitioner style.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified the practitioner style, without explaining how it affected patient satisfaction.
- Some responses stated that patients liked or preferred the practitioner style, without specifically referring to patient satisfaction.
- Some responses identified the patient-centred style instead of the doctor/practitioner-centred style, without citing any evidence to support this.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated a clear understanding of determinism and applied the concept to the relationship between practitioner style and patient satisfaction.
- Comprehensive responses explained that the patient does not control the consultation style that they receive and that the practitioner's style can therefore influence their level of satisfaction.

Limited responses

- Some responses attempted to apply determinism to practitioner style and patient satisfaction, with the explanation remaining general.
- Some responses interpreted determinism as the patient's ability to choose their own treatment instead of explaining how patient satisfaction could be determined by external factors.
- Some responses used information from other studies instead of applying determinism to the relationship between practitioner style and patient satisfaction.

Question 11

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses accurately described appropriate physiological measures used in biofeedback, such as heart rate or muscle tension, and explained how feedback from the equipment could help Fatima to learn to reduce her physiological arousal.

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- Comprehensive responses explained that Fatima would receive immediate feedback, such as a tone or display, that indicated changes in the physiological measure while she practised relaxation.
- Comprehensive responses made clear links between the feedback received during biofeedback and Fatima's ability to use the relaxation technique when experiencing stress.

Limited responses

- Some responses described relaxation techniques in considerable detail, without explaining how feedback from the equipment would help Fatima to learn to control her physiological responses.
- Some responses referred to monitoring physiological responses, without explaining how Fatima would use the feedback to reduce her stress.
- Some responses described generic relaxation techniques, without sufficient reference to biofeedback.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses evaluated a relevant weakness of biofeedback for managing stress and developed the point by explaining how it could affect the effectiveness of stress management.
- A common approach was to explain that biofeedback focuses on physiological manifestations of stress instead of addressing underlying causes, such as biological, cognitive or situational factors contributing to stress.
- Some responses explained that individuals may find it difficult to relax during biofeedback sessions, particularly when experiencing high levels of stress, and that this may limit the effectiveness of the technique in everyday situations.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a weakness of biofeedback, without explaining how this could affect the management of stress.
- Some responses focused on treatments such as drugs or CBT instead of evaluating a weakness of using biofeedback to manage stress.
- Some responses suggested that using biofeedback could itself cause stress, without explaining how or why this would affect stress management.

Question 12

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the study by Yokley and Glenwick (1984), accurately describing features of the sample, the experimental conditions and the findings.
- Comprehensive responses accurately described relevant features of the sample, including the preschool children who were immunisation-deficient and registered at the health clinic.
- Comprehensive responses described the intervention conditions, including the general prompt, specific prompt, increased access and monetary incentive conditions.
- Comprehensive responses included relevant findings, such as the monetary incentive having the greatest impact on attendance, followed by increased access, with the specific prompt and general prompt producing progressively smaller effects.
- Comprehensive responses also identified that the specific prompt was the most cost-effective intervention.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided a general summary of the study, without including sufficient detail about the sample, intervention conditions or findings.
- Some responses confused the sample with the population from which it was drawn.
- Some responses included only a limited number of the intervention conditions or results.
- Some responses confused Yokley and Glenwick's research with another study, such as the Food Dudes research.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Responses developed relevant evaluation points and applied them clearly to Yokley and Glenwick's study.

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- Comprehensive responses addressed the issue of the use of children in research by considering the use of preschool children who were immunisation-deficient and the implications of this for the study.
- Some responses linked the use of children to ethical considerations, including the role of parental consent and the potential benefits of immunisation for the children and wider population.
- Comprehensive responses that evaluated generalisability made appropriate use of details about the sample, including the use of preschool children from a Midwestern town in America, and considered how characteristics of the population could affect the extent to which the findings would apply elsewhere.
- Some responses used comparisons within an issue to develop analysis, such as considering both the benefits and limitations of generalising from the sample.
- Some responses made effective use of other relevant issues, including the use of controls and individual versus situational explanations, by supporting them with appropriate details from the study.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified relevant issues and then provided limited development or application to Yokley and Glenwick's study.
- Some responses discussed the use of children as a general ethical issue, without explaining its relevance to the specific study.
- Some responses stated that the study was unethical because children were participants, without considering the role of parental consent or the potential benefits of the intervention.
- Some candidates thought that the control groups were unable to access immunisations, which led to an inaccurate evaluation of the study.
- Some responses mentioned issues that were not relevant to the study, such as nature versus nurture.
- Some responses included inaccurate details about the study. This limited the extent to which the evaluation could be applied to the research.

Section D – Organisational Psychology

Question 13

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified relevant features of Walton's quality of working life questionnaire (QWL) and applied these to the context of night shift workers.
- Comprehensive responses often referred to 'total life space', explaining how working at night could disrupt work-life balance, socialising and family responsibilities.
- Some responses appropriately applied features, such as fair and adequate payment and safe and healthy working conditions, to the circumstances of night shift workers.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on the general effects of working night shifts, such as tiredness, disrupted sleep, accidents and adverse health effects, without linking these to a specific feature of Walton's QWL.
- Some responses identified an appropriate feature of QWL and then did not explain how this could result in a low score for night shift workers.

Question 14

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified one of Muczyk and Reimann's four styles of leader behaviour and explained both the level of leader direction and the degree of participation in decision making for this style.
- Comprehensive responses clearly distinguished between the four styles, such as explaining that a directive democrat closely monitors workers whilst encouraging a high level of participation in decision making.

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Limited responses

- Some responses identified a leadership style, without explaining both the level of direction and the degree of participation in decision making.
- Some responses referred to unrelated leadership styles from elsewhere in the organisational psychology syllabus.
- Some responses used general descriptions such as 'autocratic' or 'democratic', without identifying one of Muczyk and Reimann's four specific styles.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the nomothetic approach and applied this to Muczyk and Reimann's four styles of leader behaviour.
- Comprehensive responses explained that the theory establishes general categories of leadership behaviour, with leaders classified into one of four styles according to their level of direction and employee participation.
- Some responses explained clearly that the use of a standardised classification system allows general patterns of leadership behaviour to be identified across different leaders and organisations.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not clearly define nomothetic before applying it to Muczyk and Reimann's theory.
- Some responses stated that the theory can be generalised to many people, without explaining the idea of establishing general laws or classifications of behaviour.
- Some responses defined nomothetic by explaining what it is not, such as stating that it is not idiographic, instead of explaining the concept itself.

Question 15

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified the effective or exemplary follower as being appropriate for the baker and explained how the characteristics of this follower fit the role.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that the baker needs to be active and able to work independently, taking initiative without constant supervision.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified an inappropriate followership style, with 'pragmatic follower' being a common error.
- Some responses identified an appropriate style and then did not link its characteristics to the responsibilities of the baker.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses correctly identified the conformist or 'yes people' follower as appropriate for the packer and explained how this fitted the role.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that the packer needs to be active in carrying out the work whilst having low independent critical thinking as the role requires instructions to be followed without questioning them.
- Comprehensive responses also followed the instruction to use a different followership style from the one given in relation to the baker.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a passive or pragmatic follower rather than a conformist follower.
- Some responses identified the conformist style and then gave a generic description, without applying its characteristics to the repetitive, instruction-following duties of the packer.
- Some responses repeated the style used for the baker instead of choosing a different style as required by the question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified the practical application of Kelley's theory as a strength and explained how it could be used in an organisation.
- Comprehensive responses explained how managers could identify the type of follower required for a particular role and use this when recruiting, placing or developing employees.

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- Some responses recognised the holistic nature of the theory because it identifies several different followership styles and considers different combinations of activity and independent thinking.

Limited responses

- Some responses described the positive characteristics of an effective or exemplary follower rather than evaluating Kelley's theory itself.
- Some responses identified practical application and then did not explain how this could be used to select or place employees in appropriate roles.
- Some responses attempted to evaluate the theory using methodological criteria such as generalisability. This did not address the requirements of the question.

Question 16

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses provided detailed descriptions of both the impact of physical work conditions on productivity and the Hawthorne effect, and a study investigating open plan offices.
- Comprehensive responses described a range of physical work conditions, such as illumination, temperature and noise, and explained their possible effects on productivity. They also accurately described the Hawthorne effect as an increase in productivity associated with factors such as the attention given to workers.
- Comprehensive responses that described Oldham and Brass (1979) included relevant methodological details and findings, such as the move to an open plan office and decreases in internal motivation and job satisfaction.
- Comprehensive responses included a specific result from the Oldham and Brass study.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused mainly on defining the Hawthorne effect and gave little detail about the physical work conditions that were investigated.
- Some responses provided a brief or inaccurate description of the open plan office study, without mentioning important methodological or procedural details.
- A common error was stating that Oldham and Brass measured productivity or that open plan offices reduced productivity. The study measured psychological outcomes such as employee motivation and satisfaction instead of productivity.
- Some responses described the Hawthorne effect simply as an observer effect, without explaining the relationship between attention, changes in working conditions and productivity.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses addressed the stated issue of longitudinal studies and applied the strengths and weaknesses of this research method to the studies described in response to **Question 16(a)**.
- Comprehensive responses explained how longitudinal research can show changes over time, whilst recognising practical limitations such as participant attrition and the time required to conduct the research.
- Some responses used the different stages of Oldham and Brass (1979), including measurements before and after the move to an open plan office, to demonstrate how a longitudinal design can identify changes in employees' responses over time.
- Comprehensive responses developed other relevant issues effectively by applied them to the studies, including ecological validity and individual versus situational explanations.

Limited responses

- Some responses defined longitudinal research and listed general strengths and weaknesses, without applying these to the Hawthorne studies or to Oldham and Brass (1979).
- Some responses identified relevant evaluative issues and then provided little contextual detail from the studies.
- Some responses listed several strengths and weaknesses, without developing the implications of the points made.
- Some responses evaluated the Hawthorne effect or open plan offices as concepts instead of evaluating the research methods used to investigate them.

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PSYCHOLOGY

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Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Some candidates contextualised their responses effectively in the applied (AO2) questions.
- Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the syllabus content in their responses to **Questions 2(a)** and **6(a)**, providing accurate explanations of relevant knowledge. Some candidates also showed an understanding of how syllabus content could be applied to issues and debates. This was particularly evident in responses to **Question 10(b)**, where many candidates explained how the clinical interview about a patient's pain demonstrated an idiographic approach.
- Some candidates gave detailed descriptions of the relevant studies, theories, Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale, contracts and prompts in their responses to **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**.
- Most candidates provided relevant and accurate evaluation points in their responses to **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b)** and **16(b)**. In some responses, these points were developed in depth, with supporting details drawn from the material presented in response to part **(a)** of the question. Some responses also demonstrated effective analysis of the issues raised.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to provide greater contextualisation in their responses to the applied (AO2) questions.
- Some candidates were unable to apply the issue or debate to the syllabus content presented in part **(a)** of the question. This was evident in the responses to **Questions 2(b)**, **6(b)** and **14(b)**.
- Some candidates demonstrated limited knowledge of the relevant studies, theories, Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale, contracts and prompts in **Questions 4(a)**, **8(a)**, **12(a)** and **16(a)**.
- For **Questions 4(b)**, **8(b)**, **12(b)** and **16(b)**, candidates needed to include some form of analysis in their responses. They could have discussed the strengths or weaknesses of the issue being considered, they could have presented a counterargument or they could have compared the issue across two studies and/or theories. Any comparison, strength, weakness or counterargument needed to be explained using relevant examples from part **(a)** of the question.
- Many candidates stated that two theories or studies were 'similar' or 'in contrast', without explaining why they could be compared in this way. These responses demonstrated little analysis. Analysis could have been developed further by providing several contextualised examples to support the evaluation points.
- Including a conclusion at the end of each issue would also have helped to demonstrate a more developed understanding of the issue under discussion. Responses would have benefitted from being structured around the issue instead of around individual studies and/or theories. It would also have been helpful for responses to begin with the named issue to ensure that this requirement of the question was directly addressed.
- Some candidates did not evaluate the named issue. Some responses were structured around individual studies, theories or self-report methods instead of around the issue itself. This often resulted in responses that were superficial and repetitive.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

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- Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of explanations for blood phobia and linked the explanation directly to Richard's circumstances.
- Genetic explanations appropriately identified Richard's mother as the relevant genetic link. Some responses also used findings from Ost et al. to support the explanation.
- Responses using classical or operant conditioning generally used appropriate terminology and linked the explanation to details from the stem, such as Richard's fall from the chair and his avoidance of blood.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not link the explanation clearly to the stem and were too generic.
- Genetic explanations sometimes identified Richard's mother and then did not explain the genetic link sufficiently.
- Some responses attempted to use social learning theory, without using appropriate terminology.
- Some candidates confused social learning theory with classical conditioning.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified an opioid antagonist, such as naltrexone or nalmefene, and explained how the treatment reduced the desire to gamble.
- Comprehensive responses linked the action of the opioid antagonist to the reduction in gambling behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified the opioid antagonist and then did not explain how the treatment worked or why this would help to reduce gambling behaviour.
- Some responses described other techniques/treatments, including imagery, cognitive behavioural therapy or systematic desensitisation instead of the drug treatment that was investigated by Grant et al. (2008).

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of why the findings from Grant et al. may not be applicable to everyday life. These responses identified a relevant reason, such as the treatment not being equally effective for all gamblers or the side effects associated with the drug treatment, and provided further detail to explain this.
- Some responses contained specific information from the study, such as the greater efficacy of the opioid antagonist for participants with a family history of alcoholism.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a basic reason for why the findings may not be applicable and then did not provide further detail.
- Some responses incorrectly stated that the participants in the study had a history of alcoholism instead of recognising that the greater treatment response was associated with having a family history of alcoholism.
- Some candidates confused applicability to everyday life with generalisability, giving reasons such as the small sample size or the fact that participants came from one location.
- Some responses were too general, such as stating that not everyone is a gambler, without explaining why this would affect the applicability of the findings.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated good knowledge of methods that could be used to diagnose generalised anxiety disorder, including the GAD-7, BAI and ICD-11 criteria.
- Some responses identified a relevant diagnostic method and explained how it could be used with Jade. They included details such as the features, example question or scoring of the GAD-7 or BAI.
- Some responses demonstrated good understanding of the ICD-11 criteria by explaining what information the doctor would need in order to establish whether or not Jade met the criteria for generalised anxiety disorder.

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Limited responses

- Some responses only named a diagnostic tool, without explaining how it would be used to diagnose Jade.
- Some responses identified generic symptoms of anxiety from the scenario, without referring to a specific method or diagnostic criteria.
- Some responses identified diagnostic measures that were not relevant to generalised anxiety disorder, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) or Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS).

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of why the diagnosis of generalised anxiety disorder could be considered valid. These responses referred to a specific feature of the diagnostic method, such as the good concurrent validity of the GAD-7, or they explained how the ICD-11 has been developed and regularly reviewed by specialists.
- Comprehensive responses linked the reason for validity directly to the method used by the doctor in diagnosing Jade.

Limited responses

- Many responses recognised that the diagnostic method needed to have validity and then did not explain why the method was valid.
- Some responses used Jade's symptoms to explain why the diagnosis was valid instead of referring to a feature of the diagnostic method or criteria.
- Some candidates did not refer to a specific diagnostic method mentioned in the answer to **Question 3(a)**, which made it difficult for them to explain why the diagnosis was valid.

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the question and provided detailed descriptions of both an appropriate study of OCD and the Y-BOCS.
- Comprehensive responses described Rapoport (1989) or Lehmkuhl et al. (2008) and included specific details of the participants' obsessions and compulsions, as well as other relevant details from the case.
- Comprehensive responses described the Y-BOCS effectively. They included accurate details of the semi-structured interview, the assessment of obsessions and compulsions, and features such as the items/questions, scoring system or examples of categories.
- Some responses demonstrated accurate and appropriate use of psychological terminology throughout.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided limited or inaccurate detail about the OCD case study. Some responses merged details from the cases of Charles and Jason.
- Some responses used an incorrect study, such as Lovell et al.
- Some responses gave only a generic description of OCD, without providing sufficient detail about a specific obsession and compulsion from an appropriate study.
- Descriptions of the Y-BOCS were sometimes brief or inaccurate. Scoring, scales or the example of a question were confused with other measures.
- Some responses incorrectly described the Y-BOCS as having no qualitative data or gave inaccurate information about its method.
- Some responses demonstrated limited knowledge of the material and used psychological terminology inaccurately.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses addressed the named issue of psychometrics effectively. They identified strengths and weaknesses of the Y-BOCS and applied these to relevant features of the measure. These responses discussed issues such as reliability and validity. Some candidates explained how standardised or quantitative data from the Y-BOCS can allow comparisons between individuals or changes in OCD symptoms over time.
- Comprehensive responses considered potential weaknesses such as social desirability and explained why individuals may be reluctant to give truthful responses when discussing personal obsessions and compulsions.

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- Some responses evaluated the case studies effectively. They included issues such as the limited generalisability of findings from individual case studies and the detailed, longitudinal information that they can provide.
- Some candidates used examples from their response to **Question 4(a)** to support their evaluation. They developed their analysis by considering a strength and a counterargument or a weakness and a counterargument within the same issue.
- Some responses made effective use of other relevant issues and debates, such as idiographic versus nomothetic approaches, by supporting these with appropriate contextual examples.

Limited responses

- Some responses contained superficial evaluation of the OCD study and Y-BOCS, with limited analysis and little application to the material described in response to **Question 4(a)**.
- Some responses identified general strengths and weaknesses that could have been applied to almost any psychological research, without explaining how they related specifically to the OCD study or Y-BOCS.
- Some candidates discussed psychometrics and did not develop their points beyond identifying a strength or a weakness. This limited the analysis.
- Some responses incorrectly stated that the Y-BOCS provides no qualitative data.
- Responses that were structured around the study and then the Y-BOCS were sometimes repetitive, with brief evaluation points for each instead of development of comparisons or strengths and weaknesses around the named issue.
- Some responses used issues and debates that were not appropriate to the material, including nature versus nurture, free will and determinism, and individual versus situational explanations.

Section B – Consumer Psychology

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of utility theory and applied this appropriately to choosing a new mobile phone. These responses recognised that utility theory involves comparing available options and selecting the option that provides the best expected outcome or greatest utility for the customer.
- Appropriate contextual examples included comparing features such as storage, camera quality and price across different phones before selecting the option that best meets the customer's requirements.

Limited responses

- Some responses demonstrated limited understanding of utility theory and did not make clear that the customer would compare different options to select the one with the greatest utility.
- Some responses focused on a phone meeting the customer's needs, without explaining how the customer would identify the best option.
- Some responses described the process of searching for a phone in a way that was more consistent with satisficing.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of satisficing and applied this appropriately to choosing a new mobile phone. These responses recognised that the customer would consider a limited range of available phones and that they would stop searching once they found one that met their minimum requirements or was 'good enough'.
- Some responses identified an important feature, such as screen size or camera quality, whilst accepting that other features might not be the best available.

Limited responses

- Some responses described a customer choosing a phone that met their needs and did not make clear that satisficing involves accepting an option that is 'good enough' instead of searching for the best possible option.
- Some responses suggested that the customer would simply choose the first phone that they saw, without explaining that it needed to meet the customer's minimum requirements.
- Some responses did not clearly apply satisficing to the choice of a new mobile phone.

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Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the term 'reductionism' and applied this to the North et al. (2003) study. These responses defined reductionism as explaining behaviour in terms of its most basic elements and identified the type of music as an element used to explain customers' spending behaviour.
- Appropriate examples included explaining increased spending in terms of the classical music played in the restaurant instead of considering other possible influences on customers' spending.

Limited responses

- Some responses gave an inaccurate or incomplete definition of the term 'reductionism'.
- Some responses described reductionism as simply 'reducing something to one part' or 'ignoring other factors', without explaining how behaviour is reduced to its basic elements.
- Some responses mentioned an appropriate example from the North et al. study and then did not explain how the example demonstrated reductionism.
- Some candidates confused the term 'reductionism' with the term 'determinism'.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of a strength of reductionism. They supported their explanation with an appropriate example from the North et al. (2003) study.
- A common response was that reductionism allows researchers to isolate a variable and investigate its effect on behaviour, making it easier to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.
- Comprehensive responses applied this to North et al. by explaining how the type of music could be isolated to investigate its effect on customers' spending.
- Some responses also identified practical applications. They explained that restaurants could use classical music to increase customers' spending.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a strength of reductionism and then did not provide sufficient further detail or link the strength to the North et al. study.
- Some responses mentioned an example from the study that demonstrated reductionism and then did not explain why this represented a strength.
- Some candidates demonstrated limited understanding of reductionism in their response to **Question 6(a)**, which affected their ability to explain a strength and apply it to the North et al. study.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses gave two appropriate suggestions for improving Jing's retail atmospherics and supported each suggestion with relevant research. The most common suggestions were the use of scents, particularly citrus smells based on Chebat and Michon, and lighting, with some candidates also suggesting reducing crowding based on Machleit.
- Comprehensive responses demonstrated good knowledge of the relevant studies and accurately described the effects found. For example, citrus smell was linked to a better perception of the shopping environment.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often gave only one appropriate suggestion or provided suggestions that were not related to retail atmospherics, such as landscaping, window displays or general store layout.
- Some responses referred to an appropriate study and then gave an incorrect description of its findings. For example, some stated that Chebat and Michon found that citrus smell increased sales or spending, whereas the study investigated perceptions of the shopping environment and product quality.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified a relevant problem and explained it in the context of investigating the effects of retail atmospherics. A common response was the difficulty of isolating the effect of one atmospheric feature because many other factors may influence the customers' shopping experience or spending.
- Comprehensive responses also identified individual differences or extraneous variables and explained how these might influence customers' responses to the atmosphere, such as a customer's personal preference for a particular smell or type of lighting.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often identified a relevant problem and then did not provide sufficient detail or explain why it would create a problem when investigating retail atmospherics.
- Social desirability bias was a common response. Some responses simply identified 'bias', without explaining how it could affect the information collected from customers about their perceptions of the retail atmosphere.

Question 8

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses described the study by Becker et al. (2011) in sufficient detail, including the participants, the two independent variables of package shape and colour saturation, the procedure and measures, and relevant result(s).
- Comprehensive responses accurately described important procedural details, such as the pre-test to identify appropriate yoghurt container shapes, the 20-second video showing the package design rotating, and participants tasting lemon yoghurt before completing the questionnaire.
- Comprehensive responses also accurately described findings, in particular that angular packaging was perceived as more potent or intense and produced more positive product evaluations and higher price expectations than rounded packaging.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often described some aspects of the procedure and/or results, without including other relevant details.
- Some responses included information about the sample that was not relevant or that confused the independent and dependent variables.
- Some responses included inaccurate details about Becker et al. or confused the study with other research from the topic area. A common error was describing the taste of the yoghurt as the independent variable instead of the shape and colour saturation of the packaging.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses addressed the named issue of objective and subjective data in some detail and used specific examples from Becker et al. to explain both perspectives. For example, the numerical responses from the 7-point rating scales could be considered objective because the researchers did not have to interpret each participant's response, whereas the participants' ratings reflected their individual perceptions of the packaging and taste.
- Comprehensive responses also recognised that the use of an independent measures design and the fact that participants were not told the true aim of the study reduced the likelihood of demand characteristics, supporting the objectivity of the data.
- Comprehensive responses applied other issues, including cultural differences, reductionism versus holism, and individual versus situational explanations, directly to Becker et al. For example, the sample of 151 customers from one German supermarket could be considered a strength because of the relatively large sample and age range, and it could be considered a limitation because the findings may not generalise to other cultures.
- Comprehensive responses demonstrated analysis by considering both sides of an issue instead of simply identifying a strength or a weakness. These responses contained details from the study to explain why the issue was relevant to the conclusions that could be drawn.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often identified relevant evaluative issues and provided superficial evaluation, with little application to Becker et al. This prevented otherwise-valid points from developing into effective analysis.

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- Some responses focused heavily on ecological validity, without explaining how the specific procedures or findings of Becker et al. affected ecological validity.
- Some responses included several issues and contained only brief comments on each issue instead of developing one or more issues in sufficient depth. A lack of contextual detail, such as referring to the 151 participants or the German supermarket when discussing generalisability, was a common limitation.

Section C – Health Psychology

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses suggested appropriate ways of reducing pain using gate control theory, such as rubbing the painful area to increase large-fibre activity and close the gate.
- Other appropriate suggestions included attention diversion, imagery and the use of analgesics, with comprehensive responses explaining how these could reduce the experience of pain.
- Comprehensive responses linked the suggestion to gate control theory, such as explaining that rubbing the painful area increases large-fibre activity, which inhibits small pain-fibre activity and reduces pain signals reaching the brain.

Limited responses

- Some responses described gate control theory and then did not apply it to how a doctor could advise a patient to reduce their experience of pain.
- Some responses contained suggestions for reducing pain, without linking them to gate control theory.
- Some responses demonstrated limited understanding of gate control theory, particularly the role of large and small nerve fibres in opening and closing the gate.

Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses defined a clinical interview and explained how it could be used to measure pain.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that a clinical interview involves a conversation between the practitioner and the patient and allows the patient to describe their pain in their own words.
- Comprehensive responses contained a range of appropriate examples, including asking open questions about the type, location, intensity or duration of pain and using follow-up questions to obtain further information.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not define what is meant by a clinical interview and instead described generic methods of measuring pain, such as asking a patient to rate their pain from 1 to 10.
- Some responses identified that the patient could describe their pain and then did not explain how this would be achieved through a clinical interview.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses defined the idiographic approach in terms of understanding the uniqueness of an individual and their subjective experience.
- Comprehensive responses explained how a clinical interview allows the practitioner to obtain an in-depth understanding of the individual patient's experience of pain, such as by asking follow-up questions about the intensity, location, duration and psychological effects of the pain.

Limited responses

- Some responses were able to describe the idiographic approach and then did not make a clear link to how a clinical interview is idiographic when measuring pain.
- Some responses focused on the individual experience of pain and did not explain how the use of an interview allows the practitioner to obtain detailed, individual information.

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Question 11

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses applied the use of a token economy to improve the health and safety of workers in Rabia's grocery store.
- Comprehensive responses explained when tokens could be awarded, such as for following safe working practices (often giving specific examples that are appropriate to a grocery store), and how these could be exchanged for desirable goods or rewards.
- Some responses also recognised that the suggestion needed to focus on health and safety, for example awarding tokens for using equipment safely, for wearing appropriate protective equipment or for following procedures to prevent accidents.
- Many responses made direct reference to the Fox et al. study.

Limited responses

- Some responses gave general suggestions about improving workers' health instead of improving health and safety in the grocery store.
- Some responses identified a token economy and then did not explain how it would be implemented or applied to Rabia's workers.
- Some responses gave anecdotal suggestions, such as providing healthier food, without linking the suggestion to a study investigating health promotion in workplaces.
- Some responses made direct reference to the Fox et al. study, without any suggestions linked to a grocery store.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified a practical problem with the suggestion made in response to **Question 11(a)** and explained its implications for Rabia's grocery store.
- Comprehensive responses recognised that a token economy could be expensive if rewards had to be purchased and that rewards may not be sufficiently desirable to motivate workers.
- Some responses recognised that workers might only demonstrate safe behaviour when Rabia or another manager was present to award tokens, meaning that safe working practices might not become part of their natural behaviour.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a practical problem with a token economy and then did not explain how this would affect Rabia or the health and safety of her workers.
- Some responses mentioned a problem that was not clearly linked to the suggestion made in response to **Question 11(a)**. This resulted in a brief or unclear response.

Question 12

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses provided a detailed and accurate description of a study about improving adherence to medical advice in children. Many candidates used the Chaney et al. study, with responses including relevant details of the sample, procedure and result(s) relating to the Funhaler.
- Comprehensive responses described contracts and prompts, including relevant details about how each technique can be used to improve adherence. Some responses used Yokley and Glenwick to illustrate the use of prompts.

Limited responses

- Limited responses varied in the detail included about the study, with some inaccuracies concerning the sample, location and procedure. Some responses described Chaney et al. as having a separate control group.
- Some responses described research that did not investigate adherence in children and therefore did not address the requirements of the question.
- In limited responses, descriptions of contracts and prompts included a brief example of one or two techniques used to improve adherence, without giving examples of their application to patients.
- Some responses gave a detailed description of how a practitioner could set up a contract with a patient, without explaining why or how contracts would improve adherence in patients.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- The issue stated in the question was reliability. Comprehensive responses addressed reliability in detail and used relevant examples from the study, such as the consistent use of the Funhaler and procedure of the study, or the consistent administration of prompts in Yokley and Glenwick.
- Comprehensive responses also considered how reliability could be affected when contracts and prompts are personalised to individual patients, meaning that the same procedures may not be used for every patient.
- Comprehensive responses mentioned other issues, such as application to everyday life, generalisability, validity, ethics and the use of children in research. Candidates who included relevant details from the studies and/or contracts and prompts developed these issues further.
- Some responses provided effective analysis by explaining how and why the study or techniques in **Question 12(a)** could be seen to support an issue and also considered how they might not. For example, when discussing experiments, responses could analyse Chaney et al. as a field experiment, considering how the use of controls and a standardised procedure could increase reliability, while the natural setting could increase ecological validity. Responses could then consider limitations, such as the potential for other variables to influence adherence.
- In comprehensive responses, similar analysis was applied to other issues too, with responses explaining how and why the evidence from the study or the use of contracts and prompts supported one side of a debate and how it could be seen to support the other side of the debate.

Limited responses

- In limited responses, evaluation was often superficial. Some responses identified strengths and weaknesses, without developing the implications of these points.
- Some candidates included relevant evaluation and then did not provide sufficient context from the studies and/or contracts and prompts to support their points.
- Some responses stated that the study or technique supported an issue, without explaining how or why. For example, some responses stated that Chaney et al. was reliable because the same Funhaler and procedure were used and then did not explain why keeping procedures consistent increases the reliability of the measure of adherence.
- Some candidates confused reliability and validity.
- Some responses identified many issues and then did not develop each issue sufficiently.

Section D – Organisational Psychology

Question 13

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses suggested two appropriate ways that Hari could help his workers to meet their ‘love and belonging (social)’ needs at work. Suggestions such as team-building activities, social gatherings, parties and team dinners were common. Other appropriate suggestions included working together on team projects and providing opportunities for peer support.
- Comprehensive responses explained how these activities could promote interaction and a sense of belonging among members of the sales team.

Limited responses

- Some responses described Maslow’s hierarchy in general instead of suggesting ways that Hari could help his workers to meet their ‘love and belonging (social)’ needs.
- Some suggestions were not relevant to the ‘love and belonging’ level or could not be applied appropriately to the workplace, such as spending time with family.
- Some candidates provided an appropriate way and then did not provide sufficient detail to explain how it would meet the workers’ need for ‘love and belonging’.

Question 14

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses defined the term ‘groupthink’ and made a clear link to faulty decision making.

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- Some responses used features of groupthink, such as an illusion of invulnerability, self-censorship or an illusion of unanimity, to explain how groupthink can result in faulty decision making.

Limited responses

- Some responses just repeated the wording of the question, describing groupthink as a faulty decision-making process, without explaining what groupthink means.
- Some responses confused groupthink with social conformity.
- Some responses simply described groupthink as a desire for harmony, without explaining how this can lead to faulty decision making.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses outlined the situational explanation and explained how groupthink can be understood as a situational explanation of faulty decision making.
- Comprehensive responses explained that groupthink results from factors within the group or the environment, such as pressure to conform, self-censorship or a lack of challenge to the views expressed by other group members.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not outline what is meant by a situational explanation before applying it to groupthink.
- Some responses simply used the word 'situation', without explaining how environmental or group factors can influence faulty decision making.
- Some responses used diffusion of responsibility to explain why groupthink is situational, which did not directly address the question.

Question 15

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates suggested two stages from Tuckman's stages of group development and linked these to the advertising campaign. Storming and norming were the stages most frequently described.
- Some comprehensive responses outlined the stage and then explained how the marketing team would work together during that stage, such as how members might disagree about ideas for the advertising campaign (during storming) or how members might develop ideas into action points such as developing visual media, writing advertisements, creating a poster/billboard (during norming).

Limited responses

- Some responses identified stages and then did not describe them accurately or did not apply them to the marketing team and/or advertising campaign.
- Some responses used other models, such as Belbin's team roles, instead of stages of group development.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified relevant weaknesses of the stages of group development and provided further detail in context. A common response was that the model is deterministic because it suggests that groups progress through the stages in a particular order, although groups may not go through all five stages or may move back to an earlier stage.
- Some comprehensive responses explained that the model may not apply equally to different types of groups or tasks. For example, a marketing team working on a short advertising campaign may not experience all of the stages.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a generic weakness and did not explain why it was a weakness of the stages of group development.
- Some responses gave weaknesses that were not relevant to the model, such as reductionism or social loafing, without explaining how these related to stages of group development.

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Question 16

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses described the different reasons for workplace sabotage and the types or methods of sabotage. Knowledge of the Giacalone and Rosenfeld study was also included in some responses.
- Comprehensive responses that described Blau and Boal's absenteeism and organisational commitment model included the different levels of job involvement and organisational commitment and explained how these relate to absenteeism and turnover.
- Comprehensive responses included relevant detail from the model and/or study and used appropriate psychological terminology to describe workplace sabotage and Blau and Boal's model.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided general or vague descriptions of workplace sabotage and did not clearly distinguish between the methods and reasons for sabotage.
- In limited responses, absenteeism and organisational commitment were sometimes omitted or only described briefly.
- Some responses included aspects of Blau and Boal's model and did not provide sufficient detail to show how job involvement and organisational commitment relate to absenteeism and turnover.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- The issue stated in the question was reductionism versus holism. Comprehensive responses addressed this issue in detail and used context from workplace sabotage and Blau and Boal's model to explain both sides of the debate.
- Some candidates carried out effective analysis by explaining how and why workplace sabotage could be considered holistic because different types of sabotage and a range of reasons for sabotage are considered. In contrast, Blau and Boal's model could be considered more reductionist because absenteeism and turnover are explained in terms of two main factors: job involvement and organisational commitment.
- Comprehensive responses also considered the alternative explanation. For example, workplace sabotage could be considered reductionist if other factors, such as individual personality characteristics, are not considered. This shows how the same research area can be considered from both sides of the debate.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of other issues, such as individual versus situational explanations, idiographic versus nomothetic, and generalisations from findings. They explained how and why the concepts or study supported each side of the issue. For example, workplace sabotage can be considered situational because an employee may feel the desire to sabotage following events or experiences at work. In contrast, it can also be considered using an individual explanation because employees may respond differently to the same situation, with some choosing sabotage and others not doing so.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of generalisations from findings by considering the Giacalone and Rosenfeld study of 38 unionised factory workers. Comprehensive responses argued that the findings may have limited generalisability because the participants were all factory workers, meaning that the reasons and methods of sabotage identified may not apply in the same way to employees in other types of workplaces such as offices. In contrast, the findings may still be generalisable to factory workers more broadly because the study examined workers in a real workplace setting and the types of sabotage identified, such as production slowdowns and destruction, remain relevant to factory environments. The findings may also have continued relevance today, although changes in the location and nature of manufacturing, including much manufacturing moving outside the USA/the 'West', may limit how far the findings can be generalised to present-day workers.
- Comprehensive responses made effective use of application to everyday life by explaining how understanding the reasons for sabotage could help organisations to reduce it, for example by providing employees with opportunities to raise grievances.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified relevant evaluative issues and then did not develop the points using context from workplace sabotage or Blau and Boal's model.
- Some responses stated that a concept or model was reductionist or holistic, without explaining how or why it could be considered this way. For example, simply stating that Blau and Boal's

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model is reductionist because it focuses on job involvement and organisational commitment did not provide sufficient analysis unless the response explained that these two factors are used to explain more complex behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover.

- Some responses stated that workplace sabotage was holistic because there were different reasons or types of sabotage and did not explain why considering these different factors makes the explanation more holistic.
- Some responses identified several issues and provided little development or analysis of each point. Responses needed to focus on explaining how and why the evidence from **Question 16(a)** supported the relevant side of the issue.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/41
Specialist Options: Application and Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- In **Section A**, many candidates provided an appropriate number of features as required by the question.
- In **Section A**, comprehensive responses included an appropriate level of detail in response to questions that required candidates to identify, outline or describe. For example, responses to questions that were worth four marks included more detail than responses to questions that were worth two marks.
- When giving strengths and/or weaknesses, comprehensive responses in **Section A** demonstrated application of knowledge by including examples and/or links to the study mentioned in the question.
- In **Section B**, most candidates provided a response that was focused precisely on the question that had been asked.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** used the method stated in the question and applied four or five specific features of that method.
- In **Section B**, many candidates applied ethical guidelines to their plans when answering **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** described appropriate psychological knowledge rather than methodological knowledge.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)** explained how two features of the psychological knowledge were explicitly used in the plan.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)** explicitly linked an example from the plan to the reason and the strength/weakness.

What candidates needed to improve

- In **Section A**, candidates needed to relate their answers to the study in question or include an example from the study/topic area. The questions frequently ended with the phrase 'in this study', so the responses needed to relate to that specific topic area/study.
- In **Section A**, some candidates did not explain the terms that they chose to use. For example, some candidates wrote vague sentences such as 'it is not reliable or valid', without explaining what 'reliable' or 'valid' meant.
- Misreading the rubric in **Section B** led to errors such as answering two questions instead of one.
- In **Section B**, limited responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** did not use the method stated in the question and/or did not include sufficient specific features of the method stated in the question.
- In **Section B**, there was frequent misunderstanding of the phrase 'structured interview'. A structured interview can consist of either closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. 'Structured' means that the same questions are asked to all participants in the same order. An unstructured interview can also consist of closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. A semi-structured interview does not automatically results in quantitative and qualitative data.
- In **Section B**, many candidates chose to use both closed and open questions and often confused the two when writing actual questions to ask participants.
- In **Section B**, some candidates introduced additional questionnaires that were irrelevant to the question.
- In **Section B**, after finishing their plan in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**, candidates needed to consider whether the data that they had gathered could be analysed in order to answer the question, such as whether 'x' was effective or not.
- Candidates should not have included an aim, results or conclusions in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.

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- Candidates should not have included any evaluation such as considerations of reliability, validity or generalisability.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their responses included a consideration of ethical guidelines.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)**, candidates needed to describe some relevant psychological (not methodological) knowledge that their plan was based on.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)**, candidates needed to explain how the psychological knowledge mentioned in response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** was used in the plan that they had written in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In response to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)**, candidates needed to apply what they had written in their plan to the reason for its choice.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates described the procedure correctly and included aspects such as providing a blood sample (to test for 5-HTR2C and 5-HTT alleles), interviews (about first-degree relatives) and data being checked by a second psychiatrist.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided a summary of the whole study, including the findings rather than focusing on the procedure.
- Some candidates confused this study with a different one, leading them to describe drugs being given to treat depression, which was not part of the procedure.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses suggested that the findings of the original study could be compared with the findings of a different study that looked at the same thing. Some candidates were more specific, identifying concurrent validity and explaining how this was applied to this study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused reliability and validity, writing about test-retest reliability.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates wrote about biological measures being objective because of the source of the data (such as DNA). Others wrote about the data being objective because there is no subjective human involvement.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not address the word ‘measures’ in the question and instead wrote about theoretical aspects such as determinism and reductionism.
- Candidates often made a relevant point and then did not support it with a relevant biological example. Some responses contained no example. Candidates could have used the examples that they had provided in their response to **Question 1(a)**.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates outlined the cognitive explanation, stating that there is faulty processing in thoughts due to cognitive deficits.
- Some candidates went on to explain one or more of these deficits, such as attention deficits or meta-representation failures (an inability to distinguish between internal thoughts and external stimuli).

Limited responses

- Candidates often wrote the phrase ‘faulty processing’, without including any further detail.

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- Some candidates gave a biological (rather than a cognitive) explanation of schizophrenia, which did not address the question.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified an appropriate method (such as observation, interview, questionnaire) and identified a feature/the technique/format.
- Many candidates related how the method that they had identified could be used to investigate the cognitive explanation of schizophrenia.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified a method, such as 'interview', without including any elaboration such as the format or technique.
- Some candidates suggested using cognitive behaviour therapy to investigate the cognitive explanation. This was inappropriate because therapy is a treatment and cannot be used to investigate.
- Some responses suggested using 'brain scans', which would not be appropriate to investigate what people with schizophrenia are thinking about.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included two weaknesses of their suggested method and related these weaknesses to examples of the cognitive explanation.

Limited responses

- The candidates who had suggested therapy in their response to **Question 2(b)** could not evaluate the weaknesses because cognitive behaviour therapy is not a method.
- Some candidates provided only one weakness. Other candidates did not relate the weaknesses to the specific question asked.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified two ways in which the procedure was standardised, such as always using a telephone interview, always using the same researcher (same voice/tone), always using the pre-prepared script and always using the same question to assess purchase intentions.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the term 'standardisation' and instead wrote about controls, experimental designs and other things.
- Some candidates thought that participants were shown images of products, which would not have been possible given that the method was a telephone interview.
- Many candidates outlined how participants completed the self-monitoring scale. This was not relevant because it was not part of study three.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested a personality variable, most typically an extrovert, but other acceptable options such as 'optimistic' were offered by some candidates. Many responses also related the personality variable to advertising strategies.

Limited responses

- Some candidates thought that age, gender or culture was a personality variable.
- Some answers included an appropriate personality variable, without relating it to advertising strategies.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates wrote about standardisation allowing the study to be replicated with different participants. Others wrote about the procedure being consistent/reliable.
- Many candidates provided appropriate examples. These were often the examples from their answer to **Question 3(a)**.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about a strength and a weakness of controls rather than standardisation.
- Some candidates did not give an example from the procedure of the study to support their answer.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified one way in which people defend their space in a queue, such as a physical, verbal or non-verbal response.
- Some responses contained an example such as 'Excuse me, you have to go to the back of the line'.

Limited responses

- A few candidates identified a way in which people defend their space in a queue, often stating 'physically' or 'verbally', without clarification of what these words meant or involved.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive suggestions identified an appropriate type of response and gave an example of what that response involved, such as 'an intruder might apologise and go to the back of the line'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a partial response, such as 'arguing with the person' or 'they may ignore the person'.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included a strength and a weakness of a face-to-face interview and explained how this could provide information about how people defend their personal space in a queue.

Limited responses

- Many candidates wrongly believed that conducting a face-to-face interview automatically allowed them to collect in-depth qualitative information. A face-to-face interview collects quantitative and/or qualitative data depending on the type of question asked, not the interview technique.
- Some candidates gave a generic strength and weakness, without relating it to defending space in a queue.

Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates identified two reasons for exclusion and many provided an explanation. For example, they identified that participants were excluded because of existing illnesses, such as having schizophrenia or manic depression. Others wrote about legal reasons, being under 16 or over 75, or having a life-threatening illness.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified two reasons, such as having a life-threatening condition or an existing illness. They could not provide any detail beyond identifying the reason.
- Some candidates commented on why some participants withdrew from the study. The question focused on why the researchers excluded participants rather than why participants withdrew.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates focused more on the second questionnaire testing the reliability of answers (test-retest reliability). Other candidates focused more on what was being asked, namely satisfaction levels.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not realise that the second questionnaire was testing reliability.

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- Some candidates believed that the second questionnaire was asking about the preference for sharing or directing style when participants were tested on only one of these styles.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included two strengths of excluding participants, commenting that this prevented them from experiencing harm (an ethical issue), using life-threatening illnesses as a supporting example. Some candidates wrote about extraneous participant variables biasing the results. Other candidates wrote that excluding certain participants increased the validity of what was being measured.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that excluding participants would prevent ethical issues, without giving an example of what these ethical issues were or giving an example to support their statement.
- Some candidates suggested that excluding participants 'increases validity', without providing further explanation or an example.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified 'skill acquisition' as the second phase and then provided an outline of an aspect of this phase, such as it including breathing exercises and relaxation techniques.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not identify the second phase.
- Some candidates suggested that this phase was where the patient consults the doctor to receive treatment.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates suggested a closed question that included an appropriately worded question and included answer options such as 'yes/no' or a rating scale.

Limited responses

- Some closed questions did not have answer options.
- Some candidates suggested questions that asked about stress inoculation reducing existing stress levels. Stress inoculation is taught to people who have no stress, who use it to inoculate against future stress.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates understood that stress inoculation training is given to people who are not stressed. They could therefore provide an appropriate strength and weakness. An appropriate strength was that participants are prepared and know what to do if they later experience a stressful event.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made generic statements that were inappropriate, such as considering stress inoculation training to be a treatment for people who are stressed rather than an inoculation for people who are not. Some candidates suggested that a weakness was that the treatment is unethical; this is not the case.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates explained one of the three measures in detail and others described two of the measures in less detail. Comprehensive responses considered how the 14 adjectives (seven positive and seven negative) were used, with some responses including the actual adjectives such as 'intelligent' and 'bossy'. Others described the closed questions, measured using the 7-point Likert-type scale.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates could not provide any detail about how leadership capacity was measured.
- Some candidates described the general procedure or described the information passages about the leadership styles given to the participants rather than how leadership capacity was measured.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested an appropriately detailed method and explained how this could be used to measure some specific aspect of leadership capacity such as productivity levels or their role as a supervisor.

Limited responses

- Many different methods were suggested, but these were often too vague such as 'an observation', 'an interview' or 'a questionnaire'. The format or technique of an interview or questionnaire needed to be given.
- Some of the suggested methods did not contain sufficient detail of what was being measured. Some candidates just stated the phrase 'leadership capacity', which was too vague and was a repetition of the words used in the question.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their closed questions were indeed closed (including the use of answer options) and that their open questions were indeed open (including words such as describe, explain and why).

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates gave two strengths of quantitative data and related these to leadership capacity. For example, they stated that quantitative data could be gathered in the form of a psychometric test used on different occasions for the same leader to see if the leader is consistent in their decision-making.

Limited responses

- Many candidates gave two generic strengths of using quantitative data. These could apply to any question or topic rather than being specifically related to the supervisor's leadership capacity.
- Some candidates confused quantitative data with qualitative data.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified a type of rapid rotation such as the 'metropolitan' or 'continental' rota and often included a detailed description of how the rotation worked in an organisation.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave an example of one type of rotation, without being able to identify its name. Some candidates confused rapid rotation shift work with other types of working-week techniques such as on-call or flexitime.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested techniques such as on-call, flexitime, piece/work rate and 'traditional' (9–5) and gave explanations of how they worked.

Limited responses

- Some response were vague, such as '9–5 working'.
- Some answers confused the technique and example, such as writing about flexitime and giving an example about piecework.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates provided one strength and one weakness. Strengths included enabling a company to be productive 24 hours a day and allowing the worker to work/not work at different time periods within 24 hours. Appropriate weaknesses included disruptive circadian rhythms causing health problems such as poor sleep patterns and cardiovascular illnesses.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates could not provide any strengths or weaknesses. Other candidates gave a strength and weakness of a work technique that was not rapid rotation.
- Some candidates wrote about job rotation, which was irrelevant.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses applied the experimental method and gave four or five features such as IV, DV, controls, experimental design and the type of experiment.
- Comprehensive responses explicitly addressed the question of gender differences (the IV) in the words used to describe the avatars (the DV).

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not answer the question clearly. The question was about gender differences (the IV) in the words used (the DV) to describe the mental states of avatars.
- Some responses focused on questionnaires given to participants about their mental state both before and after the study rather than on the specific focus of the question.
- Some candidates attempted to replicate the Freeman et al. study without adapting their plan to answer the specific question asked.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines; some plans were unethical.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses described the details of the study by Freeman et al. that were relevant to their plan. These included use of the VR environment, avatars in a library, participants being interviewed after the VR experience, and the comments participants made about the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on the Brief Symptoms Inventory (BSI), which was of limited relevance to the question.
- Some candidates wrote about methodological aspects, which were of limited relevance because the question asked for psychological knowledge rather than methodological knowledge.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated clearly how they used the knowledge described in **Question 9(b)(i)**, such as the use of a VR environment, the use of a library as a setting and the behaviour of the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, such as 'Freeman et al. used 24 participants and so did I'. This was not psychological knowledge.
- Many candidates included detail in their plan simply because it was done by Freeman et al. despite it being irrelevant to the question. The focus needed to be on what could be used and/or what could be modified and not a straight replication.
- Some answers included things not mentioned in response to **Question 9(b)(i)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for their choice of type of data, either quantitative or qualitative.
- Candidates explained that their data was quantitative when counting the number of words used by male or female participants and others explained that their data was qualitative because they were looking at the actual words used by male and female participants.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that they used both types of data because they mistakenly thought that this is a better strategy.

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- Some candidates introduced new variables that were not relevant to the question just so that they could include both types of data. Candidates needed to use a type of data that was appropriate to the question.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates suggested that a weakness of quantitative data is that it ignores knowing the reasons for behaviour (such as the reason why participants chose a particular word to describe the avatar).
- Other candidates suggested that a weakness of qualitative data was that the application of statistical analysis was not possible.

Limited responses

- The candidates using both types of data often gave a weakness of both and therefore wrote an answer that was longer than it needed to be.
- Candidates often gave a weakness without supporting it with an example of the data that they had gathered in their plan.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had a DV, which was to measure the outcome of a study, and in this instance the DV could have been the difference in words chosen by male and female participants to describe the mental state of the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not give a reason why they had a dependent variable.
- Some candidates gave a vague answer such as 'the number of words'.
- Candidates needed to give a reason for the DV and state what their DV was specifically.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses used a naturalistic observation rather than another method.
- Some candidates addressed the question of personal space distances (such as the difference between participants measured in metres/centimetres).
- Some responses focused on age differences rather than on a range of variables such as gender.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not used the named method of naturalistic observation and instead introduced a stooge to invade the personal space of people in the queue.
- Some candidates did not address personal space distance and looked at discomfort or other behaviours instead.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines. Invading space for a study could be considered unethical.

(b)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses referred to the work of Hall (1966), who outlined four personal space zones, with each having a different space distance range. Others referred to the work of Robson (2011), who used table space distances of 6″, 12″ and 24″. The work of Milgram (1986) was also mentioned on occasion.

Limited responses

- Some answers were entirely anecdotal, with no evidence of psychological knowledge. Candidates needed to describe relevant psychological knowledge.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses applied the knowledge that was outlined in **Question 10(b)(i)**, such as marking distances of 6″, 12″ and 24″ on the floor to judge the space distances. Others used Hall's space zones, such as personal and social.
- Many candidates applied their psychological knowledge to inform the design of their plan.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates did not explain how what they had written in response to **Question 10(b)(i)** informed their plan. They needed to write clearly how their plans in **Question 10(a)** were informed by the psychological knowledge in **Question 10(b)(i)**, with supporting examples.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that using behavioural categories standardised their observation and gave examples from their **Question 10(a)** plan of what was included in their categories.
- Categories used were often age differences and personal space distances, which answered the question specifically.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that they used categories, without making any link to their study or the categories that they had used in their **Question 10(a)** plan.
- Some candidates included categories of behavioural responses to their space being invaded, such as frowns. This did not answer the question.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates focused on ambiguities of age differences such as whether to have 20–30 years or whether to have 20–25 and 25–30, etc. Other candidates mentioned similar ambiguities in deciding what space distances to include, such as categories at 10 centimetre spacing or simply 1 metre or 0.5 metres. Both these answers were clearly related to the question and plan of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave weaknesses of inappropriate categories, such as different facial expressions. Other candidates gave behavioural responses to space invasion, neither of which answered the question on space distances and age.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates often stated how they analysed their data, even if it was a simple statement such as ‘added up the number of people aged 20–25 keeping a distance of 0.5 metres’. Other candidates decided to present the data as a histogram or bar chart.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not provide any analysis, sometimes stating ‘I analysed the data and the results were…’, without stating what the analysis was.

Question 11

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses included closed questions and gathered only quantitative data.
- Some answers used doctors/nurses with experience of Munchausen syndrome as participants.
- Many answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not use the named method or decided to conduct an additional questionnaire to gather qualitative data that was not relevant to the question.
- Some candidates assumed that participants with Munchausen syndrome were in a mental institution.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many answers outlined the characteristics of Munchausen syndrome, such as peregrination, multiple hospital visits, feigned illness and manipulating test results, amongst others, which they then used as a basis for the closed questions in their plan.
- Many answers also referred to the case study by Aleem and Ajarim (1995), who reported a case study of Munchausen syndrome.

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Limited responses

- Some answers identified one or two features, without expanding on what they were.
- Some candidates chose to exclude relevant psychological evidence from their answers, such as the case study by Aleem and Ajarim (1995).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained how two features that they had outlined in their response to **Question 11(b)(i)** had informed the questions that they asked in their **Question 11(a)** plan.

Limited responses

- Some answers described relevant features of Munchausen syndrome in response to **Question(b)(i)** and then did not refer to them in response to **Question 11(b)(ii)** or in the **Question 11(a)** plan.

(c)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had chosen their participants. Sometimes these were people who had been diagnosed with Munchausen syndrome, or their participants were the doctors and nurses who had encountered people with Munchausen syndrome in their working life.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about their choice of sampling technique. Candidates needed to be mindful of the difference between 'sampling technique' (opportunity/volunteer/random) and 'sample of participants' (number of, sex/gender, age, etc.).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates mentioned that a weakness of their sample was that participants may tell lies. This was appropriate because a feature of Munchausen syndrome is pathological lying.
- Some candidates who used doctors and nurses as participants explained that they may have limited experience with Munchausen patients because they are quite rare.

Limited responses

- Candidates who focused on sampling techniques could not answer this question on sample of participants.
- Some candidates suggested that a limitation was that all participants were from the same area. This was not relevant because Munchausen syndrome is multicultural.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that using closed questions providing quantitative data allowed them to apply descriptive statistics such as the mean, median or mode. For example, the median allowed them to see specifically which feature of Munchausen syndrome was the most common.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not refer to any descriptive statistic in their answer or explain a way in which they analysed their data.
- Candidates needed to gather data and explain how that data was organised.

Question 12

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses used a structured interview that included some fixed, common-to-all questions.
- Some candidates explicitly addressed the question about accidents due to human error.
- Some answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not use the named method, instead deciding to design an experiment.
- Some candidates thought that a structured interview automatically gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

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- Limited responses did not address the question specifically and included a vague statement such as 'errors at work'.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses referred to human errors such as omission, commission, sequencing and timing errors. Many responses included detailed descriptions and examples of one or more of these different types.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on 'the monitoring of accidents and risk events' (the 'Swat study'), which did not look at human error. These responses were therefore of limited relevance.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that they had used the different types of human error (outlined in their response to **Question 12(b)(i)**) to help construct the questions that they asked participants in their interviews.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, which is not psychological knowledge.
- Some answers focused on describing different industries used in the study by Swat.
- Some candidates did not include any types of error in response to **Question 12(b)(i)**, so they could not link these to questions asked in **Question 12(a)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for their choice of sampling technique, most commonly an opportunity sample because participants were readily available.
- Many candidates linked their sampling technique to their plan, such as workers in a shoe factory being available as they are at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a reason for their sampling technique, without relating it to their study.
- Some candidates stated that they chose an opportunity sample 'because it is quick and easy', with no elaboration.
- Some candidates wrongly believed that a volunteer sampling automatically makes a study ethical.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave a strength of using a structured interview (the same questions in the same order to all participants) and related this to the questions that they had asked to employees about accidents at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were unaware of what a structured interview involved.
- Some candidates could give a strength of using a structured interview, often not considering how it could apply to errors and accidents at work.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated that they had used a face-to-face interview for a specific reason. Other candidates gave a reason for why they had used a telephone interview. For example, if a telephone interview was used then the employee could answer without anyone else at the factory overhearing what was said or even knowing that they had been interviewed.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about interview format (structured, etc.) rather than interview technique (face-to-face or telephone).
- Some candidates could give a reason for their interview technique, often not considering how it could apply to interviewing participants about errors and accidents at work.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/42

Specialist Options: Application and Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- In **Section A**, many candidates provided an appropriate number of features as required by the question.
- In **Section A**, comprehensive responses included an appropriate level of detail in response to questions that requires candidates to identify, outline or describe. For example, responses to questions that were worth four marks included more detail than responses to questions that we worth two marks.
- When giving strengths and/or weaknesses, comprehensive responses in **Section A** demonstrated applications of knowledge by including examples and/or links to the study mentioned in the question.
- In **Section B**, most candidates provided a response that was focused precisely on the question that had been asked.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** used the method stated in the question and applied four or five specific features of that method.
- In **Section B**, many candidates applied ethical guidelines to their plans when answering **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** described appropriate psychological knowledge rather than methodological knowledge.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)** explained how two features of the psychological knowledge were explicitly used in the plan.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)** explicitly linked an example from the plan to the reason and the strength/weakness.

What candidates needed to improve

- In **Section A**, candidates needed to relate their answers to the study mentioned in question or include an example from the study/topic area. The questions frequently ended with the phrase 'in this study', so the responses needed to relate to that specific topic area/study.
- In **Section A**, some candidates did not explain the terms that they chose to use. For example, some candidates wrote vague sentences such as 'it is not reliable or valid', without explaining what 'reliable' or 'valid' meant.
- Misreading the rubric in **Section B** led to errors such as answering two questions instead of one.
- In **Section B**, limited responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** did not use the method stated in the question and/or did not include sufficient specific features of the method stated in the question.
- In **Section B**, there was frequent misunderstanding of interview format. A structured interview can consist of either closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. 'Structured' means that the same questions are asked to all participants in the same order. An unstructured interview can also consist of closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. A semi-structured interview does not automatically results in quantitative and qualitative data.
- In **Section B**, many candidates chose to use both closed and open questions and often confused the two when writing actual questions to ask participants.
- In **Section B**, some candidates introduced additional questionnaires that were irrelevant to the question.
- In **Section B**, after finishing their plan in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**, candidates needed to consider whether the data that they had gathered could be analysed in order to answer the question, such as whether 'x' was effective or not.

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- Candidates should not have included an aim, results or conclusions in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- Candidates should not have included any evaluation such as considerations of reliability, validity or generalisability.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their responses included a consideration of ethical guidelines.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)**, candidates needed to describe some relevant psychological (not methodological) knowledge that their plan was based on.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)**, candidates needed to explain how the psychological knowledge mentioned in response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** was used in the plan that they had written in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In response to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)**, candidates needed to apply what they had written in their plan to the reason for its choice.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates described the procedure accurately and included aspects such as a one-hour face-to-face session at the start and end, eight 30-minute telephone sessions, weekly homework and follow-up at one, three and six months.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided a summary of the whole study, including details for both types of therapy.
- Some candidates only provided one or two features of the procedure.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses suggested that non-verbal interaction is important for the therapist and gave an example.
- Some candidates suggested that the telephone line/internet connection may be inconsistent, resulting in the consultation being interrupted.

Limited responses

- Some candidates mentioned that non-verbal responses were absent. They could not relate this to how this might affect the satisfaction for the therapist.
- Some responses focused on why the patient might not find the therapy satisfactory rather than why the therapist might not find it satisfactory.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates explained two strengths, such as it being possible to conduct the interview in the homes of the therapist and patient and that people with particular types of OCD could avoid any contamination that they may meet when in a consultation room.

Limited responses

- Some answers were vague, stating that ‘it is quick and easy’, with no explanation.
- Some candidates gave a weakness. This was not required by the question.
- Candidates often suggested that telephone therapy was better because patients do not have to wait in a queue, which was incorrect because patients still need to wait in a queue for telephone therapy.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified one type of delusion such as persecutory or grandiose and gave an outline of what that delusion entailed.

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Limited responses
- Some candidates named a type and then did not outline it.
- Some candidates provided an outline and then did not name the type.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Most responses identified a suitable way (this did not have to be a method). They then linked the use of that way to delusions. For example, they suggested the use of a psychometric test such as the Psychotic Symptom Rating Scale (PSYRATS).

Limited responses
- Some candidates identified a method, such as 'questionnaire', without including any elaboration of the format or technique.
- Some candidates suggested using a closed question, which was appropriate, and then did not give an example of what that closed question would be. They therefore did not relate their answer to delusions.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates included two weaknesses of using open questions and related these weaknesses to examples that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of delusions.

Limited responses
- Some candidates provided only one weakness.
- Some candidates provided weaknesses that were unrelated to delusions.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates identified four features of the music used in this study, such as the volume, the duration and always being played from 7pm. Some candidates identified the individual pieces of music such as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

Limited responses
- Some candidates could not identify any relevant features.
- Some candidates identified one or two features.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates suggested a suitable dependent variable to measure the ambience of the restaurant, such as staying there for longer, giving positive reviews on social media or giving generous tips to staff.

Limited responses
- Some candidates referred to spending, which was the original DV. They made no reference to the ambience of the restaurant.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Some candidates explained that extraneous variables may be more difficult to control in a field experiment.
- Some candidates gave relevant examples of variables that could not be controlled, such as the weather or the mood of a participant, which might affect the dependent variable.

Limited responses
- Many candidates stated that variables in a field experiment cannot be controlled. In this specific study, nearly every variable was controlled.
- Some candidates gave examples of variables that were controlled in the study.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Most candidates explained the term 'post-purchase cognitive dissonance', which is the regret, anxiety and/or discomfort that is sometimes experienced after a purchase has been made.

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- Many candidates provided a relevant example to illustrate their explanation.

Limited responses
- A few candidates gave a definition of 'cognitive dissonance' rather than of 'post-purchase cognitive dissonance'.
- A few candidates did not provide an example.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Suitable suggestions focused on what the seller of a product could do to ease dissonance. Appropriate examples included offering a warranty or exchange, offering a 'money back guarantee' or focusing on the appearance and quality of the product using 'social proof'.

Limited responses
- Some answers did not identify any way in which post-purchase cognitive dissonance could be reduced. Other answers suggested how 'non-purchase' dissonance could be reduced.
- Some answers did not focus on what the seller of the product could do to reduce dissonance.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates included a strength and a weakness of using closed questions and explained how this related to investigating post-purchase cognitive dissonance.

Limited responses
- Some candidates gave a strength and a weakness that were not related to post-purchase cognitive dissonance.
- Some candidates provided closed questions that did not have answer options.
- When providing closed questions, candidates needed to ensure that the questions really were closed (including answer options).

Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates identified that independent measures included the experimental group (the positive mental health programme) and the wait-list control group.
- Many candidates explained that repeated measures applied when the psychometric tests (BSI, RSE, LOT-R, etc.) were given to the same participants on different occasions.

Limited responses
- Some candidates confused independent and repeated measures designs.
- Some candidates identified the basics of each design, such as measures being repeated by participants, without being able to elaborate on what those measures included.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Most candidates suggested that a longitudinal design allowed researchers to examine the long-term effects of the intervention.
- Some candidates demonstrated their understanding of the study by stating that the effects of the positive programme included increases in self-esteem, self-efficacy and optimism and a reduction in distress, anxiety and depression.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not develop their answer beyond the suggestion that longitudinal is over time. They did not consider what would be measured over time.
- Candidates needed to apply their knowledge of the study and state more than just the phrase 'positive psychology'. For example, they needed to consider how the measures of the BSI, RSE, etc. might have improved.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates suggested that generalisations could be made because there are 11- to 14-year-old children all over the world and because a positive psychology programme can be taught anywhere in the world.
- Many candidates suggested that generalisations could not be made because the children were from just two schools (both located in Israel).

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Limited responses

- Some candidates believed that generalisations could be made from large numbers of participants. Increasing a sample size or having a large sample does not increase generalisability.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates outlined what is meant by acute pain, the essential feature being that it lasts for less than six months (because chronic pain is defined as lasting more than six months).
- Many candidates were able to give an example of an acute pain, such as a headache, a broken bone or a cut.

Limited responses

- Some responses were vague, stating that 'the pain doesn't last long'.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses explained how a 'peripheral' biochemical treatment worked, such as NSAIDs, or explained how a local anaesthetic worked, such as an injection for extracting a tooth.
- Candidates often provided an example to show they understood what the different types of biochemical treatments were used for, such as for a headache or tooth extraction.

Limited responses

- Some suggestions were not biochemical. Instead, some candidates proposed psychological treatments such as attention diversion.
- Some candidates provided a suitable suggestion and then did not mention how it was related to acute pain.
- Some candidates wrote simply 'take a pill'.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included two weaknesses. They often made points about potential side effects (and included examples), the fact that some treatments are addictive or the fact that some treatments act short-term and therefore require repeated doses.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided only one weakness or wrote generic statements such as 'they can be bad for you', without elaboration or example.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified four features of the sample of participants in the Landry et al. study. For example, they stated that there were 123 participants, 60% of the participants were female, all the participants spoke French and that the participants had a mean age of 23 years.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not identify four features.
- Some candidates gave an age range. This information was not stated in the original study.
- Some candidates outlined the sampling technique, which is different from the sample of participants.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested a location relevant to an organisation, which could be an office, a factory floor, or a store, shop or supermarket.
- Some candidates explained that conducting a study in a real-life location would make questions about motivational rewards more realistic for participants.

Limited responses

- Some answers suggested that conducting the study in a classroom rather than at a university would improve application to everyday life when this is the organisation's option.

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- Some candidates gave an appropriate location, such as an office or factory floor, and then did not mention how this might affect responses to motivational rewards.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates gave two weaknesses of the sample, such as it being too small, gender imbalanced and/or restricted to location.
- Many candidates gave examples to support their weakness, such as the sample size being 123, 40% of the sample being males, and the location being a university in Canada, which showed knowledge of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided weaknesses without examples, which showed no knowledge of this study.
- Some candidates wrote about weaknesses of sampling techniques instead of weaknesses with the sample of participants used in the study.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified two types of bullying behaviour at work. Types mentioned included personal attacks, verbal threats, social isolation and making work tasks difficult to perform.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the causes of bullying or the phases of bullying instead of the types of bullying.
- Many answers were vague, stating only ‘verbal and physical bullying’.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified an appropriate method (such as observation, telephone interview, questionnaire) and identified a feature/the technique/format.
- Some candidates related how the method that they had identified could be used to investigate bullying behaviour at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified a method, such as ‘questionnaire’, without including any elaboration such as the format or technique.
- Some candidates outlined an appropriate method and then did not relate that method to how it could be used to investigate bullying behaviour at work.
- Some candidates wrote about bullying behaviour in other contexts instead of at work.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates mentioned a suitable strength and a suitable weakness of a face-to-face interview and explained how this could be used to investigate bullying at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided a generic strength or weaknesses that were not related to bullying at work.
- Many candidates believed that conducting a face-to-face interview automatically allowed them to collect in-depth qualitative information. A face-to-face interview collects quantitative and/or qualitative data depending on the type of question asked, not the interview technique.

Section B

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses planned a suitable experiment and included four or five features of it.
- Many answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

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Limited responses

- Some responses did not used the method stated in the question.
- Some answers included a limited range of features, such as absence of IV and DV.
- Some responses did not gather data that would assess the long-term effectiveness of ERP.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many answers outlined the treatment process of ERP.
- Many answers also referred to the case study by Lehmkuhl et al. (2008) of Jason, who experienced contamination fears.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were unclear about what ERP involves and what it is used to treat.
- Some candidates did not include the relevant case study by Lehmkuhl et al. (2008), which would have helped to inform their plan.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated clearly how they used the ERP treatment process, which they had outlined in response to **Question 9(b)(i)** and their **Question 9(a)** plans, to reduce the contamination fear (or whatever specific type of OCD the person had in their **Question 9(a)** plan).
- Many candidates used the contamination fear of doorknobs and books because this was used by Lehmkuhl et al. (2008).

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, which was not psychological knowledge.
- Some candidates wrote about things that they had not mentioned in their response to **Question 9(b)(i)**.
- Some candidates used a case study rather than an experiment because that was used by Lehmkuhl et al. (2008).

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated what their interval (or frequency) of testing to measure the effectiveness of ERP was, such as one, three and six months.
- Some candidates explained that they would measure effectiveness by the reduction in Y-BOCS score.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that the frequency of their testing was weekly. This would not measure the long-term effectiveness.
- Some candidates confused frequency of testing long-term effectiveness with the duration of the treatment.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates suggested that testing too often, such as weekly, might lead to the person dropping out of the study.
- Some candidates suggested that testing after one year might be too long and would perhaps result in loss of contact with the person.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused testing effectiveness with treatment, suggesting that treatment should be weekly rather than monthly or vice versa.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for their choice of type of data, either quantitative or qualitative.
- Many candidates explained that their data was quantitative, such as when using Y-BOCS to see if there was a reduction in score.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that they used both types of data because they mistakenly thought that this is a better strategy.
- Some candidates introduced additional methods, such as a questionnaire with open questions, that were not relevant to the question just so that they could include both types of data. Candidates needed to use a type of data that was appropriate to the question.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates planned a face-to-face interview with associated features such as interview format.
- Many responses included an appropriate range of questions to investigate reasons for store choice.
- Many answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not used the method stated in the question, often designing an experiment instead.
- Some responses did not address the question set, looking instead at age differences or some other feature rather than at gender differences.
- Some candidates asked only one question, such as 'what are your reasons for store choice'.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses outlined the study by Sinha (2002) which investigated reasons for store choice, such as convenience, merchandise, ambience and previous patronage. Sinha specifically studied gender differences, with 40% of males reporting convenience and 40% of females reporting merchandise as reasons for purchase.

Limited responses

- Some candidates focused on retail store design, with some writing about interior store layout and others writing about exterior landscaping. This did not answer the question, which focused on reasons for store choice.
- Some candidates relied only on general knowledge or anecdotal knowledge of the reasons why people choose particular stores to visit.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates applied the knowledge that they had outlined in response to **Question 10(b)(i)**, such as asking questions that specifically addressed the gender differences raised in the study by Sinha.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not explain how what they had written in response to **Question 10(b)(i)** informed their plan. They therefore did not address the question.
- Some candidates could not form relevant questions to ask about store choice because they did not describe any relevant psychological knowledge in response to **Question 10(b)(i)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had chosen a specific location, such as the outside 'on the street', or inside a specific store. Candidates often mentioned that conducting the study in a particular location, such as a shopping street, increased the ecological validity.

Limited responses

- Some candidates chose a shopping mall as their location, which confounded their study because a shopping mall usually includes stores of different types in the same location.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates mentioned that conducting the study 'in the street' was a weakness because it introduced potential confounding variables such as other shoppers, traffic noise, crowding, the weather, etc., which could have distracted the participants who were being interviewed.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates chose to conduct the study in a laboratory. Most candidates who chose this location for the study were unable to give a weakness of using that location.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates chose one question format only, either open or closed. This allowed them to focus on gathering one type of data about store choice.
- Many responses contained questions that were closed (with answer responses provided) or open (beginning with 'describe' or 'explain' and the question not requiring a one-word answer).

Limited responses

- Some candidates chose to use both open and closed questions. They often confused the wording of these questions, such as stating that they had used an open question when the question was closed.
- Some candidates asked only one generic question such as 'what are your reasons for store choice', demonstrating little awareness of what question format this was.

Question 11

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses used a telephone interview and included associated features such as the interview format and question format.
- Some answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not used the method stated in the question and instead converted the study into an experiment.
- Some answers suggested giving participants a visual analogue pain rating scale or a McGill pain questionnaire, which would be difficult to do over the telephone.
- Some answers did not focus on descriptions of pain and instead gathered numerical data.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many answers referred to the McGill pain questionnaire (MPQ), which included a list of sensory words used to describe pain, such as 'throbbing', 'stabbing', or 'burning'. Occasionally, the 'effective' and 'evaluative' components were also mentioned.

Limited responses

- Some candidates referred to the study by Brudvik et al. (2016), which was of limited relevance.
- Some candidates wrote about visual analogue scales or the faces pain scale (which applies only to children).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that in their plan they had used some of the same words that are used on the MPQ. Candidates linked their psychological knowledge described in their response to **Question 11(b)(i)** with what they had used in their **Question 11(a)** plan and explained it here.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on peripheral information or studies, such as Brudvik et al. (2016).
- Some answers included methodological aspects rather than psychological knowledge.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates chose one question format only, either open or closed. This allowed them to focus on gathering one type of data.
- Many responses contained questions that were closed (with answer responses provided) because when conducting an interview via telephone, the responses should be clear and simple.
- Many responses contained questions that were simple, such as 'give three words to describe a recent pain that you experienced'.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates chose to use both open and closed questions, which was not the most appropriate selection given that it was a telephone interview. In a telephone interview, answers should be kept short and simple.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates often suggested that a telephone interview was better because people could participate while they are at home or wherever they are if they are using a mobile phone.
- Some candidates suggested that a telephone interview would save time and costs of not having to travel somewhere to be interviewed face to face.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided brief answers such as 'it is quick and easy', without elaboration.
- Some candidates gave a generic strength that was not related to descriptions of pain.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates often stated how they analysed their data. For example, they calculated the total number of different words used to describe pain or they used a mode to see which words were most frequent for males and for females.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not provide any analysis, sometime stating only 'I used quantitative data'.
- Some candidates stated that their analysis was to use a bar chart or a scatter graph, neither of which analyses data.

Question 12

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses applied the experimental method and gave four or five features such as IV, DV, controls, experimental design and the type of experiment.
- Some answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Limited responses contained a limited range of features of an experiment.
- Some answers did not consider how effectiveness was measured.
- Some answers did not focus their answer on the question.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses outlined the research by Claypoole and Szalma (2019), which used electronic performance monitoring (EPM).
- Some responses also included descriptions of social loafing, with many candidates referring to the study by Earley (1993).

Limited responses

- Some answers briefly mentioned one of the two studies mentioned above. Both of the studies were relevant to the question.
- Some candidates wrote about neither of these two pieces of relevant psychological research and instead gave a generic description of the study on social loafing by Ringelmann (1913).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained how two features that they had outlined in their response to **Question 12(b)(i)** had informed the questions that they asked in their **Question 12(a)** plan. These included the use of CCTV cameras to monitor performance or the placing of participants in work groups to assess social loafing.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, which is not psychological knowledge.

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- Some candidates included aspects that they had not mentioned in their response to **Question 12(b)(i)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for using controls, most commonly to see if the DV has been caused by the IV. Controls were often an experimental (EPM group) and a non-EPM control group, or control of situational variables.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not state a reason for their controls.
- Some candidates simply stated 'I controlled all situational variables to make the study better', without stating what was controlled or what the study was about.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates chose a laboratory experiment so that they could control all extraneous variables, with the weakness being that ecological validity would suffer.
- Other candidates chose a field experiment, with the weakness being that performance monitoring would be more difficult to control.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave generic weaknesses of laboratory or field experiments, without mentioning performance monitoring or social loafing.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had a DV, which is to measure the outcome of a study, and that in this instance the DV could have been a way to measure the reduction in social loafing.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not give a reason for why they had a dependent variable.
- Some candidates gave the DV as the general effect of performance monitoring, with no reference made to social loafing.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/43
Specialist Options: Application and Research Methods

Key messages

What candidates did well

- In **Section A**, many candidates provided an appropriate number of features as required by the question.
- In **Section A**, comprehensive responses included an appropriate level of detail in response to questions that required candidates to identify, outline or describe. For example, responses to questions that were worth four marks included more detail than responses to questions that were worth two marks.
- When giving strengths and/or weaknesses, comprehensive responses in **Section A** demonstrated application of knowledge by including examples and/or links to the study mentioned in the question.
- In **Section B**, most candidates provided a response that was focused precisely on the question that had been asked.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** used the method stated in the question and applied four or five specific features of that method.
- In **Section B**, many candidates applied ethical guidelines to their plans when answering **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** described appropriate psychological knowledge rather than methodological knowledge.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)** explained how two features of the psychological knowledge were explicitly used in the plan.
- In **Section B**, comprehensive responses to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)** explicitly linked an example from the plan to the reason and the strength/weakness.

What candidates needed to improve

- In **Section A**, candidates needed to relate their answers to the study in question or include an example from the study/topic area. The questions frequently ended with the phrase 'in this study', so the responses needed to relate to that specific topic area/study.
- In **Section A**, some candidates did not explain the terms that they chose to use. For example, some candidates wrote vague sentences such as 'it is not reliable or valid', without explaining what 'reliable' or 'valid' meant.
- Misreading the rubric in **Section B** led to errors such as answering two questions instead of one.
- In **Section B**, limited responses to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)** did not use the method stated in the question and/or did not include sufficient specific features of the method stated in the question.
- In **Section B**, there was frequent misunderstanding of the phrase 'structured interview'. A structured interview can consist of either closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. 'Structured' means that the same questions are asked to all participants in the same order. An unstructured interview can also consist of closed questions or open questions or a combination of both. A semi-structured interview does not automatically results in quantitative and qualitative data.
- In **Section B**, many candidates chose to use both closed and open questions and often confused the two when writing actual questions to ask participants.
- In **Section B**, some candidates introduced additional questionnaires that were irrelevant to the question.
- In **Section B**, after finishing their plan in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**, candidates needed to consider whether the data that they had gathered could be analysed in order to answer the question, such as whether 'x' was effective or not.
- Candidates should not have included an aim, results or conclusions in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.

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- Candidates should not have included any evaluation such as considerations of reliability, validity or generalisability.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their responses included a consideration of ethical guidelines.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)**, candidates needed to describe some relevant psychological (not methodological) knowledge that their plan was based on.
- In response to **Questions 9(b)(ii)**, **10(b)(ii)**, **11(b)(ii)** and **12(b)(ii)**, candidates needed to explain how the psychological knowledge mentioned in response to **Questions 9(b)(i)**, **10(b)(i)**, **11(b)(i)** and **12(b)(i)** was used in the plan that they had written in response to **Questions 9(a)**, **10(a)**, **11(a)** and **12(a)**.
- In response to **Questions 9(c)(i)**, **9(c)(ii)**, **9(c)(iii)**, **10(c)(i)**, **10(c)(ii)**, **10(c)(iii)**, **11(c)(i)**, **11(c)(ii)**, **11(c)(iii)**, **12(c)(i)**, **12(c)(ii)** and **12(c)(iii)**, candidates needed to apply what they had written in their plan to the reason for its choice.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates described the procedure correctly and included aspects such as providing a blood sample (to test for 5-HTR2C and 5-HTT alleles), interviews (about first-degree relatives) and data being checked by a second psychiatrist.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided a summary of the whole study, including the findings rather than focusing on the procedure.
- Some candidates confused this study with a different one, leading them to describe drugs being given to treat depression, which was not part of the procedure.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses suggested that the findings of the original study could be compared with the findings of a different study that looked at the same thing. Some candidates were more specific, identifying concurrent validity and explaining how this was applied to this study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused reliability and validity, writing about test-retest reliability.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates wrote about biological measures being objective because of the source of the data (such as DNA). Others wrote about the data being objective because there is no subjective human involvement.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not address the word ‘measures’ in the question and instead wrote about theoretical aspects such as determinism and reductionism.
- Candidates often made a relevant point and then did not support it with a relevant biological example. Some responses contained no example. Candidates could have used the examples that they had provided in their response to **Question 1(a)**.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates outlined the cognitive explanation, stating that there is faulty processing in thoughts due to cognitive deficits.
- Some candidates went on to explain one or more of these deficits, such as attention deficits or meta-representation failures (an inability to distinguish between internal thoughts and external stimuli).

Limited responses

- Candidates often wrote the phrase ‘faulty processing’, without including any further detail.

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- Some candidates gave a biological (rather than a cognitive) explanation of schizophrenia, which did not address the question.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified an appropriate method (such as observation, interview, questionnaire) and identified a feature/the technique/format.
- Many candidates related how the method that they had identified could be used to investigate the cognitive explanation of schizophrenia.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified a method, such as 'interview', without including any elaboration such as the format or technique.
- Some candidates suggested using cognitive behaviour therapy to investigate the cognitive explanation. This was inappropriate because therapy is a treatment and cannot be used to investigate.
- Some responses suggested using 'brain scans', which would not be appropriate to investigate what people with schizophrenia are thinking about.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included two weaknesses of their suggested method and related these weaknesses to examples of the cognitive explanation.

Limited responses

- The candidates who had suggested therapy in their response to **Question 2(b)** could not evaluate the weaknesses because cognitive behaviour therapy is not a method.
- Some candidates provided only one weakness. Other candidates did not relate the weaknesses to the specific question asked.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified two ways in which the procedure was standardised, such as always using a telephone interview, always using the same researcher (same voice/tone), always using the pre-prepared script and always using the same question to assess purchase intentions.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the term 'standardisation' and instead wrote about controls, experimental designs and other things.
- Some candidates thought that participants were shown images of products, which would not have been possible given that the method was a telephone interview.
- Many candidates outlined how participants completed the self-monitoring scale. This was not relevant because it was not part of study three.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested a personality variable, most typically an extrovert, but other acceptable options such as 'optimistic' were offered by some candidates. Many responses also related the personality variable to advertising strategies.

Limited responses

- Some candidates thought that age, gender or culture was a personality variable.
- Some answers included an appropriate personality variable, without relating it to advertising strategies.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates wrote about standardisation allowing the study to be replicated with different participants. Others wrote about the procedure being consistent/reliable.
- Many candidates provided appropriate examples. These were often the examples from their answer to **Question 3(a)**.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about a strength and a weakness of controls rather than standardisation.
- Some candidates did not give an example from the procedure of the study to support their answer.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates identified one way in which people defend their space in a queue, such as a physical, verbal or non-verbal response.
- Some responses contained an example such as 'Excuse me, you have to go to the back of the line'.

Limited responses

- A few candidates identified a way in which people defend their space in a queue, often stating 'physically' or 'verbally', without clarification of what these words meant or involved.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive suggestions identified an appropriate type of response and gave an example of what that response involved, such as 'an intruder might apologise and go to the back of the line'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a partial response, such as 'arguing with the person' or 'they may ignore the person'.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included a strength and a weakness of a face-to-face interview and explained how this could provide information about how people defend their personal space in a queue.

Limited responses

- Many candidates wrongly believed that conducting a face-to-face interview automatically allowed them to collect in-depth qualitative information. A face-to-face interview collects quantitative and/or qualitative data depending on the type of question asked, not the interview technique.
- Some candidates gave a generic strength and weakness, without relating it to defending space in a queue.

Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates identified two reasons for exclusion and many provided an explanation. For example, they identified that participants were excluded because of existing illnesses, such as having schizophrenia or manic depression. Others wrote about legal reasons, being under 16 or over 75, or having a life-threatening illness.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified two reasons, such as having a life-threatening condition or an existing illness. They could not provide any detail beyond identifying the reason.
- Some candidates commented on why some participants withdrew from the study. The question focused on why the researchers excluded participants rather than why participants withdrew.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates focused more on the second questionnaire testing the reliability of answers (test-retest reliability). Other candidates focused more on what was being asked, namely satisfaction levels.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not realise that the second questionnaire was testing reliability.

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- Some candidates believed that the second questionnaire was asking about the preference for sharing or directing style when participants were tested on only one of these styles.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates included two strengths of excluding participants, commenting that this prevented them from experiencing harm (an ethical issue), using life-threatening illnesses as a supporting example. Some candidates wrote about extraneous participant variables biasing the results. Other candidates wrote that excluding certain participants increased the validity of what was being measured.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that excluding participants would prevent ethical issues, without giving an example of what these ethical issues were or giving an example to support their statement.
- Some candidates suggested that excluding participants 'increases validity', without providing further explanation or an example.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified 'skill acquisition' as the second phase and then provided an outline of an aspect of this phase, such as it including breathing exercises and relaxation techniques.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not identify the second phase.
- Some candidates suggested that this phase was where the patient consults the doctor to receive treatment.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates suggested a closed question that included an appropriately worded question and included answer options such as 'yes/no' or a rating scale.

Limited responses

- Some closed questions did not have answer options.
- Some candidates suggested questions that asked about stress inoculation reducing existing stress levels. Stress inoculation is taught to people who have no stress, who use it to inoculate against future stress.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates understood that stress inoculation training is given to people who are not stressed. They could therefore provide an appropriate strength and weakness. An appropriate strength was that participants are prepared and know what to do if they later experience a stressful event.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made generic statements that were inappropriate, such as considering stress inoculation training to be a treatment for people who are stressed rather than an inoculation for people who are not. Some candidates suggested that a weakness was that the treatment is unethical; this is not the case.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates explained one of the three measures in detail and others described two of the measures in less detail. Comprehensive responses considered how the 14 adjectives (seven positive and seven negative) were used, with some responses including the actual adjectives such as 'intelligent' and 'bossy'. Others described the closed questions, measured using the 7-point Likert-type scale.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates could not provide any detail about how leadership capacity was measured.
- Some candidates described the general procedure or described the information passages about the leadership styles given to the participants rather than how leadership capacity was measured.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested an appropriately detailed method and explained how this could be used to measure some specific aspect of leadership capacity such as productivity levels or their role as a supervisor.

Limited responses

- Many different methods were suggested, but these were often too vague such as 'an observation', 'an interview' or 'a questionnaire'. The format or technique of an interview or questionnaire needed to be given.
- Some of the suggested methods did not contain sufficient detail of what was being measured. Some candidates just stated the phrase 'leadership capacity', which was too vague and was a repetition of the words used in the question.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their closed questions were indeed closed (including the use of answer options) and that their open questions were indeed open (including words such as describe, explain and why).

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates gave two strengths of quantitative data and related these to leadership capacity. For example, they stated that quantitative data could be gathered in the form of a psychometric test used on different occasions for the same leader to see if the leader is consistent in their decision-making.

Limited responses

- Many candidates gave two generic strengths of using quantitative data. These could apply to any question or topic rather than being specifically related to the supervisor's leadership capacity.
- Some candidates confused quantitative data with qualitative data.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses identified a type of rapid rotation such as the 'metropolitan' or 'continental' rota and often included a detailed description of how the rotation worked in an organisation.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave an example of one type of rotation, without being able to identify its name. Some candidates confused rapid rotation shift work with other types of working-week techniques such as on-call or flexitime.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses suggested techniques such as on-call, flexitime, piece/work rate and 'traditional' (9–5) and gave explanations of how they worked.

Limited responses

- Some response were vague, such as '9–5 working'.
- Some answers confused the technique and example, such as writing about flexitime and giving an example about piecework.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates provided one strength and one weakness. Strengths included enabling a company to be productive 24 hours a day and allowing the worker to work/not work at different time periods within 24 hours. Appropriate weaknesses included disruptive circadian rhythms causing health problems such as poor sleep patterns and cardiovascular illnesses.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates could not provide any strengths or weaknesses. Other candidates gave a strength and weakness of a work technique that was not rapid rotation.
- Some candidates wrote about job rotation, which was irrelevant.

Section B

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses applied the experimental method and gave four or five features such as IV, DV, controls, experimental design and the type of experiment.
- Comprehensive responses explicitly addressed the question of gender differences (the IV) in the words used to describe the avatars (the DV).

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not answer the question clearly. The question was about gender differences (the IV) in the words used (the DV) to describe the mental states of avatars.
- Some responses focused on questionnaires given to participants about their mental state both before and after the study rather than on the specific focus of the question.
- Some candidates attempted to replicate the Freeman et al. study without adapting their plan to answer the specific question asked.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines; some plans were unethical.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses described the details of the study by Freeman et al. that were relevant to their plan. These included use of the VR environment, avatars in a library, participants being interviewed after the VR experience, and the comments participants made about the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on the Brief Symptoms Inventory (BSI), which was of limited relevance to the question.
- Some candidates wrote about methodological aspects, which were of limited relevance because the question asked for psychological knowledge rather than methodological knowledge.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated clearly how they used the knowledge described in **Question 9(b)(i)**, such as the use of a VR environment, the use of a library as a setting and the behaviour of the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, such as 'Freeman et al. used 24 participants and so did I'. This was not psychological knowledge.
- Many candidates included detail in their plan simply because it was done by Freeman et al. despite it being irrelevant to the question. The focus needed to be on what could be used and/or what could be modified and not a straight replication.
- Some answers included things not mentioned in response to **Question 9(b)(i)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for their choice of type of data, either quantitative or qualitative.
- Candidates explained that their data was quantitative when counting the number of words used by male or female participants and others explained that their data was qualitative because they were looking at the actual words used by male and female participants.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that they used both types of data because they mistakenly thought that this is a better strategy.

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- Some candidates introduced new variables that were not relevant to the question just so that they could include both types of data. Candidates needed to use a type of data that was appropriate to the question.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates suggested that a weakness of quantitative data is that it ignores knowing the reasons for behaviour (such as the reason why participants chose a particular word to describe the avatar).
- Other candidates suggested that a weakness of qualitative data was that the application of statistical analysis was not possible.

Limited responses

- The candidates using both types of data often gave a weakness of both and therefore wrote an answer that was longer than it needed to be.
- Candidates often gave a weakness without supporting it with an example of the data that they had gathered in their plan.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had a DV, which was to measure the outcome of a study, and in this instance the DV could have been the difference in words chosen by male and female participants to describe the mental state of the avatars.

Limited responses

- Some candidates could not give a reason why they had a dependent variable.
- Some candidates gave a vague answer such as 'the number of words'.
- Candidates needed to give a reason for the DV and state what their DV was specifically.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses used a naturalistic observation rather than another method.
- Some candidates addressed the question of personal space distances (such as the difference between participants measured in metres/centimetres).
- Some responses focused on age differences rather than on a range of variables such as gender.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not used the named method of naturalistic observation and instead introduced a stooge to invade the personal space of people in the queue.
- Some candidates did not address personal space distance and looked at discomfort or other behaviours instead.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines. Invading space for a study could be considered unethical.

(b)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses referred to the work of Hall (1966), who outlined four personal space zones, with each having a different space distance range. Others referred to the work of Robson (2011), who used table space distances of 6″, 12″ and 24″. The work of Milgram (1986) was also mentioned on occasion.

Limited responses

- Some answers were entirely anecdotal, with no evidence of psychological knowledge. Candidates needed to describe relevant psychological knowledge.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses applied the knowledge that was outlined in **Question 10(b)(i)**, such as marking distances of 6″, 12″ and 24″ on the floor to judge the space distances. Others used Hall's space zones, such as personal and social.
- Many candidates applied their psychological knowledge to inform the design of their plan.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates did not explain how what they had written in response to **Question 10(b)(i)** informed their plan. They needed to write clearly how their plans in **Question 10(a)** were informed by the psychological knowledge in **Question 10(b)(i)**, with supporting examples.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that using behavioural categories standardised their observation and gave examples from their **Question 10(a)** plan of what was included in their categories.
- Categories used were often age differences and personal space distances, which answered the question specifically.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that they used categories, without making any link to their study or the categories that they had used in their **Question 10(a)** plan.
- Some candidates included categories of behavioural responses to their space being invaded, such as frowns. This did not answer the question.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates focused on ambiguities of age differences such as whether to have 20–30 years or whether to have 20–25 and 25–30, etc. Other candidates mentioned similar ambiguities in deciding what space distances to include, such as categories at 10 centimetre spacing or simply 1 metre or 0.5 metres. Both these answers were clearly related to the question and plan of the study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave weaknesses of inappropriate categories, such as different facial expressions. Other candidates gave behavioural responses to space invasion, neither of which answered the question on space distances and age.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates often stated how they analysed their data, even if it was a simple statement such as ‘added up the number of people aged 20–25 keeping a distance of 0.5 metres’. Other candidates decided to present the data as a histogram or bar chart.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not provide any analysis, sometimes stating ‘I analysed the data and the results were…’, without stating what the analysis was.

Question 11

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses included closed questions and gathered only quantitative data.
- Some answers used doctors/nurses with experience of Munchausen syndrome as participants.
- Many answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not use the named method or decided to conduct an additional questionnaire to gather qualitative data that was not relevant to the question.
- Some candidates assumed that participants with Munchausen syndrome were in a mental institution.
- Some responses showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many answers outlined the characteristics of Munchausen syndrome, such as peregrination, multiple hospital visits, feigned illness and manipulating test results, amongst others, which they then used as a basis for the closed questions in their plan.
- Many answers also referred to the case study by Aleem and Ajarim (1995), who reported a case study of Munchausen syndrome.

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Limited responses

- Some answers identified one or two features, without expanding on what they were.
- Some candidates chose to exclude relevant psychological evidence from their answers, such as the case study by Aleem and Ajarim (1995).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained how two features that they had outlined in their response to **Question 11(b)(i)** had informed the questions that they asked in their **Question 11(a)** plan.

Limited responses

- Some answers described relevant features of Munchausen syndrome in response to **Question(b)(i)** and then did not refer to them in response to **Question 11(b)(ii)** or in the **Question 11(a)** plan.

(c)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained why they had chosen their participants. Sometimes these were people who had been diagnosed with Munchausen syndrome, or their participants were the doctors and nurses who had encountered people with Munchausen syndrome in their working life.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about their choice of sampling technique. Candidates needed to be mindful of the difference between 'sampling technique' (opportunity/volunteer/random) and 'sample of participants' (number of, sex/gender, age, etc.).

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates mentioned that a weakness of their sample was that participants may tell lies. This was appropriate because a feature of Munchausen syndrome is pathological lying.
- Some candidates who used doctors and nurses as participants explained that they may have limited experience with Munchausen patients because they are quite rare.

Limited responses

- Candidates who focused on sampling techniques could not answer this question on sample of participants.
- Some candidates suggested that a limitation was that all participants were from the same area. This was not relevant because Munchausen syndrome is multicultural.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that using closed questions providing quantitative data allowed them to apply descriptive statistics such as the mean, median or mode. For example, the median allowed them to see specifically which feature of Munchausen syndrome was the most common.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not refer to any descriptive statistic in their answer or explain a way in which they analysed their data.
- Candidates needed to gather data and explain how that data was organised.

Question 12

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses used a structured interview that included some fixed, common-to-all questions.
- Some candidates explicitly addressed the question about accidents due to human error.
- Some answers included an appropriate range of ethical guidelines.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not use the named method, instead deciding to design an experiment.
- Some candidates thought that a structured interview automatically gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

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- Limited responses did not address the question specifically and included a vague statement such as 'errors at work'.
- Some answers showed no awareness of ethical guidelines.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses referred to human errors such as omission, commission, sequencing and timing errors. Many responses included detailed descriptions and examples of one or more of these different types.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on 'the monitoring of accidents and risk events' (the 'Swat study'), which did not look at human error. These responses were therefore of limited relevance.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates explained that they had used the different types of human error (outlined in their response to **Question 12(b)(i)**) to help construct the questions that they asked participants in their interviews.

Limited responses

- Some answers focused on methodology, which is not psychological knowledge.
- Some answers focused on describing different industries used in the study by Swat.
- Some candidates did not include any types of error in response to **Question 12(b)(i)**, so they could not link these to questions asked in **Question 12(a)**.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated a reason for their choice of sampling technique, most commonly an opportunity sample because participants were readily available.
- Many candidates linked their sampling technique to their plan, such as workers in a shoe factory being available as they are at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a reason for their sampling technique, without relating it to their study.
- Some candidates stated that they chose an opportunity sample 'because it is quick and easy', with no elaboration.
- Some candidates wrongly believed that a volunteer sampling automatically makes a study ethical.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave a strength of using a structured interview (the same questions in the same order to all participants) and related this to the questions that they had asked to employees about accidents at work.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were unaware of what a structured interview involved.
- Some candidates could give a strength of using a structured interview, often not considering how it could apply to errors and accidents at work.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates stated that they had used a face-to-face interview for a specific reason. Other candidates gave a reason for why they had used a telephone interview. For example, if a telephone interview was used then the employee could answer without anyone else at the factory overhearing what was said or even knowing that they had been interviewed.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about interview format (structured, etc.) rather than interview technique (face-to-face or telephone).
- Some candidates could give a reason for their interview technique, often not considering how it could apply to interviewing participants about errors and accidents at work.

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