

Psychology

Answers and commentaries

A-level (7182)

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written by the student.

Question 1

Outline what is meant by soft determinism.

[2 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2 marks

2 marks for a clear and coherent outline with some elaboration.

1 mark for a limited or muddled outline.

Content:

- the idea that behaviour/actions/traits are to an extent governed/dictated by internal/external forces
- despite this, we still have some element of control over/some free will to control our behaviour/actions/traits etc.

Accept other relevant outlines and outlines embedded in example.

Student responses

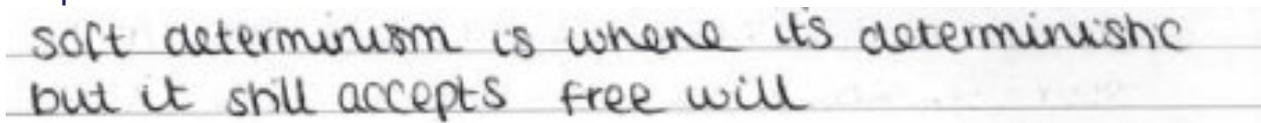
Response A

Soft determinism refers to the extent to which behaviour is influenced by internal and external factors with some degree of free-will. Which is how much control we have over our actions.

A clear and coherent outline with some elaboration.

2 marks

Response B



soft determinism is where it's deterministic
but it still accepts free will

Answer was too vague to gain credit.

0 marks

Question 2

A psychologist investigated the effect of the presence of a friend on mood. She used a controlled laboratory experiment. She asked a group of participants to rate their happiness on a scale.

In **Condition 1** (Alone Condition), participants completed the scale after sitting alone in a room for 30 minutes.

In **Condition 2** (Friend Condition), the same participants completed the same scale after sitting for 30 minutes in a room with a friend.

The conditions were counterbalanced.

The psychologist analysed the results of the study using a Wilcoxon test. The analysis showed that happiness ratings were significantly higher in the Friend Condition.

Explain two reasons why it was appropriate to use a Wilcoxon test in this situation. Refer to the description of the study in your answer.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO2 = 4 marks

For each of two valid reasons, award marks as follows:

- 2 marks for a clear and coherent reason.
- 1 mark for a limited/muddled reason.

Reasons:

- tested all participants both alone and in the presence of a friend therefore the psychologist used the same participants in each condition, thus the design was repeated measures/related
- data were ratings of happiness on a ratings scale which would be considered ordinal data as the units can be ranked from high to low but are not of a fixed size/equal interval
- the psychologist was investigating a difference in happiness ratings between two conditions: the Alone Condition and the Friend Condition.

Student responses

Response A

	Unrelated	Related	Correlation
N	CW	SW	C
O	W	W	S
I	J	R	P.

It was appropriate to use a Wilcoxon test in this situation as she was measuring behaviour using a scale which is ordinal data as it is subjective since it is based on the participant inputting the data. The experimental design used was repeated measures as she puts the participants in one condition first and then the same participants are put in the second condition. Repeated measures is a form of related design. Thus making it appropriate to use Wilcoxon.

This response was given full credit. The decision diagram included with the answer was useful.

4 marks

Response B

It is appropriate to use a Wilcoxon test because the data is ordinal. The data consists of ratings on a happiness scale meaning the data is categorized and ranked. Also, the data is related as the study uses a related measure as there are two conditions to the study. ~~The use of related test that the psychologist uses~~ → One test condition consisted of participants being alone and the other condition consisted of happiness after being in a room with a friend, making it two different conditions being compared.

There was a lack of clarity about the repeated measures design; the answer didn't make it clear that the same participants were used in the second condition.

3 marks

Question 3

The psychologist claimed to have demonstrated a causal explanation for happiness.

What is meant by a causal explanation? Explain why it was appropriate to claim that there was a causal explanation in this case.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2 marks, AO2 = 2 marks

Level 2

Marks: 3–4

Knowledge of what is meant by a causal explanation is clear and detailed. The explanation of why it was appropriate in this case is clear and detailed and shows sound understanding. There is appropriate use of specialist terminology.

Level 1

Marks: 1–2

Knowledge of what is meant by a causal explanation is limited/muddled. Any explanation of why it was appropriate in this case lacks detail/understanding. Use of specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriate.

Mark: 0

No relevant content.

Content: a causal explanation is based on the scientific notion that behaviour is caused/determined by internal/external factors – there is a cause and effect relationship

Application: the experiment was a controlled laboratory study so the only thing that changed was the IV (presence of friend or not), all other variables were controlled and there was a (significant) effect on the DV (happiness ratings).

Credit other relevant material.

Student responses

Response A

Causal explanation is focused on the fact that behaviour has a cause (determinism). This then allows ~~self~~ manipulation of independent variable (whether participant is present with a friend or not) to see its effect on ~~the~~ dependent variable (happiness score), ~~there~~ provided that extraneous variables are controlled, (using counterbalancing). This then allows us to determine a cause and effect relationship ~~between~~ between presence of friend and happiness score.

This is a Level 2 response

This answer was placed in Level 2, and was a borderline Level 3/4. The knowledge and understanding is implicit in the application, eg the reference to cause and effect here was a slight benefit of the doubt to bring this to 4 marks.

4 marks

Response B

A causal explanation is when a difference has been identified, it means the independent variable has a direct effect on the dependent variable. It is appropriate that it was a causal explanation as there was a significant difference shown, "happiness ratings were significantly higher in the friend condition".

This is a Level 1 response

Both the knowledge and application elements of the answer were limited and lacked detail.

2 marks

Question 4

Using an example of a research study you have learned about in psychology, outline what is meant by a nomothetic approach to psychological investigation.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO1 = 4 marks

Content:

Up to 2 marks for knowledge of what is meant by a nomothetic approach.

Award 1 mark for each of the following points:

- a nomothetic approach involves studying a (large) sample of participants
- using the findings to generate or substantiate general laws/models of behaviour; make inferences about the wider population/make generalisations; make predictions.

Plus

2 marks for an appropriate research study (no need to name), with clear and coherent explanation of how findings from the sample have been used to generate a theory/applied to a larger population.

OR

1 mark for a relevant research study with limited/muddled explanation. Suitable examples can be taken from any area of psychology, eg:

- Milgram tested a sample of participants to propose his theory of situational obedience
- Ainsworth tested infants using the Strange Situation to propose three attachment types.

Credit other relevant material/examples.

Student responses

Response A

Nomothetic approach aims to establish general laws of human behaviour in order to establish a benchmark to which people can be compared to. They ~~aim to~~ use a large sample so that the findings are (continued) generalisable. Nomothetic approach uses methods like scientific experiments to generate quantifiable data ~~and~~ which can be statistically analysed to create a benchmark. An example of nomothetic research used in psychology is research from Dabbs et al. ^{who used a} large number of participants ^{who were prisoners} (2002) to measure their salivary testosterone in order to create general laws about the impact of testosterone on aggression.

2 marks awarded for knowledge of what is meant by a nomothetic approach and 2 marks for appropriate research with clear explanation of how the sample is used to generate a theory/ applied to a larger population.

4 marks

Response B

~~A study consisting of a nomothetic approach~~
A nomothetic approach is when all ~~variable~~ types of participants are taken into account. This means that the study could possibly be generalized to a wider population. An example of a type of research with a nomothetic approach is Kroonenberg's study of attachment across all cultures. This takes a nomothetic approach because ~~he tak~~ the researcher takes different cultures and countries into account. The attachment styles within each country can be generalised to the wider population.

The study is marginally appropriate but not well used. The focus is on cultural differences which makes this a limited/muddled answer.

2 marks

Question 5

Referring to the example used in your answer to Question 4, briefly explain how the same behaviour might be studied using an idiographic approach to psychological investigation.

[2 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO3 = 2 marks

Award 1 mark for an appropriate idiographic method eg the case study method, single-case observation, in-depth interview etc

Plus

1 mark for how it could be used with this behaviour eg carrying out a case study of a mother and baby to study their unique attachment behaviours.

Credit other relevant material.

Note: for the 2nd mark the behaviour must be the same as that given in answer to Question 4 but not necessarily a variation of the same study eg if using Milgram in Question 4 the proposal should relate to obedience

Note: If there is no answer to Question 4 or no behaviour is given in answer to Question 4, no credit can be awarded for Question 5

Student responses

Response A

Aggression may be studied using the idiographic approach by ~~asking~~ prisoners using unstructured interviews and asking prisoners individually about cases of their violent aggression and why they may have acted aggressively to gather in depth qualitative understanding of each unique prisoner.

The same behaviour as in Question 4 (aggression) with a clear explanation of an appropriate idiographic method.

2 marks

Response B

An idiographic approach to this study would be ~~a one child's attachment style being studied~~ and ~~to~~ only one culture being studied, this is idiographic because it can't be generalised to ~~top~~ the wider population and can only take one culture into account.

The idiographic method is confused with only one culture being used. Too much confusion for credit to be awarded.

0 marks

Question 6

There are many examples of socially sensitive research in psychology.

Outline what social sensitivity means in the context of psychology. Explain how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity.

[8 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3 marks, AO3 = 5 marks

Level 4

Marks: 7–8

Outline of social sensitivity is accurate with some detail. Explanation of how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.

Level 3

Marks: 5–6

Outline of social sensitivity is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Explanation of how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.

Level 2

Marks: 3–4

Outline of social sensitivity is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any explanation of how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.

Level 1

Marks: 1–2

Outline of social sensitivity is very limited. Explanation of how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.

Mark: 0

No relevant content.

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Possible content:

- research which has potential implications or consequences, eg leading to prejudice and discrimination
- where a group of people represented in the research might be negatively affected as a result of a study, eg women affected by Bowlby's work on attachment
- where a study leads to changes in public policy affecting individuals/groups, eg research into IQ in the 1950s leading to educational changes.

Possible explanation points:

- submit research proposals to ethics committees and abide by any recommendations
- weigh up the possible costs and benefits before conducting any research. Only proceed where the benefits (to many) outweigh the costs (to a few)
- take care when formulating the aim/framing the question so as not to misrepresent certain groups
- be alert to the possibility of misuse of findings and take steps to present findings in a value-free way
- consider the wider effects of publication of the findings eg Sieber and Stanley's recommendations as part of the peer review process
- take steps to avoid prejudicial/biased/sensational media presentation of findings
- consider the possible reactions of participants to any research procedure they experience and take account of ethical issues in the design of any studies
- use of examples to illustrate specific ways in which social sensitivity can be taken into account.

Credit other relevant material.

Student responses

Response A

Socially sensitive research is research which has ethical implications on the participants and people like the participants beyond the scope of the study. However, researchers should not shy away from such research as it can be beneficial for psychology in the long term. Researchers can deal with socially sensitive research ~~by~~ first by building an awareness of the impact of releasing socially sensitive research. First they need to be aware of the impact of the research on the participants that are taking part so that they don't get harmed during the research or after. Secondly they (continued) need to be aware of the impact of socially sensitive research on the wider public. They need to ensure that particular groups are not being abused for findings and they need to ensure that the findings are not used as scientific credibility for prejudice. Thirdly, they need to be aware of the impact of socially sensitive research on public policy. They must ensure that political parties don't use their findings to marginalise particular groups in society. After building a true awareness of the impact of releasing socially

sensitive research, they need to deal with it. This can be done by publishing research in a factual, non emotive ~~one~~ way and without exaggeration. Furthermore, to avoid harm to participants, researchers need to ensure that their right to confidentiality are met and that participants are reminded of their right to withdraw. Researchers should also provide a sensitive debrief.

This is a Level 4 response

Outline of social sensitivity is accurate with some detail. Explanation of how researchers in psychology could deal with issues related to social sensitivity is thorough and effective. However, some of the outline is implicit in the discussion so not quite top of Level 4.

7 marks

Response B

Social sensitivity was proposed by Sieber and Stanley, they stated that researchers have to be aware at how they propose findings to avoid negative bias towards the group of participants who took part in the research or the population associated with participant group.

They proposed four ways of socially sensitive research. Firstly the researcher must be careful with the question / hypothesis of the study. The researcher must also keep participant data confidential, before, during and after the research. The researcher must also take into consideration how they handle results. Lastly results / findings should be stated without being negatively biased towards the sample of participants.

Findings could later on determine how a certain group in society can be treated. For example with Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation, which then led many to believe that women (mothers) roles was to stay at home.

This is a Level 2 response

A brief outline and fairly general proposal of how to deal with socially sensitive research. Answer of limited effectiveness, placed at the top of Level 2.

Helpful to note that the better answers to this question used the recommendations of Sieber and Stanley as the basis for suggestions of how to deal with issues related to socially sensitive research.

4 marks

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7182

You can talk directly to the Psychology subject team

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