



General Certificate of Education

Psychology 5186
Specification B

**Unit 2 (PYB2) Social and Cognitive
Psychology**

Report on the Examination
2007 examination - June series

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Unit 2: (PYB2) Social and Cognitive Psychology

General

The paper was of a similar level of difficulty to previous series.

The most popular questions were 2, 6 and 8 as usual, closely followed by 4. A few answers consisted largely of “common-sense” psychology and so gained few marks.

It was noticeable in answers to section (d) questions that those candidates whose answers directly addressed the question did better than those candidates who gave stereotyped ‘all purpose’ answers.

Section A: Social Psychology

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates recognised the ego-expressive function in the example, although many confused the knowledge and adaptive functions.
- (b) While some candidates scored full marks, many failed to identify the semantic differential scale.
- (c) Social Identity theory is generally not well known by candidates, and some tried to answer (unsuccessfully) in connection with the functions of attitudes, or conformity.
- (d) Most candidates had some success in defining cognitive dissonance and many described Festinger and Carlsmith’s study with reasonable accuracy. However, several candidates confused cognitive dissonance with balance theory or the extent to which attitudes are consistent with behaviour.

Question 2

- (a) There was quite a lot of confusion about the meaning of informational social influence. Many candidates recognised a link with conformity, although examples sometimes illustrated normative social influence instead. Many candidates did not explain this as a group effect but used explanations and examples based around “copying the answer of someone who knows what it is” or persuasion.
- (b) There were some concise and accurate definitions of group norms, although some candidates described conformity instead. A few thought that a group norm was a person.
- (c) Many candidates identified consistency as a factor that could aid minority influence, although relatively few outlined what this meant or explained how it might affect majority opinion. Descriptions sometimes gave the impression that consistency meant the same as persistence. There were some appropriate examples, which followed the guidance in the question to focus on ‘a group situation.’ The most commonly used appropriate example was of Moscovici’s study. However, many candidates gave examples that did not relate to group situations – usually of political figures or Charles Darwin. These are not good illustrations of minority influence and so did not receive credit.

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- (d) Some candidates recognised explanations for defiance that were relevant to the scenario, including lack of proximity, lack of a uniform and social support. There was frequent reference to Milgram's basic study and to relevant variations. However, some candidates strayed off the question and instead wrote about explanations for obedience rather than for defiance. Weaker candidates confused defiance with non-conformity. Some gave long descriptions of Zimbardo's study, which they were usually unable to make relevant.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates recognised that the primacy effect was to do with the first encounter with a person.
- (b) There were some effective definitions of stereotyping, although many candidates failed to mention the important feature of inferring traits on the basis of group membership.
- (c) About half of candidates attempting this question recognised this example of the self-serving attribution bias, and of these, many scored the full 5 marks. There were several "common-sense" answers and repetitions of the story details. These did not earn credit unless connected to the "dispositional" and "situational" attributions.
- (d) This question about factors influencing self-perception attracted quite a lot of common-sense answers, although many candidates referred to social comparison and the looking glass effect. Relatively few gave good examples or supported their answers with evidence of studies. There were some answers that prominently featured the connections between different aspects of self-perception, such as self-esteem, self-image and ideal self. This often amounted to saying that self-perception influences self-perception and did not gain credit.

Question 4

- (a) There was some confusion about the dominant response, with a small minority of candidates gaining full marks. Examples were often not specific enough to earn a mark. Good answers usually involved a performer, a skill level and an outcome.
- (b) Most candidates successfully identified one of the factors likely to produce home ground advantage (Factor A).
- (c) Most candidates described relevant studies of social facilitation, although some descriptions showed extensive inaccuracies.
- (d) There were some excellent answers exploring the link between cohesion and performance in high- and low-interaction sports. However, some candidates confused "high/low interaction sports" with "contact/non-contact sports". Some candidates included marginally relevant material not about the link, but about factors leading to cohesion.

Section B: Cognitive Psychology**Question 5**

- (a) Most candidates were able to select at least one feature of Broadbent's model.

- (b) Many candidates successfully identified three other models of attention.
- (c) Many candidates gave a basic explanation implying the role of expectation, although few made this explanation explicit.
- (d) There were some very good answers from candidates who were familiar with the illusions presented and who were able to use these to discuss contrasting views of the implications of these (usually Gregory and Gibson). However, some other candidates gave mistaken accounts of how the illusions worked and could say little about their implications for visual perception.

Question 6

- (a) A majority of candidates were able to define and illustrate a cue.
- (b) About half of the candidates answering this question correctly identified the different types of memory in each example.
- (c) There were some effective descriptions of studies relevant to the influence of context on memory, including Godden & Baddeley and Malpass & Devine. Some candidates described studies of state-dependent memory, and there were a number of studies with no link to context or state-dependent memory.
- (d) While many candidates gave accurate descriptions of the model, some were unable to correctly state the three levels of processing. Evaluations of the model often lacked detail and clarity. The links to tactics for revision rarely gave specific ideas. Relatively few candidates described the wrong model.

Question 7

- (a) Many candidates gave effective definitions of language, sufficient to score the full 2 marks.
- (b) A minority of candidates correctly identified all three types of reasoning from the examples. The commonest error was to confuse the examples of inductive and deductive reasoning.
- (c) Most candidates showed some knowledge of relevant studies of communication in non-humans, although descriptions were usually brief and/or inaccurate.
- (d) Most candidates were able to characterise Whorf's view correctly, although a few got language and thought the wrong way round. Although some relevant studies were described, few candidates were able to use them effectively to support or refute Whorf. There were often routine descriptions of Piaget's and Vygotsky's views, although these were rarely used to evaluate Whorf's view.

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates were able to outline the feature analysis model.
- (b) A minority of candidates effectively explained a relevant criticism of the model, although many scored one of the 2 available marks. Some candidates simply outlined the holistic model, without addressing the question.

- (c) Almost all candidates correctly identified the types of amnesia shown in the examples and many answers referred to relevant causes. Some candidates failed to gain marks by writing “surgery” rather than “brain surgery”, “trauma” rather than “head trauma” or “alcohol” rather than “alcohol abuse”.
- (d) Many candidates identified a range of factors that can affect the reliability of eyewitness testimony. The better answers followed the requirements of the question by discussing these factors and giving accurate descriptions of relevant studies. However, some studies described were not very relevant. For example, Baddeley’s ‘doors and names’ study is not a study of eyewitness testimony. “Time-gap”, mentioned by some candidates as a factor affecting EWT, did not gain any credit.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.