

**Subject:** Psychology

**Level:** 3

**Standards:** 91876

## Part A: Commentary

Candidates demonstrated thorough understanding of issues in psychological practice, as evident through their descriptions of the key concepts and psychological evidence, e.g. theories, studies.

In general, candidates were able to describe an issue in relation to their selected resource accurately. The most discussed issues chosen by candidates to analyse were cultural bias (Resource A) or gender bias (Resource C).

Candidates should take care to interact with their resource of choice rather than to memorise answers.

## Part B: Report on standards

### 91876: Analyse a significant issue in psychological practice

#### Examination

A selection of five resources were provided relating to a range of issues in psychological practice; cultural bias, use of animals in research, gender bias, socially sensitive research; Resource E was a generic resource that could be interpreted in relation to any issue.

The assessment task consisted of three parts. For (a), candidates needed to describe the significant issue from psychological practice that was being addressed in their chosen resource. In the remaining parts, candidates had to demonstrate their understanding of the significant issue in psychological practice. For (b), candidates needed to express their agreement or disagreement with the significant issue identified in the resource clearly.

#### Observations

Candidates who referred only to the context of their chosen resource, e.g. Freud in Resource C, were restricted in the development of their response. For example, when discussing gender bias, candidates could refer to the alpha bias evident in Freud's work, and the beta bias evident in Kohlberg's (1968) and Giligan's (1982) studies.

Candidates who selected Resource D (Raine et al., 1997) tended to focus on the study itself rather than the issue of socially sensitive research. Candidates would benefit from

ensuring they identify and describe the issue of socially sensitive research, and to explain how research (such as that of Raine) has implications for participants and / or wider society.

If choosing to analyse the use of animals in research, candidates should ensure they explain the negatives or costs of animal use, e.g. physical harm, lack of consent, to demonstrate understanding of the issue. Additionally, it is also suggested that candidates support their arguments with theoretical frameworks, e.g. animal rights, utilitarian theory, rather than just identifying different ways animals are harmed or stating that they do not give consent.

Some candidates referred to both the use of animals and children which tended to restrict the development of ideas. Better success could have been achieved with focus only on animals, i.e. in response to Resource B or E, or on children, i.e. Resource E.

With regard to psychological evidence, e.g. theories or studies, evidence should be specific to psychology. Referring to wider society or other bodies of knowledge, such as sociology, can provide context but should not be the focus of a candidate's response.

Candidates would also benefit from careful selection of psychological evidence in theories or studies, as some examples do not provide enough scope for analysis and can be too general. For example, Kohlberg (1968) allows for a more detailed explanation of beta bias compared to Zimbardo (1971). Kohlberg can be explained in tandem with Gilligan (1982) to better explore how beta bias and androcentrism can influence psychology.

Explanations of supporting evidence need to be detailed and concise to demonstrate the issue. This typically comes from the sample and the conclusion. For example, if describing Ainsworth's "A Strange Situation" study, candidates should ensure they explain cultural bias in relation to the participant sample used and conclusion of this research. Candidates could then compare Ainsworth's findings with attachment research from another culture or country, e.g. Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988 or Takahashi, 1990, and explain the cultural differences and reasons for these.

When discussing how the issue can be addressed, candidates should be careful not to present generic, vague ideas, e.g. "psychology should be more culturally relative", that lack development.

At least two strategies should be provided that are distinct from each other, and clearly relate to psychological practice and / or research. The explanations of the strategies should include supporting evidence, e.g. statistics, psychological research or theory, quotes from researchers or clinicians. Explanations should consider why these strategies could be effective in addressing the issue. Wider societal ideas or concepts may provide a context, e.g. decolonisation, but should be tied to specific strategies. Strategies can be aspirational, e.g. the development of an Indigenous School of Psychology that focuses on Kaupapa Māori psychological research and practice, or related to current practice that might only be happening in some areas, such as implementing a programme similar to Te Whare Mārie throughout Aotearoa.

Limitations of strategies could be in relation to psychological or scientific constructs (e.g. lacks validity) or wider society (e.g. different hapū / iwi may have varying *kawa*, which may influence how they engage with *tāngata whaiora*).

## **Grade awarding**

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified and described the issue demonstrated in their chosen resource
- described the issue in relation to psychological practice. Explanations may be general or limited to a few specific details
- may have described relevant key terms, e.g., alpha bias, beta bias
- may have included description(s) of supporting psychological evidence and / or theories in some detail. These descriptions lacked explanation of how the issue was demonstrated.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not accurately identify the issue demonstrated in their chosen resource or did not refer to their chosen resource at all
- lacked understanding of the issue
- did not explain the issue in relation to psychological practice and included inaccurate and / or irrelevant information.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- explained, in detail, the issue (including relevant key terms) and fully applied this understanding to psychological practice. Several impacts of the significant issue on psychological practice were explained.
- provided details of supporting psychological evidence, e.g. studies, theories, and explained how this evidence demonstrated the issue.
- attempted to discuss ways or strategies of how the issue could be addressed, but not in enough detail for Excellence. For example, responses may have focused on only one strategy, or several strategies that were too similar to each other. Responses may have also been too generalised, e.g. "increase the number of females in psychology, and / or lacking detail.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- gave a detailed explanation of an issue and comprehensively applied this understanding to psychological practice. Several impacts of the significant issue on psychological practice were clearly explained.
- integrated supporting psychological evidence (studies, theories), providing detailed accounts of the evidence and detailed explanations of how this evidence demonstrated the issue. Explanation may show some insight and connection to wider societal contexts, e.g. decolonisation.

- discussed, in some detail, at least two distinctive strategies to address the issue. Strategies were considered, fully explained, and usually supported with evidence
  - may have considered the limitations and / or consequences of these strategies for psychology and / or society.
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