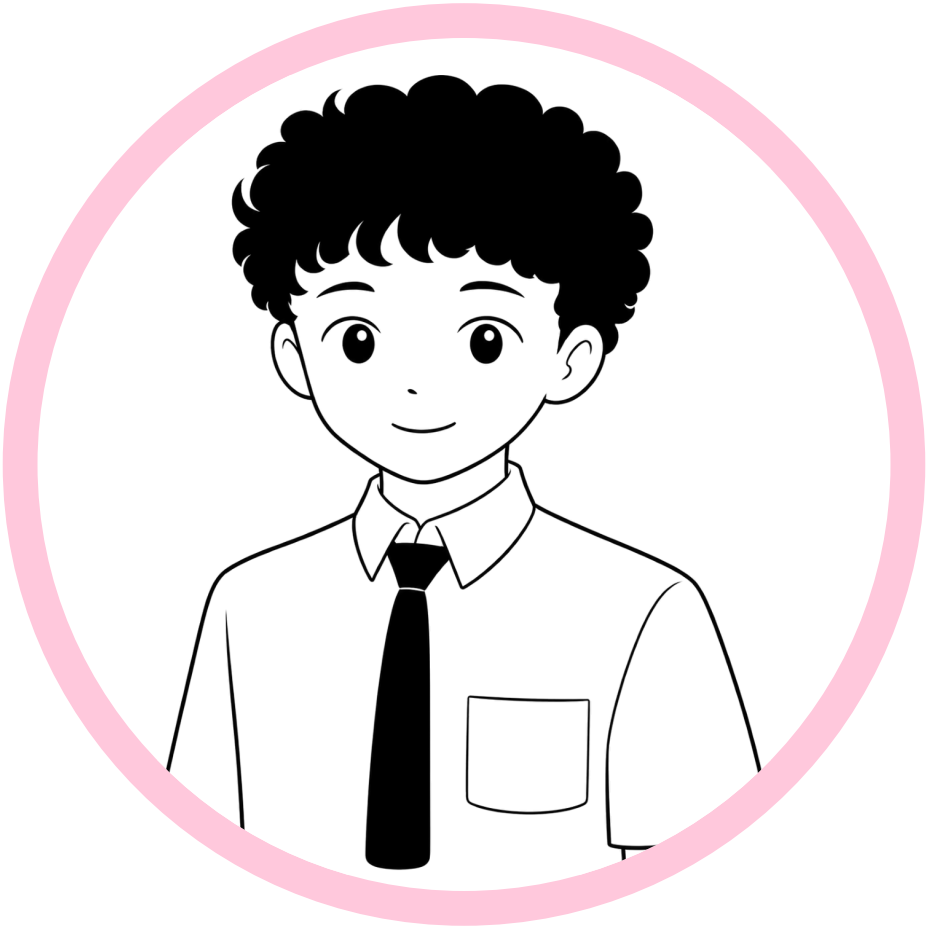
AQA A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY · 7182

PSYCHOLOGY



MARK SCHEME

3.3.2 EVOLUTIONARY EXPLANATIONS

SCORE	PERCENTAGE
/38	%

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Q1.

[AO1 = 3 AO3 = 3]

Level	Mark	Description
3	5-6	Outline is clear, coherent and mostly accurate, with some detail. Limitation is clearly explained. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
2	3-4	Outline is appropriate but has minor inaccuracy or lack of clarity. Limitation is appropriate but lacks clarity. Specialist terminology is sometimes used appropriately OR one aspect at Level 3.
1	1-2	Outline is limited / very limited. Limitation is muddled or absent. The answer lacks clarity and accuracy. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one aspect at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- partner preference / mating strategy is driven by sexual selection
- males / females choose partner in order to maximise their reproductive success (Inter and Intra sexual selection)
- characteristics that maximise reproductive success are more likely to be passed on to subsequent generations
- so partner preferences evolve in a population
- examples of male / female strategies, e.g. courtship rituals, mate-guarding etc.
- knowledge of explanation embedded in evidence.

Possible evaluation points:

- use of evidence to refute evolutionary theory
- evolutionary theory cannot explain non-heterosexual relationships as easily
- theory is less relevant where women have a more independent role in some modern societies
- societal and cultural changes such as availability of contraception mean that evolutionary pressures are less relevant.

Credit other relevant material.

[6]

Q2.

[AO1 = 6 AO3 = 10]

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge of evolutionary explanations for partner preferences is accurate and generally well detailed.

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		Discussion is thorough and effective. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument sometimes lacking.
3	9 – 12	Knowledge of evolutionary explanations for partner preferences is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. Discussion is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	5 – 8	Some knowledge of evolutionary explanation(s) for partner preferences is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 4	Knowledge of evolutionary explanation(s) for partner preferences is limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- natural selection theory: genes that confer reproductive advantage will increase in the gene pool
- intra-sexual selection – members of one sex (usually male) compete for access to the other sex (usually female) leading to male-female dimorphism – accentuation of secondary sexual characteristics in those with greater reproductive fitness
- inter-sexual selection – one sex (usually females) chooses from available prospective mates (usually males) according to attractiveness; biological marketplace explanation (Noe and Hammerstein 1995), genes that confer attractive qualities are more ‘saleable’.

Possible evaluation points:

- apparent conflict between natural selection and sexual selection
- use of evidence to support or contradict theory, eg in favour of natural selection, eg studies of feature preferences in males and females, eg waist-hip ratio, facial symmetry
- animal evidence, eg mating strategies / parental investment and extrapolation to humans
- some explanations for female mate choice seem contrary to evolution – Fisher (1930) ‘good-taste hypothesis’; Zahavi (1975) handicap / good-genes hypothesis
- sexual strategies theory – partner selection strategies differ according to what each partner wants from different type of relationship (long-term or short-term).

Credit other relevant evaluation points.

Only credit evaluation of the methodology used in studies when made relevant to discussion of the explanations.

Q3.

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO3 = 10

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion / evaluation / application is thorough and effective. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument sometimes lacking.
3	9 – 12	Knowledge is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. Discussion / evaluation / application is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	5 – 8	Some knowledge is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion / evaluation / application is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 4	Knowledge is limited. Discussion / evaluation / application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Please note that although the content for this mark scheme remains the same, on most mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) content appears as a bulleted list.

AO1

Candidates may outline the background to research on sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour in terms of evolutionary theory, selfish gene etc. Also relevant would be a description of the detailed processes involved in sexual selection, including intrasexual (mate competition) and intersexual (mate choice) selection. Other factors affecting mate choice, such as parental investment theory, and variations such as short and long-term mate preferences, would also be creditable.
Research with non-human animals may earn marks insofar as it is made explicitly relevant to human reproductive behaviour.

Research studies may be presented as illustrating the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behavior.

AO3

There are a variety of routes to credit. Research findings, such as Buss's cross-cultural studies and dating research, could be used effectively. Evaluation of research eg use of questionnaires and social desirability issues, may earn marks if the implications for the reliability and validity of findings are clear.

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Credit comparison with alternative approaches eg social psychological explanations. Credit a more theoretical approach focusing for instance on broader issues eg free will and determinism – if sexual selection, human reproductive behaviour and the relationships it involves are driven by purely evolutionary considerations, then they would be highly predictable. In fact human reproductive behaviour has changed dramatically over the last century, with non-heterosexual relationships, widespread use of contraception, and couples choosing not to have children. This implies that we have more control (free will) over our behaviour than is implied by the evolutionary approach. Credit also relevant references to reductionism, cultural differences, gender biases and socially sensitive research.

Q1.

Most answers consisted of a prolonged outline followed by a very brief limitation, which was stated rather than explained. As a consequence, relatively few answers were awarded marks in the top level. Outlines focussing on inter and intra sexual selection were commonly seen and often comprehensive. In these responses, it was usual to see limited applicability to non-heterosexual relationships or lack of relevance to modern society as the limitation. Some quite detailed outlines failed to address the matter of ‘preferences’ as per the question, although preference was often implicit. Weak responses were anecdotal, typically arguing that ‘men are not fussy’, and ‘women are picky’.

Q3.

Another very popular question that exemplified the need to organise material. Students accessing the higher marks outlined the principles of Darwinian evolution, then reviewed various aspects of human sexual selection. These included intra- and inter-sexual selection, gender differences in reproductive priorities (spreading genes versus resource support) based on parental investment theory, and consequent gender differences in attitudes to short- and long-term relationships. At each stage supporting evidence could be quoted from a range of cross-cultural and western studies. Other aspects, such as attitudes to jealousy, could earn marks if clearly linked to the question of sexual selection.

Weaker answers showed an incomplete understanding of evolutionary theory and failed to provide a coherent and organised answer. Findings of studies were incompletely interpreted, and methodological evaluation sometimes misplaced. Buss’ cross-cultural study was not ‘culturally biased’ and evolutionary theory clearly does provide an explanation for female sexual and reproductive behaviour, which it is not ‘gender biased’.

Social psychological theories could be used effectively as AO2 / 3, but some students had clearly prepared answers on social psychological approaches only and earned few, if any, marks. General commentary included the changing socio-cultural roles of men and women, and the issue of explaining non-traditional relationships.