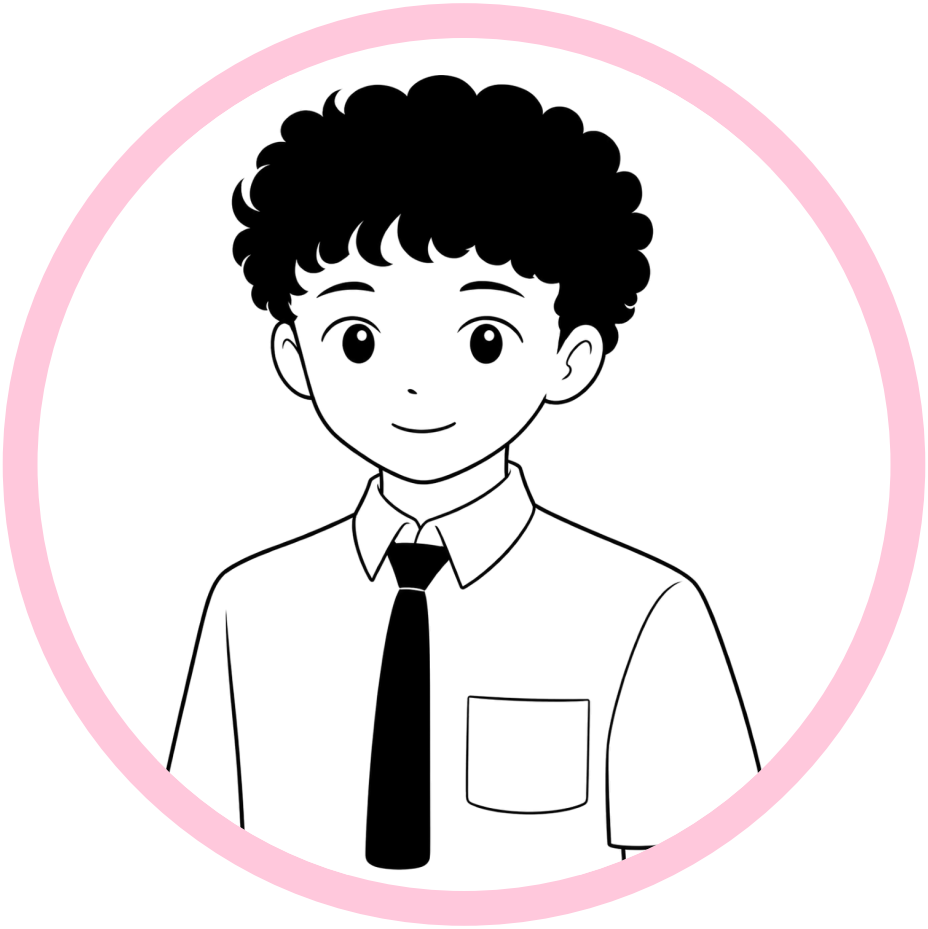
AQA A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY · 7182

PSYCHOLOGY



MARK SCHEME

3.3.7 MEASURING STRESS

SCORE	PERCENTAGE
/40	%

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Q1.

[AO1 = 3 AO3 = 5]

Level	Marks	Description
4	7 – 8	Knowledge of self-report scale(s) as measures of stress is accurate with some detail. Evaluation 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.
3	5 – 6	Knowledge of self-report scale(s) as measures of stress is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Evaluation is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	3 – 4	Limited knowledge of self-report scale(s) as measures of stress is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 2	Knowledge of self-report scale(s) as measures of stress is very limited. Evaluation 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.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible outline:

- SRRS (Holmes and Rahe) scale of 43 life events experienced over a specified time each event is accorded life change units (LCUs) which can be added up to give an overall life change score (credit also knowledge of how the scale was constructed)
- Hassles and Uplifts Scale (Kanner) 117 daily hassles, respondent indicates hassles occurring over last month and their severity, 135 uplift events which mediate effect of hassles.

Credit other self-report scales, eg Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen) and Stress Appraisal Measure (Peacock and Wong).

Possible evaluation:

- validity issues, eg ambiguity of certain life events on the SRRS that may be stressful for some people but not for others eg marital separation is highly rated but may be a relief for some people
- need to distinguish between positive and negative events on SRRS
- causality issues – illness may lead to some stressful life events (eg job loss) rather than the other way round
- issues of reliability – recall is retrospective so may be inaccurate – test-retest reliability for SRRS varies
- use of evidence, eg Kanner – hassles correlate with psychological health; Johnson –

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link between high SRRS score and illness
- individual differences, eg hardiness and personality type can mediate stress so measurement needs to take personal variables into account
- ethics – completing self-report Qs may affect a person's stress level
- combined measure of life events and hassles gives fuller picture – one can exacerbate the effect of the other
- hassles a better measure of stress troubling most people
- comparison with other measures, eg objective physiological measures.

Credit other relevant material.

Q2.

[AO3 = 2]

1 mark for a brief explanation of a limitation (must be explained rather than stated).

Plus

1 mark for elaboration

Possible limitations:

- does not consider individual differences in response, eg divorce or children leaving home
- illness outcomes are not clearly specified
- correlations between the SRRS scores and illness outcomes are small / non-existent
- use of retrospective questionnaire has problems of self-presentation, demand characteristics, accuracy of recall.

Credit other relevant limitations.

Q3.

[AO3 = 2]

Possible content:
- Demand characteristics, self-presentation
- Reliance on recall
- Does scale cover all possible hassles and uplifts?
- Ignores major life events that can affect stress
- Results linking H & U and stress measures (illness, depression etc) are correlational, cause/effect cannot be concluded

2 marks for a clear and coherent explanation
1 mark for a vague /muddled explanation or for a limitation merely identified

Q4.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

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Although the essential content for this mark scheme remains the same, mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) take a different format as follows:

- A single set of numbered levels (formerly bands) to cover all skills
- Content appears as a bulleted list
- No IDA expectation in A Level essays, however, credit for references to issues, debates and approaches where relevant.

AO3 = 4

Candidates are asked why different findings / conclusions might be obtained by using questionnaires and interviews. They might refer to such issues as:

- People may or may not be more honest in a questionnaire than when faced directly with an interviewer.
- With an interview people have the opportunity to ask if they don't understand a question.
- In an interview people have a greater opportunity to use their own words to express themselves and can say exactly what they want.
- Interview can be more flexible, especially if using unstructured interview.

Any other relevant issue can be credited.

Examiners should be sensitive of breadth / depth trade-off. There could be one explanation in detail or more than one in less detail.

There is no requirement to engage with the stem although this would be creditworthy.

AO3 Knowledge and understanding of research methods
4 marks Effective explanation Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of possible difference in results.
3 marks Reasonable explanation Reasonable explanation that demonstrates knowledge of possible difference in results.
2 marks Basic explanation Basic explanation of possible difference in results.
1 mark Rudimentary Rudimentary, muddled, explanation of possible difference in results, demonstrating very limited knowledge.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

Q5.

AO3 = 4

Limitations of using questionnaires could include:

- social desirability

- leading questions
- ambiguous wording / different understanding of words
- participants may not tell the truth, especially with regard to stress-related issues which are sensitive
- sampling difficulties / response rates
- closed questions leading to lack of detail
- open questions leading to difficulty of analysis

Any other relevant problem can be credited.

Any reference to data without an explicit link to open or closed questions is not credit-worthy.
Ethical issues are not credit-worthy.
For each limitation: 1 mark for identification of the problem and a further mark for elaboration
of why it is a limitation or a consequence.
For example, participants might not understand the question (1 mark) and so make a guess and give answers that do not really represent their stress (further mark for elaboration).
Answers do not need to be expressed within the context of stress research to gain full marks.

Q6.

AO3 = 2

Ethical issues could include:

- Informed consent
- Right to withdraw
- Protection from harm
- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Deception.

Any relevant ethical issue can receive credit, but the question requires candidates to explain the ethical issue.
1 mark for identifying the ethical issue and a further mark for the explanation. For example, confidentiality is an issue because when investigating stress the participant might be disclosing personal information that they want to keep private.

Q7.

AO3 = 2

Limitations of using questionnaires could include:

- Social desirability
- Leading questions
- Ambiguous wording / different understanding of words
- Participants may not tell the truth, especially with regard to stress-related issues which are sensitive

- Sampling difficulties / response rates.

Any other relevant problem can be credited, as long as it is NOT an ethical one.
1 mark for identification for the problem and a further mark for elaboration. For example, participants might not understand the question (1 mark) and so make a guess and give answers that do not really represent their stress (further mark for elaboration).

Q8.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

(a) **AO2 = 1**

Harry shows typical Type A behaviour.

AO2 = 3

The behaviour of such personality types makes them more prone to stress-related illnesses such as CHD, raised blood pressure etc. Such people are more likely to have their ”flight or fight” response set off by things in their environment. As a result they are more likely to have the stress hormones present, which over a long period of time leads to a range of stress-related illnesses.

Alternatively an answer that focuses on psychological effects of stress could be credit-worthy (eg depression).

(b) **AO3 = 2**

Candidates can offer a generic method such as questionnaire or interview, they could offer a specific method such as the Jenkins Activity Survey, or they could describe the methods used by specific researchers such as Friedman & Rosenman.
1 mark for brief identification or outline of a method and a further mark for elaboration, or 2 marks for a detailed description of the way it is measured. For example, psychologists use interviews to measure Type A behaviour (1 mark) Friedman & Rosenman kept on interrupting their participants to see how they would react (further mark for elaboration).
Reference to methods involving measuring blood pressure, or taking blood samples are not credit-worthy as measures of Type A.

Q9.

AO3 = 6

This question is assessing candidates’ understanding of the use of questionnaires, a common technique when investigating life events (eg SRRS, SES, etc). For both the advantage and disadvantage 1 mark for identification and a further 2 marks for elaboration. Candidates may refer to specific questionnaires or take a more generic approach. They can link it to actual research such as referring to a specific questionnaire (eg SRRS).

Advantage: If closed questions are used the quantitative data that is produced are generally fairly easy to analyse. This makes it possible to make comparisons, produce

trends, etc.
People may be happier to disclose detailed and personal information if they don't have to do so face to face.

Compared to an interview they are easy to use (1 mark). The researcher doesn't need any special training to hand out the questionnaires and information about how stress affects health can be gathered by any researcher fairly easily (2 further marks for elaboration).

Disadvantage: If the wording on the questionnaire is not clear, people may misunderstand a question (1 mark) and answer it in different ways (1 mark). This makes it more difficult to analyse their data (1 mark).

Researcher bias may affect the respondents (1 mark). The way in which the researcher gives the questionnaire, their gender, age or even their appearance might influence the respondent to give an answer that they think is expected of them (2 further marks for elaboration).

Q10.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

(a) **AO1 = 2**

Up to 2 marks for an outline of what is meant by Type A behaviour. This could include descriptions of the specific behaviours such as; aggression and ambition, very competitive and always playing games to win, impatience and trying to do more than one thing at a time. 2 marks for 2 traits or 1 well elaborated trait.

(b) **AO3 = 2**

Up to 2 marks for an outline of a method that has been used. 1 mark for an identification of a relevant method and a further mark for elaboration. Candidates could offer generic methods, eg questionnaire, interview, observation, or they could offer a specific method such as the Jenkins Activity Survey; Bortner Scale.

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Q1.

This fairly straightforward question was usually competently answered, with most students offering both the SRRS and the Hassles and Uplifts scale. Some detailed accounts of the types of items and the scoring of the SRRS were seen. Effective evaluations tended to consider the appropriateness of having a fixed LCU for each life event when different individuals would experience the same event quite differently and comparisons between the scales. Appropriateness of the SRRS for various age groups was also a useful discussion point. Weaker discussions referred to internal validity, external validity, reductionism and determinism, without any sensible explanation.

Q4.

Although there were some excellent, detailed answers that demonstrated very good understanding of these two methods, few were able to produce a coherent comparison of the methods. Better answers were able to refer back to the measurement of specific personality types, even though this was not necessary. For example in an interview, body language may be observed such as finger tapping.

There was some confusion among weaker students who seemed to think that questionnaires could only use closed questions and interviews only use open questions. There was also some misperception as to the meaning of social desirability: this could occur in either method. There was also a tendency for some students to speculate on Georgia's personality type rather than on the research methods themselves.

Q5.

There were a wide range of limitations given, but the more successful ones were those that were able to show why it was a limitation. For example, social desirability is a limitation because the answers might not reflect the truth and may lack validity. Other answers compared questionnaires with interviews as a method of illustrating the limitation. A large number of students are still making the classic mistake of offering types of data as the limitation but without linking it to specific types of questions. Unless there is an explicit link to open / closed questions then such answers are not relevant.

Q6.

In general candidates were able to do well on this question.

Q7.

In general candidates were able to do well on this question.

Q8.

(a) Clearly candidates knew how to describe Type A personality but the skill of applying this knowledge and demonstrating an understanding of why this links to the negative effects of stress was beyond many. This is a classic example of how the assessment of learning has changed on the new specification; but some centres do not seem to be aware of this (perhaps the same centres who do not have access to these reports?) Students could describe in detail the personality type but were not in the possession of the skills to apply their knowledge; candidates rarely explained the link between Type A personality and the negative effects.

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(b) Most candidates could identify a relevant method of measuring personality type eg questionnaire, interview etc. A significant number were able to offer excellent detailed answers of the exact methods that Friedman and Rosenman used, eg interviews where they were frustrated/interrupted to measure hostility.

Q9.

The main problem with the responses to this question was that many candidates failed to identify one (either advantage or disadvantage) but instead linked several together. This meant that their answers lacked detail and they seldom gained more than one mark. Comparison with another method is a useful way of answering this type of question. For example, one advantage of using questionnaires is that in comparison with an interview, the person administering the questionnaire does not need to be trained, while with an interview they do require some specialist skills. Candidates often found the disadvantage easier than the advantage, using the problems associated with social desirability very effectively.

Q10.

A straightforward question with most candidates gaining full marks for part (a). However, simply naming a method in part (b) was not sufficient for both marks, some elaboration was required. Better answers were able to not only name the interview method but also note that researchers could also look at body language such as tapping the table with fingers when impatient as an indication of Type A.

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