
AP[®] Psychology

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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AP[®] PSYCHOLOGY

2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

Professor Menendez conducted an experiment to investigate the effects of a new medication for treating the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Part A

Explain the concept of compulsion in the context of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Part B

Explain why each of the following would be used in this experiment to help establish cause and effect.

- Random assignment
- Placebo condition

Part C

Professor Menendez presented the research at an international conference. After the presentation, audience members met in small groups to discuss the research.

Explain how each of the following may affect the attendees' discussion of the research.

- Groupthink
- Display rules
- Belief perseverance
- Cocktail party effect

General Considerations

1. Answers should be presented in sentences and must be cogent enough for the meaning of the response to come through. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce the score of a response, but spelling must be close enough that the reader is convinced of the word.
2. Do not score any notes made on the question section of the booklet. Score only what has been written in the blanks provided in the booklet.
3. Definitions alone will not score, but they may be used to enhance the application.
4. Within a point, a student will not be penalized for misinformation unless it directly contradicts correct information that would otherwise have scored a point. A correct application with an incorrect definition is not considered a direct contradiction and should score the point.
5. Rubric examples provided for each point are not to be considered exhaustive.
6. Responses that simply parrot or repeat the terms from the question will not score.
7. A response can score a point only if it clearly conveys what part of the question is being answered. It is possible to infer what part of the question is being answered if it is consistent with the order of the question.

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Question 1 (continued)

Part A

Point 1: Compulsion

Responses must indicate that a compulsion is a repetitive behavior or mental act (e.g., counting) in response to an obsession or done to reduce anxiety/distress.

- Score: “Jamal washes his hands a lot to reduce his anxiety.”
- Do NOT score: “Ricardo wants to wash his hands all the time because he thinks it will make him feel better” because desires (beliefs, needs, wants, etc.) are not a behavior.
- Do NOT score: “Amy tidies her room regularly” because it is not a response to an obsession or done to reduce anxiety.

Part B

Point 2: Random assignment

Responses must refer to minimizing the impact of subject variables (e.g., age, gender, weight) between groups.

- Score: “Random assignment allows for the creation of groups that are more similar to each other.”
- Score: “Random assignment reduces the chance that subject variables will confound the experiment.”
- Do NOT score: “Random assignment helps Prof. Menendez create representative groups” because representativeness or generalizability is related to random sampling, not random assignment.
- Do NOT score vague responses, e.g., “to reduce bias,” “to increase validity,” or “to improve results.”
- Do NOT score confounding variables related to environmental differences between groups (e.g., time of day).

Point 3: Placebo condition

Responses must indicate that the placebo condition allows researchers to separate the effect of the drug itself from the expectations of the participants.

- Score: “A placebo condition allows conclusions about the effectiveness of medication independent of the participants’ expectations.”
- Score: “Placebo condition would be used to establish cause and effect by ensuring that improvements in the patients would not just be because they were told the drug would work.”
- Do NOT score vague responses, e.g., “to reduce bias,” “to increase validity,” or “to improve results.”

Part C

Point 4: Groupthink

Responses must indicate that the discussions at the conference are limited because attendees fail to share opinions or fully examine evidence for some group-related reason.

- Score: “Dr. Smith disagreed with the results of Professor Menendez’s research but refrained from sharing her viewpoints with the group.”
- Score: “The participants may not voice their opinions and just conform to the majority.”
- Do NOT score: “All members of the group agreed with Prof. Menendez’s conclusion” because there is no reference to failing to share opinions or not fully examining evidence.

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

Point 5: Display rules

Responses must indicate that learned or culturally based displays of emotion, or the management of emotional expression, affect the discussions of the attendees at the conference. Facial expression establishes emotional expression, but body language and gestures alone do not.

- Score: “If Prof. Menendez grew up in the U.S., he will show his emotions freely. If Mr. Nagasami is coming from Japan, he may not show his happiness and Prof. Menendez may read it as anger.”
- Do NOT score: “Display rules can help the group discussion flow smoothly if everyone agrees in advance to a ‘no interruption rule’” because a reference to rules (or body language, gestures, etc.) must be related to learned or culturally-based displays or the management of emotion.

Point 6: Belief perseverance

Responses must indicate that an attendee maintains a belief despite contradictory evidence.

- Score: “Cesar maintains his belief that OCD doesn’t exist, even after hearing Prof. Menendez’s evidence-based talk that it does exist.”
- Do NOT score: “Rasheed sticks to his beliefs and won’t let anyone change his mind or be convinced otherwise” because it lacks reference to contradictory evidence.

Point 7: Cocktail party effect

Responses must indicate that during the conference attendees are able to filter out other noises AND focus on one voice in the room.

- Score: “There is construction noise, but Teresa is easily able to just focus on her group’s discussion.”
- Score: “Hearing their name called across the noisy room can distract a participant from the group’s conversation.”
- Do NOT score: “An attendee might be able to hear an idea being discussed in a different group” because there is no evidence of filtering out other noises.

1A
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ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 1

A compulsion is a recurring urge to do something. For example, you might feel a strong urge to check to make sure the stove is off every 15 minutes and feel like if you don't, your house will burn down.

Random assignment is deciding which participants are in each group randomly. This would help to minimize the chances of there being any difference between the experimental & control groups in Prof. Menendez's study. A placebo is a fake treatment, like a sugar pill, which is known to have no effects. The group that receives no treatment (control group) would most likely receive a sugar pill in place of the experimental medication in this study. This would make the control group unaware that they aren't receiving any treatment. This is important because it makes the placebo effect the same in both groups since they both think they're receiving treatment. Without that you wouldn't be able to tell how much of the effects of the medication are placebo & you wouldn't be able to establish cause & effect.

Groupthink is when the opinion of the group affects the opinion of an individual. So perhaps one attendee thought that the research wasn't ~~very~~ well valid since perhaps it wasn't

A1
2 of 3

Question 1 is reprinted for your convenience.

1. Professor Menendez conducted an experiment to investigate the effects of a new medication for treating the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Part A

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Part B

Explain why each of the following would be used in this experiment to help establish cause and effect.

- Random assignment
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Part C

Professor Menendez presented the research at an international conference. After the presentation, audience members met in small groups to discuss the research.

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double-blind, but everyone else in the group thinks that the research ~~was~~ was well done and valid, so that attendee assumes everyone else is right & doesn't say anything.

Display rules are ~~after~~ social rules about how we should behave. So perhaps one of the attendees is very excited about this research because their dad has OCD and they are hoping that the medication will soon become available and it will help their father, so they want to shout & jump up and down, but they

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3 of 3

ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 1

don't because of display rules since that would be socially inappropriate.

Belief perseverance is when people's beliefs remain unchanged even in the face of evidence against them. Perhaps one of the attendees is of the opinion that OCD can't be managed with medication, and even though the experiment showed that the medication helped to control the symptoms of OCD they are still convinced that medication can't help, so they go around telling everyone that this is pointless & the medication is ineffective.

The cocktail party effect is when someone can hear something, like their name or a curse word in a room full of people talking. So maybe one of the attendees will be discussing the study when they hear their name across the room & get distracted.

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Part A

Compulsion is where the ~~main~~ subject is ~~compulsed~~ pushed to fulfill a need through a psychological disruption. The subject does not have conscious control of these compulsions. A compulsion could be considered a need to flip a light switch a certain number of times or to straighten a paper.

Part B

Random assignment helps avoid bias in placing people in the control & treatment groups. This allows for the experiment to be valid.

The placebo condition allows for a check to be given in comparing the treatment to a placebo. The placebo effect is when one believes their symptoms are being treated, therefore they begin to recover. A placebo check would assign one ~~treat~~ group to ~~a~~ ~~the~~ treatment & the other to a similar looking placebo. This ~~measures the~~ effects of the checks to make sure the new treatment is not simply making effect like a placebo would.

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1B
2 of 3

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Part C

Groupthink is where, in order to avoid conflict, people avoid giving contradictory opinions & tend to simply agree on what is being said in the group whether they truly believe that or not. In the discussions the attendees will most likely avoid talking about any doubts they may have in order to avoid contention in the group.

Display rules are where one who is more dominant in a conversation guides the conversation.

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Therefore, the attendees, in part of the social norm to follow display rules, will converse in the direction of the dominant speaker's opinions.

Belief perseverance is where even when given contradictory evidence one still holds onto their own opinions & ideas of the topic. If another professor believes that there are no other working treatments for OCD, ~~then~~ after the presentation given by Professor Mendez, the other professor will disregard Mendez's presentation & still believe there are no other treatments for OCD. This he will share with others who ~~do~~ share his beliefs in the discussions, where they all disregard the presentation.

The cocktail party effect is where one, ~~see~~ even in the midst of many noises, can hear & pay particular attention to one source. As the discussions at the conference are going on, everyone will be trying to listen to one particular voice in the midst of all the other voices. One only accomplishes this by use of the cocktail party effect, listening closely to one person & ignoring all other noises.

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ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 1

- Compulsions, in the context of obsessive-compulsive disorder, are behaviors or actions, such as having to repeatedly wash your hands.
- Random assignment would be used to randomly group ~~participants~~ ^{the subjects} in either the control (the group not receiving medication) or the experimental group (the group receiving medication), to see the results of the experiment.
- Placebo condition would be used ~~by~~ by possibly telling subjects that they are on the medication, when they are not, to see if the desired results still occur.
- Some audience members may disagree with the experiment, but not share their opinions, in order to ~~maintain~~ maintain harmony within the group, thus exemplifying groupthink.
- Some audience members may discuss that rules ^{and conditions} should have been followed throughout the experiment. For example, if placebo condition was used, debriefing would be necessary after the experiment to explain the deception that occurred. This is a

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part of the ethical guidelines of an experiment as well.

• ~~Despite~~ Despite contradictory evidence, ~~the~~ some audience members may continue to discuss, ~~share~~, share, and hold onto their opinions, thus exemplifying belief perseverance.

• While discussing the research, one audience member may think someone from across the room called their name, even if ~~someone~~ ^{someone} did not call it, thus exemplifying cocktail party effect.

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2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The responses needed to focus on an experiment investigating the effects of a new drug to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder. Part A required that the responses demonstrate an understanding of a compulsion in the context of the disorder. The responses needed to explain that the performed behavior is repeated and is either in response to an obsession or that the behavior reduces anxiety or distress. In Part B the responses needed to demonstrate an understanding of how using random assignment and a placebo condition allowed the researcher to draw conclusions about cause and effect. The responses had to explain that random assignment minimizes individual differences, or subject variables, between groups. In addition, the responses needed to explain that participants' expectations are controlled when a placebo condition is used in an experiment testing a drug's effectiveness. Part C required that the students explain how groupthink, display rules, belief perseverance, and the cocktail party effect impacted the group discussion held after the researcher's presentation of the results.

Sample: 1A

Score: 6

The response to point 1 did not earn a point because there is no reference to a repetitive behavior being performed. The response earned point 2 because it refers to minimizing differences between the groups to make them similar. The response earned point 3 because it refers to the participant receiving the treatment and that they “wouldn't be able to tell,” indicating participation expectation about the effects of the medication. The response earned point 4 because it describes the attendee failing to share their opinion because they assume that others are correct — limiting group discussion. The response earned point 5 because it describes the attendee limiting or managing their expression of emotion by not jumping up and down because they deem it socially inappropriate. The response earned point 6 because it refers to the attendee maintaining their belief about the ineffectiveness of OCD medication even in the face of experimental results that show effectiveness (evidence). The response earned point 7 because it describes how the attendee filters out the sound of voices in a “room full of people talking” and hears “their name.”

Sample: 1B

Score: 4

The response did not earn point 1 because it refers to compulsion in terms of a need and does not describe a behavior. The response did not earn point 2 because it does not refer to use of random assignment to minimize subject variables. The response earned point 3 because it does refer to participant expectation and the use of placebo condition to make sure the treatment is the cause for the effect. The response earned point 4 because it discusses how the attendees would avoid sharing doubts to avoid contention in the group. The response did not earn point 5 because there is no reference to emotional displays. The response earned point 6 because there is a reference to an attendee maintaining a belief in spite of contradictory evidence. The response earned point 7 because it describes filtering of discussions and focusing on a voice.

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Question 1 (continued)

Sample: 1C

Score: 2

The response did not earn point 1 because there is no indication of a response to obsession or reduction in anxiety. The response did not earn point 2 because there is no discussion of individual difference or subject variables. The response did not earn point 3 because there is no indication that the researcher was able to separate the effects of the drug from participants' expectations. The response earned point 4 because there it indicates that discussion was limited to “maintain harmony” — a group related reason. The response did not earn point 5 because there is no indication of emotional display. The response earned point 6 because it states that attendees hold beliefs despite contradictory evidence. The response did not earn point 7 because there is no discussion of filtering.