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Examiners' Report January 2010

GCE Psychology 6PS01

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1.1 General Comments

This was the third exam assessing the new 2008 specification. Overall, candidates appeared to understand the nature of the paper and the areas of the course drawn through the questions. The paper seemed to be the most accessible of the three Unit 1 exams set so far, but still had enough differentiation to help stretch better candidates.

The number of unanswered questions was at its lowest and generally most candidates had a good attempt at all questions, which was very pleasing and a number used additional sheets to expand upon answers (Q16 in particular).

There were some real discriminators on the paper. Question 10 on the multiple choice which dealt with the old key assumption style assessment was only correctly answered by better candidates. Q12 (b) clearly separated those who knew about experimental designs from those who did not. Q13 rewarded candidates who correctly knew how to compare and Q14 enabled better candidates to be creative using psychology.

There was no repeat of candidates falling down on the essay although again too many did just describe and evaluate Milgram's study instead of his theory. This lack of distinction between a theory and a study still remains baffling and has beset some psychology students for a number of years. How to address this issue is still a challenge.

Q14 again demonstrated careless errors on the part of the candidate from simply glossing over the stimulus material and not reading it properly. These are designed to help candidates not hinder them. Too many answers did not refer to advice which was inherent in the question.

Some candidates still follow a generic way of evaluation and not putting enough detail into their responses. The descriptions of studies followed a NAMRC formula, and GRAVE for analysis was used on many candidates work. Some candidates still write responses for different questions in the spaces provided and writing please go to page x in the answer booklet.

Questions 1-10 Multiple Choice

The standard of responses in this section showed an improvement compared to the previous two papers. The majority of candidates did well on these multiple choice questions with some scoring the full 11 marks. There was an equal split for the first time of correct answers which were based on methodology (Questions 1-7) and non methodology (Questions 8-11). Question 10 which required two answers, nearly all candidates did cross two boxes and so had read the injunction correctly which was pleasing. However this was also the first time a question had been asked about definition of the social approach which a number of candidates answered incorrectly. Surprisingly these same candidates answered the previous question about definitions of the cognitive approach correctly.

Question 11

The majority of candidates successfully identified a study from the Cognitive Approach in part (a) with Godden & Baddeley and Craik & Tulving being the most popular. A minority scored zero for identifying a non-cognitive study such as Milgram. A few offered a vague identification that could not be credited and others lost marks by just putting LOP.

For part (b) many candidates scored two overall for one finding and one conclusion. However, many candidates could not take their answers further and give a second, different finding or an elaborated conclusion. Weaker candidates wrote limited findings but did not provide enough detail in their responses. Others wrote detailed descriptions of the methods / procedures of these studies or described the whole study rather than focus on the requirements of the question. Candidates who chose Bartlett's War of the ghosts struggled to access high marks.

The better answers were from those who chose either Godden and Baddeley or Craik and Tulving. Both of these studies contained lots of specific details that could have been included in the findings/conclusions, and the more able candidates were able to cite very specific results. Godden & Baddeley was typically answered in more detail than other studies seen and included appropriate percentages. One or two candidates answered with Loftus and Palmer and managed to get full marks.

For part (c) many chose reliability as their strength or validity in some form. A sizeable minority stated that a strength was it backed up a theory which was not creditworthy. There were a few candidates here who gave a study from the social approach. Candidates understood psychological terms such as ecological validity or control of extraneous variables but did not elaborate in enough detail.

Better candidates demonstrated a good range of either application or methodological strengths. These usually gave a suitable application specifically to revision purposes with fully extended points made gaining full marks. Some struggled to access both marks – good ideas were given however many did not elaborate on the evaluative point and therefore failed to access the additional mark. There were some generic answers not clearly related to the study.

Question 12

The vast majority of candidates could easily describe a basic aim but it was rare for them to identify both variables sufficiently to gain maximum marks. 'Recall' was a very common DV. However, more able candidates gave sufficient depth to include both variables and there were some excellent answers here that gained both marks. Some candidates did not read the question, as a consequence wrote their response relating to a survey from the social approach (mainly prejudiced attitudes). A significant minority of candidates identified a method rather than a design.

Common one mark answers included "to see if semantic processing produced better recall". Most indicated an intention to replicate an existing study, with very few identifying the variables within their own study. Those who did cue dependency type experiments seemed to fare better on this question as they elaborated on both IV and DV in the aim.

Part (b) brought about very variable answers and proved to be a good differentiator between those who knew about experimental designs and those who did not. Many candidates chose to evaluate experiments, sampling or just have a general evaluation of their own practical (using last years paper where problems about own practical was asked?). Weaker candidates found this element challenging and commonly demonstrated confusion at the difference between design and method.

The most popular responses were independent groups or repeated measures. Accurate responses commented on the effect of order effects and participant variables. Those discussing independent or repeated measures demonstrated more knowledge than those discussing matched pairs. These were the two designs most frequently discussed. Hardly any references to correlation were noted.

Question 13

Most candidates scored at least two marks here for some comparison work and a number of candidates scored 4 or 5 on this question. Comparing on validity, reliability, the setting and ethics were quite common. The questions use of criteria (i.e. validity, reliability and ethics) appeared to help structure many candidates' responses. A lot of candidates could actually do the comparison by having relevant sentences next to each other. Some even decided to compare natural with lab or field.

There were some very well thought out answers here showing that candidates really know their experiments well. Comparisons were made including points about environment i.e. controlled artificial or natural and realistic or control over extraneous variables. Some candidates included information about demand characteristics. Very few candidates used evidence from research studies.

Weaker candidates failed to gain marks due to not making explicit comparisons between the types of experiments. Instead there was a tendency to evaluate each experiment independently. Ecological validity seemed well understood, though there was some confusion between reliability and validity. The structure of these answers was often confused and many lost marks but describing Lab experiments in one paragraph and then Field experiment in the next. Comparisons were sometimes implicit.

Field experiments are experiments that happen in the participants natural environment. Laboratory experiments occur in ~~the~~ a scientific area where variables are strictly controlled. Laboratory experiments ~~are~~ produce ~~more~~ less valid results as the tasks set are artificial and tasks which are not normally done in normal everyday life. However, field experiments ~~are~~ ~~is~~ have high validity as the data is collected from the participants natural environment where the tasks set are normal. The laboratory experiments are more reliable as it is well controlled, so only ~~the~~ ~~is~~ cause and effect relationship could be found ^{by the IV} and if task is repeated it will produce similar results. Field experiments have less control over variables and certain factors can make the experiment less likely to produce similar results when repeating.


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Examiner Comments

Four marks in total.

The first two sentences compare setting so that is the first mark.

The next two sentences compare the artificial and everyday settings as showing differences in validity and the points are elaborated enough to warrant a second mark so two marks here.

However, the final section about reliability is not as elaborated/clear as the previous points that were about validity so just one mark for the point about reliability and controls.

Laboratory experiments are useful as the variables can be tightly controlled, whereas field experiments aren't able to achieve that level of security all the time. However, they are more reliable due to the fact that they are conducted in the natural environment of the participants, so the results are more ecologically valid. As far as ethics are concerned, laboratory experiments tend to be better. Field experiments are aimed to keep everything as realistic as possible so they often forget about getting informed consent or giving them the right to withdraw, to name a few.

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Examiner Comments

The first sentence is clearly a comparison about controls and gets one mark. After that the answer is not clear. The next sentence is about validity but wrongly mentions reliability first. The comments about ethics are not clarified (lab) or too general (field). So this answer gets just the one mark overall.

Field experiments have a high ecological validity as they are done in a persons participants known, surroundings, however laboratory experiments low ecological validity as they are normally carried out in a controlled environment. Laboratory experiments have a high reliability as they have high controls and so can be repeated but field experiments have lower reliability as they are not easily replicated as they have less control. Field experiments ~~are~~ are more likely not to have informed consent as you can ~~study~~ observe someone without them even realising that they are in a study but laboratory experiments are ~~also~~ more likely to have got informed consent as participants will have been taken to a controlled environment. Laboratory experiments are more likely to deceive people as to the actual aim of the study whereas field experiments are less likely as they are being to. Both laboratory and field experiments will fully debrief participants after the study has taken part to make sure no harm and study was understood. (Total for Question 13 = 5 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This answer gets four of the five marks.

There is a clear mark in the first sentence about validity and a clear mark in the second sentence about reliability (two marks).

Then a double mark for the next point about informed consent, where there is elaboration by mentioning observing and them not realising (two more marks).

No credit for the last two sentences which are incorrect/not sufficiently explained.

Question 14

This proved to be a real differentiator where the more able candidates were able to connect to the wording of the question i.e. advice. Some very thoughtful responses were given by many candidates that revolved around social psychology. Although many candidates seemed to just summarise prejudice/obedience with a high level of accuracy, the mark scheme allowed them to gain some credit.

It was popular to use Social Identity Theory here to explain the issue and most candidates could do this very well. However, too many did not set it into the context of advice as the question asks thus limiting their score. Applications from the reduction of prejudice were used effectively by many candidates as a way of overcoming the problem. Agency theory, deindividuation and conformity were all used by candidates effectively to help the police out! Those candidates that offered advice included points such as not allowing fans to wear football shirts outside the ground, removing ring leaders from causing trouble, or using the players to encourage the fans to appreciate the skills of their opponents on the field.

Some very weak candidates simply wrote common sense answers that did not relate to social psychology or the mark scheme. Generally the 'advice' given was weak and often not successfully linked back to social psychology theory/research.

Dr Nelson could explain that violence among football fans often stems from prejudice. Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (SIT) suggests that simply being in a group (each football team supporters) creates prejudice because once we identify with a group we are more likely to promote their interests than those of a very similar out-group (other teams). The police could therefore aim to not emphasise the group differences. The groups already formed are called in-groups (our team for example Spain) and the out-group (opposing team for example France). The in-group members are seen as individuals whereas out-group are seen as homogenous. These differences are emphasised by their identity; the football strip; each team has. So to minimise violence the police could request that team shirts are only worn in the stadium to lower before and after match violence.

Some fans may blindly obey orders, this means follow direct orders from a perceived authority figure, ~~they may~~ be without thinking if the order is moral or just, they are in an ~~an~~ agentic state. This may be possible for policemen and could be used to their advantage. They are legitimate authority figures so if they give direct orders (eg. "stop fighting now") fans are highly likely to obey.



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Examiner Comments

Five marks overall.

The first few words show that this is about advice so all marks can be accessed (see mark scheme).

Down to 'homogenous' gets two marks - one for the idea of police not emphasising group differences (and explaining those differences) and the other for the elaboration about in-groups and out groups (two marks here).

The idea about controlling team shirts gets one mark.

The point about police being the ones giving orders (at the end) gets a mark and the point above where agentic state is explained gets a mark for elaboration of the 'orders' point (two marks here).

The Social Learning Theory would be a good way to describe to the police what is happening.

There are three parts to this, the first is social categorisation. Here ~~the~~ football fans would place their self and others in groups. Their in-group would be the group they ~~feel~~ feel they belong (their side) and the out-group would be the group they don't feel they belong (the other side). Stage two is social identification in which the person would absorb the groups values and norms. They may emphasise group membership by wearing particular clothes, in this case a football shirt. Finally there is social comparison in which the person wants their group to look good in order to boost their self esteem. They may also try to make the out-group look bad in order to make the in-group look better. This where the friction between football fans comes. ~~In~~ In order to reduce this the fans should be encouraged to break down the idea of two opposing teams and be encouraged to see themselves as one big in-group.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gets four marks.

The end sentence mentions encouraging fans which is advice. It might be thought, without reading through, that the answer is not about advice, so this highlights the need to read the answer through before marking.

There is a mark for the in group being 'their side' and the out-group being 'the other side' and the explanation. And a second mark for 'wearing football shirts'. A third mark for making their group looks better so there might be friction. And the final fourth mark for the encouragement for them to see themselves as one big group (the advice).

Dr Nelson can use the Agency Theory by Milgrim to advise the police. It states that when an individual is in their agentic state, they are agents and so obey regardless of their own opinion. This helps explain 'blind obedience'. She can advise them by describing the autonomous state which is when an individual is under their own control and can make their own decisions. Using this she can advise them as to how to overcome this however it is difficult to control.

Another idea she can use is the Social Identity theory which explains why prejudice occurs due to the formation of groups. In this case, fans of different teams. The theory helps explain how prejudice occurs and the factors that affect the amount of prejudice that occurs i.e extent to which an individual identifies with the group of fans and the relevance of comparison with other groups. From this, Dr. Nelson can advise the police as to how they can limit possible violence. However, it is very difficult as fan groups of teams are well established and rivalry exists with many of the groups so advice i.e keeping different fan groups in different locations may help.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gets three marks.

The first sentence mentions advice, so all marks can be accessed.

There is a mark after 'blind obedience' though not a further mark for the actual advice (about how to overcome this) because it is not explained.

There is a mark after 'comparison with other groups' for the explanation of the theory although again the advice mark is not given because the advice (about limiting violence) is not explained.

There is a final mark at the end for the idea of keeping different groups separate.

Tajfel et al 1970 Minimalist group study backs up the Social Identity theory which simply states that by simply forming a group can lead to prejudice.

Therefore, I would advise Dr Nelson to not segregate the fans by making two countries divide in the football stadium as this will encourage in-group favouritism. So, I recommend that they try to make the fans from different countries to sit together.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gets two marks

The second paragraph talks about advice so all marks can be accessed.

The first sentence gets a mark because the second paragraph explains a good point giving advice and the first sentence clarifies that advice (reverse amplification). This shows too how findings from studies can be used (see mark scheme)

Question 15

Popular theories described in part (a) were interference and trace decay. Both of these theories allowed candidate's easier access to four marks, as there is simply more to describe. Most candidates could describe at least two things about their chosen theory and especially for interference appropriate examples were plentiful! Repression was tackled well but candidates really struggled on displacement if they chose this theory. There were quite a few candidates writing about Multistore Model, Levels of Processing, and Reconstructive memory.

For trace decay candidates included responses in their answer such as the biological element of the neurons and that information had to be accessed or rehearsed so that it would not be lost. Interference answers highlighted the difference between retroactive and pro-active interference. Examples that were used were from the AS texts about language learning or telephone numbers. Some candidates did not read the question and wrote a response about the theory of cue dependency.

Repression was also effective but to a lesser degree. Others describing either state or context dependency as if they were separate theories of forgetting.

Part (b) had variable answers. At the top end candidates used supporting evidence well by linking it to the theory being evaluated. However, many candidates simply listed studies without stating why it supported the theory they had chosen. There were some good comparisons where a difference was clearly expressed but many simply described a different theory in an attempt to use it as an evaluation point. The most popular theory evaluated was cue dependency. Some candidates used the point directly from the mark scheme about helping police reconstructions or the conclusions of the Godden and Baddeley research.

Only a minority evaluated the theory of memory that they had described in part a. When the theory evaluated was different to that described in part a, there was a tendency to include a lot of description of the theory, rather than focusing upon the evaluation.

Again the suggested criteria in the question helped candidates structure their responses, and often access at least 3 marks. However a minority of candidates simply evaluated the research that has helped prove the theory e.g. Godden and Baddeley, or just evaluated a theory of memory that clearly gained no marks.

Better candidates gave enough supporting information from research to access high marks. Practical applications were well applied here also. Reporting the applicability of the findings of studies was common, with cue dependency typically relating to eye witness testimony.

Question 16

This question was generally answered well by candidates. Most were familiar with Hofling's study and were well detailed and showed good understanding. A significant majority could describe two procedure points and a result to score 3/5. However, there were some fabulous answers where candidates clearly understood the aim, the two parts of the study, the key results and then what it all meant. The only downside is that a lot of candidates over-answered writing far too much to gain full marks.

Others spent a lot of their response describing the method, rather than focussing on a rounded answer that included the results. A few candidates described Milgram's research. There were very few 'no responses' or incorrect studies. A significant minority of candidates failed to give correct results – "20 out of 22 nurses" or "all of them" were common mistakes.

Others were very good at outlining the procedure and finding, although specifics such as details of the Astoten label were widely missed out. Many candidates outlined the findings of the questionnaire carried out with nurses but very few compared these findings with the findings of the actual experiment.

Many candidates made good use of the 'survey' used before hand and generally gained 2 marks for procedures. A minority of candidates failed to describe the findings or conclusion of the study which clearly limited their marks, despite having an excellent summary of the procedures involved. There are still candidates who suggest there was just one group of nurses who both completed the questionnaire and were telephoned on the ward.

Question 17

The majority of candidates could identify and describe agentic and autonomous states. Most used world war two and Abu ghraib prison as examples to elaborate the agentic state. Others completed it in a formulaic fashion starting with definitions of agentic and autonomous states, moral strain and a conclusion from Milgram's research. The better candidates added agentic shift and socialisation playing a role to their descriptions of agency theory and how people cope with these e.g. employing defence mechanisms. A few candidates muddled agentic and autonomous states.

Evaluation was quite mixed. More able candidates were able to offer a mixture of supporting evidence from research as well as useful application points and alternative explanations. But importantly were able to explain why the findings from studies supported or went against the theory. Better candidates included points about some people not following orders using the 35% in Milgram's study that didn't shock to the 450v or that there are other explanations of obedience in terms of following a charismatic leader or the social power theory. These most successful answers went on to identify what the theory cannot explain, e.g. independent behaviour. These able candidates often added at least four solid A02 comments and accessed level 3 and 4 of the mark scheme. Weaker candidates simply cited Milgram's obedience research in support, some adding Hofling or the ability to provide an explanation for genocide. Weakest candidates appeared to misread the question and describe and evaluate Milgram's obedience study.

Very few candidates left this question blank, showing by and large good preparation. Generally candidates understood agency theory but possibly ran out of time at the end of their examination to fully elaborate their points.

Milgram's proposed ~~that~~ agency theory says that ~~when~~ people start off in an autonomous state but shift to an agentic state when obeying. This shift is known as the agentic shift. The theory was proposed ~~&~~ after carrying out the study to test levels of obedience under an authority figure by Milgram. 65% showed obedience by giving shocks till the end.

A strength of the agency theory is that there are many studies to back the theory up such as Hojlund (1966), Meus & Kaajimaker and also Milgram's own study on obedience. A weakness is that there

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Examiner Comments

This answer is in level 1 and gets two marks

The first sentence identifies the two terms. The Milgram evidence is not presented as a supporting study. In evaluation there is mention of studies supporting - though no detail about the studies, so that comes under little attempt (mark scheme). There is more than the minimal (1 mark) but not enough for the top of the band.

Milgram said that the participants who were in his study acted in an agentic state: they acted as agents to an authoritative figure ~~showing~~ even though it went against their moral strain (doing something that goes against your beliefs) they acted with blind obedience to an authoritative figure like a soldier taking orders. An individual is normally in an ~~agentic~~ ^{autonomous} state which means they can act and think as an individual deciding what's right and wrong.

Milgram's theory is ~~valid~~ reliable as he has tested his theory in his study and his results have come out showing this 'agency theory'. However he did the study himself which could lead to researcher bias so his results could say what he wanted them to say. We are all individuals who can think and act for ourselves. So is there such thing as an agentic state? But in ~~the~~ Milgram's study a participant even had a full blown seizure this could show he was feeling severely distressed.

which could have been to the moral strain he felt, this proves Milgram's theory is valid. How does an individual know what an authoritative figure because a teacher is ^{seen} as authoritative figure to a pupil but does this mean when a pupil does what a teacher wants they act in an ~~aut~~ agentic state and the rest of the time they are in an autonomous state this proves Milgram's ~~the~~ theory to authoritative figures but perhaps there are other things to consider as people have different personalities so while one ~~may~~ may follow his orders at an early stage another may not as shown in Milgram's study.

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Examiner Comments

This answer is in Level 2 and gets 4 marks

The description mentions both states, and shows understanding of them both - Level 2. The evaluation is appropriate - Milgram's evidence is used quite well and there is an evaluation point about Milgram (him being the experimenter). Then the answer is not so clear and gives little else in the way of evaluation. There are some points, but not clearly made (e.g. personalities). The qwc is not good and also fits into Level 2. Because of the qwc not being good, and both the description and evaluation being weak, the bottom mark in Level 2 is awarded.

Milgram's Agency Theory (1974) claimed that in order to maintain a stable society, ~~so~~ society has developed 2 states.

the autonomous state in which we have our ^{and have} free will and make moral decisions, ^{reason-making} ~~moral decisions~~ and

Agentic state in which we surrender our free will in order to act on behalf of the

society. We are merely the means to an end determined by someone else. He claimed

that we learn to get into the agentic state from early on in our lives, when we have to

obey a teacher. He also said we feel Moral Strain which is the guilt we feel after doing

something that goes against our moral

^{codes} ^{of strength} of Milgram's Agency Theory ^{is that} ^{it} ^{explains} some explanation of why blind obedience leads

to atrocities such as the Mykai Massacre and why it occurred. The soldiers were in the agentic

state.

Milgram (1963) found that when prompted by an ~~er~~ figure of authority the participants just did as he had asked. ^{giving evidence for} ~~But~~ ~~showing~~ ~~that~~

there is an agentic state. And after the experiment was over his ppl's felt guilty showing

evidence for moral strain.

However ^{there is no} Agency Theory ~~is~~ evidence for an agentic state shift within people and so the ~~the~~ theory can't really be tested as there is no measure for when an agentic shift takes place.

The theory has useful applications such as the police could use it to incorporate into training to build barriers against the agentic state in some situations, so they don't just blindly follow orders.

However the Agency Theory provides an excuse for atrocities such as the Holocaust and the Mykai massacre and shouldn't be accepted as an excuse it should just be used as an explanation.

In conclusion Agency Theory provides a plausible explanation to large parts of obedience in human behaviour.

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Examiner Comments

This answer is in Level 3 and gets 7 marks.

This answer defines both states well and talks about why we need the agentic state. Also mentions socialisation and moral strain. The description is all there but could do with more elaboration for Level 4. This description is just Level 3

The evaluation is good - says that the theory explains why the soldiers acted as they did and gives Milgram's evidence and links to moral strain. The paragraphs about no evidence for the shift and the police using the theory are not well explained. There is a useful comment about the excuse for atrocities. A good evaluation is Level 3, but later in the essay the evaluation is not as strong so bottom Level 3.

Milgram (1974) proposed an agency theory whereby he said that our tendency to obey those in authority to us, is a way of maintaining a stable society. Milgram proposed we have developed 2 social states; firstly, the "Agentic state" whereby we surrender to our free will and conscience in order to serve the interests of a wider group; i.e. we are not in control of our actions and act primarily as agents to those in authority and secondarily as individuals. The "Autonomous state" is where we have free will and we act as we wish and follow our conscience. During the "Agentic state" Milgram maintained we may experience "moral strain" whereby we feel an unpleasant sensation resulting from committing an immoral act and often later regret our actions. Milgram suggested that we develop to "Agentic" state during childhood; where at school we put to good of the class before our own needs.

This theory is supported by Milgram's (1963) study, where he found 40 male participants, were administered "electric shocks" to a stranger for every wrong word pair they recalled. He found that 100% of participants administered 300V and 65% continued to administer to full 450V shock. This suggests that to 65% who gave to full shock to George "Mr Wallace" were in the "Agentic state" and were surrendering to their free will in order to serve the interests of the authoritative figure (the experimenter), who sat in and gave verbal continuation prompts. However, they did show signs of experiencing "moral strain" as participants attempted to pull out and sweated and shook with guilt and nerves.

Additionally, Hofling et al's (1966) study provides further experimental support. 21/22 nurses obeyed a doctor and administered a dose of "Atridien" (actually glucose) to a patient, even though it was double the maximum daily dosage and could potentially put a patient's life at risk. This suggests that these 21 nurses were in the "Agentic state" and



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Examiner Comments

This essay is in Level 4 and gets 12 marks.

The description is detailed and well elaborated. Both states are clearly defined and some additional information too, such as about maintaining a stable society and experiencing moral strain. Socialisation is brought in as well. Good communication skills as well. Both types of state, defined well, appropriate elaboration so Level 4.

The evaluation is very good. There are supporting studies and evidence, e.g. Milgram, related well to the theory (agentic state and moral strain). Also Hofling again related to the theory (nurses in agentic state). There are practical applications - again linked to the theory (surrendering free will). The comment about 35% in Milgram's theory being autonomous (and not explained by the theory) shows the good level of this answer.

Quality of written communication is also very good as required for Level 4.

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Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Uniform boundary mark	80	64	56	48	40	32
Raw boundary mark	60	43	38	34	30	26

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