

AP[®] PSYCHOLOGY

2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

The Smith-Garcias are planning for their first baby. Both parents-to-be have had a psychology course and are looking forward to applying the principles they learned from theories and research that address child development.

A) Summarize one main idea or finding of each of the following four researchers.

- Skinner's operant conditioning
- Bandura's social learning theory
- Ainsworth's attachment research
- Baumrind's research on parenting styles

B) Provide a specific example of actions the Smith-Garcias might take to raise their child to produce positive outcomes using each of the theories below to address the corresponding psychological concept.

- Skinner's operant conditioning: tantrum management
- Bandura's social learning theory: sharing behavior
- Ainsworth's attachment research: self-reliance
- Baumrind's research on parenting styles: self-esteem

Scoring Criteria

General Considerations

1. Answers must be presented in sentences, and sentences must be cogent enough for the student's meaning to be apparent. Spelling and grammatical mistakes do not reduce a student's score, but spelling must be close enough so that the reader is convinced of the word intended.
2. Within a point, students are not penalized for misinformation unless it *directly contradicts* correct information that would otherwise have scored a point.
3. Students can only score points if information is presented in *context*. This means that they must clearly convey which part of the question is being answered before a point may be scored.
4. The lists of terms in these guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive but rather to represent the principal psychological terms and concepts that earn a point.

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Question 1 (continued)

Part A: Theories/Research (Points 1–4)

In general, students *must* provide and describe a key term, idea, or method of the named researcher.

Point 1: Skinner

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms: reinforcement, punishment, shaping, schedules of reinforcement, extinction, Skinner Box, operant chamber, air crib, stimulus generalization, stimulus discrimination, token economy

AND must provide a description of a correct relationship to behavior—for example, reinforcing wanted behavior or punishing unwanted behavior.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide this general Skinnerian idea: “Behavior is a function of its consequences.”

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- a. “Behaviors are determined by reinforcers and punishers.” (This response does not score via Path 1 without providing the relationship between these consequences and behaviors. It does not score on Path 2 because “reinforcers and punishers” is not an exhaustive list of consequences.)
- b. “People learn from experience” (too vague)
- c. Any clear reference to classical conditioning or other nonoperant concept
- d. Law of effect
- e. Reward (without reference to any of the terms above)

Point 2: Bandura

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms: vicarious reinforcement, vicarious punishment, observational learning, Bobo doll studies, modeling, cognitive mediation, reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, efficacy or outcome expectations, self-regulation of behavior

AND must relate this term to learning.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide this general Banduran idea: “People learn by observing others.”

Note

Do not score: social norms, conformity.

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Question 1 (continued)

Point 3: Ainsworth

There are two ways to earn this point.

Path 1. Students must use one of the following terms related to attachment: secure attachment, insecure attachment, anxious-resistant, anxious-avoidant, resistant, avoidant, ambivalent, disorganized, disoriented

AND must provide a description that includes *one* of the following ideas:

- a. Securely attached children are more likely to use/perceive their primary caregiver as a secure base, or more likely to explore surroundings, or more likely to have positive reactions to a parent.
- b. Insecurely attached children are less likely to explore their surroundings, or more likely to have negative reactions to a parent, or more likely to cling to a parent.

OR

Path 2. Students must provide an accurate description of the strange situation. (Simply using the term strange situation does not score.) This description must clearly discuss Ainsworth's research paradigm and include separation and reunion with a parent.

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- a. Parental responsiveness, without the use of any of the acceptable terms (e.g., "Sensitive mothering leads to good attachment.")
- b. Other terms related to attachment, such as temperament, Harlow, critical periods, bonding, imprinting
- c. Separation anxiety

Point 4: Baumrind

Students must use one of the following terms related to parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, indulgent, neglectful, indifferent, rejecting, uninvolved

AND must describe some accurate aspect of the designated parenting style.

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Question 1 (continued)

Part B: Applications (Points 5–8)

Students must provide a description of a *specific action* that the *parents* might take to *address each target issue*. They may provide an appropriate example or use an appropriate term correctly and in context.

Point 5: Application of Skinner's operant conditioning to manage a tantrum

This point scores if the example is a correct application, even if the term used to describe the mechanism is incorrect (e.g., "The parents use negative reinforcement by taking a toy away from the child after a tantrum occurs").

- "Parents extinguish the tantrum" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents reinforce the child for a different behavior" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents punish the tantrum" (or student provides an example of this).

Note

Do not score: "Parents negatively reinforce the tantrum" (if used alone).

Point 6: Application of Bandura's social learning theory to sharing

- "Parents provide a model for sharing" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents increase sharing via vicarious reinforcement or vicarious punishment" (or student provides an example of this).
- "Parents increase child's self-efficacy for sharing" (or student provides an example of this).
- Parents share a behavior with their child via some social-learning mechanism, which results in a positive outcome.

Note

Do not score: "Parents use positive reinforcement to increase sharing behavior."

Point 7: Application of Ainsworth's attachment styles to increase self-reliance

"Parents promote secure attachment to increase self-reliance" (or student provides an example of this).
Examples may include behaviors such as nurturing, support, encouragement, sensitivity and response to signals, interactional synchrony, availability.

Note

Do not score the following answers:

- "Parents need to love the child" ("love" is not a specific action).
- ". . . by giving their child freedoms bit by bit so he or she is reliant by the time he or she is an adult"
- The idea that parents intentionally limit the behaviors that promote secure attachment

Point 8: Application of Baumrind's parenting styles to increase self-esteem

"Parents use authoritative style (or student provides an example of a parenting style with high control/discipline/expectations)

AND high warmth/love/communication/responsiveness to increase self-esteem."

Note

Do not score: Behaviors that may be aspects of more than one parenting style (e.g., "The parents must love their child")

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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1AA
1 of 3

A) In Skinner's operant conditioning subjects learn through positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment and negative punishment. Behaviors that are accepted and wanted are reinforced, behaviors that are unwanted are punished. Subjects are more likely to continue an action that is positively reinforced and less likely to continue an action that is negatively punished.

According to Bandura's social learning theory children learn by observation and modeling (taking as an example and imitating peers and figures of authority). Children who for example observe violence are more likely to display violence due to modeling.

According to Ainsworth's attachment research secure attachment is when children after their mother's brief disappearance, greet her with warmth and happiness that she is back. Children who are insecurely attached display hostility and coldness towards the mother when she returns. Securely attached children grow to be more sociable and independent adults.

Baumrind's research on parenting styles identified 3 types of parenting styles -

1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

authoritarian (demand obedience, no questions asked), authoritative (set limits but allow their kids flexibility) and permissive (set no limits).

B) When their little girl Mary has a tantrum, the Garcia's should apply Skinner's operant conditioning technique of negative punishment. They would do that by taking away her TV privileges so that she discontinues the tantrum. In order to promote sharing behavior in their daughter, the Garcia's should utilize Bandura's social learning theory of modeling. By practicing and showing her sharing behaviors they would cause for her to imitate that behavior. Ms. Garcia might share her toy with Mr. Garcia, which would cause Mary to start sharing her toys with the other kids.

In order to make Mary more self reliant, the Garcia's should apply Ainsworth's attachment research involving secure attachment. They should show Mary that they are supportive and warm but leave her briefly to play on her own. In this way she would learn independence and be securely attached to her parents and show attachment when they return.

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1AA
3 of 3

If the Garcia's want their little daughter to have high self esteem, they should apply Baumrind's research on parenting styles by being authoritative parents. They should set limits and teach Mary of what she is allowed and not allowed but they should also give her flexibility and independence. This kind of environment would give Mary enough support and freedom to build high self esteem. She would be confident in her abilities and she would be secure and sociable.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1

IBB

1 of 2

B: A) Skinner's operant conditioning involves reinforcing the desired behavior for a particular situation. ~~Positive reinforcement~~ Positive reinforcement after a certain action will increase the likelihood of that behavior occurring again. In relation to tantrum management, the Smith-Garcias should remember not to punish their child when he/she throws a tantrum. Skinner never supported the use of punishment for the following reasons: ~~promotes~~ ^{punishment} does not guide towards the accepted behavior, promotes aggression as a problem-solving method, and it encourages ~~behavior~~ ^{avoidance} that behavior. Therefore, the Smith-Garcias should put their child in a "time-out" (so that attention is taken away) instead of punishing him/her.

Bandura's social learning theory states that children learn by observing a model. In his Bobo doll experiment, Bandura found that children (both boys and girls) were more likely to act aggressively towards a Bobo doll after watching an adult do the same compared to the children who did not see the adult. Therefore, ~~also~~ in reference to sharing behavior, the Smith-Garcias should act appropriately in front of their child. Otherwise, their child might model unwanted behavior, such as lying. For example, if the mom lied about a new pair of shoes that she bought, her child might then lie about eating a cookie before dinner.

Ainsworth studied attachment between mothers and their young children. Children who were securely attached were not afraid when she left, and when she did come back they would greet her and then continue their play. They knew that their mother would come back and they were able to rely on themselves in the meantime. To have a self-reliant child, the Smith-Garcias should encourage exploration of the environment and independence. For example, when walking in ~~a~~ a new park,

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

they should encourage their child to explore the playground area while assuring him/her that they will wait on the bench for their return. If they are waiting when he/she returns, this will increase his/her confidence that his/her parents will be there when needed.

Baumrind's research on parenting styles focused on how permissive or authoritative styles effected the self-confidence and self-esteem of the child. For example, when a child is encouraged to make certain decisions for themselves, ~~they~~^{he/she} feels greater self-esteem in exerting control over the environment. The Smith-Garcias should let their child make decisions early, such as choosing clothes, while still enforcing rules. ^{for school}

A) One main finding from B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning would be behavior modification. Skinner, being a behaviorist, conducted experiments to see a change (if there was one) in behavior based on the consequences of the subject's actions. ~~And~~ An idea from Bandura's social learning theory would be how the child, in this scenario, would react when exposed to ^{the} actions of other children. A finding from Ainsworth's attachment research would be how ~~the~~ attached the child was to his/her parents based on their responses to the child. Lastly, one finding from Baumrind's research on parenting styles would be how their actions as parents affect their child's mindset and personality.

B) Using operant conditioning to manage their child's temperament, the parents could modify his/her behavior by making the consequences of their child's actions negative (no dessert after dinner, e.g.). The parents could use Bandura's social learning theory by positively reinforcing their child when he/she got along well with other children. The parents need to control many aspects of their child's life (not all, though). This way the child can slowly obtain a feeling of self-reliance (Ainsworth's attachment research).

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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Using Baumrind's research on parenting styles, the parents need to make their child feel great when he/she accomplishes something. This will greatly improve his/her self-esteem.

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2008 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

This question presented the scenario of a couple anticipating the birth of their first child as the context for application of psychological concepts. Although the focus of the question was developmental in nature, it required students to understand and apply theory and research from the areas of operant conditioning, social learning theory, attachment, and parenting.

Sample: 1AA

Score: 8

The student earned Point 1 by correctly using the technical term “reinforced,” coupled with the correct relationship of behavior. Point 2 was awarded for the simple statement that “children learn by observation.” The student uses the term “secure attachment” and accurately describes positive reactions to the parents, so Point 3 was awarded. The essay includes a specific parenting style term and an accurate description of the authoritarian style and thus earned Point 4. The essay provides specific actions that the parents can take to address each issue. Point 5 was earned when the student suggests the use of punishment as an operant conditioning technique to reduce tantrums. The student earned Point 6 by describing modeling in terms of practicing sharing behavior as a technique for helping the child to learn sharing behavior. Point 7 was awarded because the student describes secure attachment as supportive and warm actions that will help the child to become more self-reliant. The student earned Point 8 by identifying an authoritative parenting style and high levels of support as mechanisms for increasing self-esteem.

Sample: 1BB

Score: 5

This essay is particularly interesting because the student combines part A and part B in the response. The student earned Point 1 by using the phrase “reinforcing the desired behavior.” Point 5 was earned when the student provides an example of “time-out” as an operant conditioning technique for managing the tantrums. Point 2 was earned because the student references learning through observing a model. However, the essay did not earn Point 6, because there is no reference to an increase in sharing. Ainsworth’s secure attachment style and the correct description of it in the response earned Point 3; also, the application of Ainsworth’s model for increasing self-reliance in a secure setting earned Point 7. Although the essay addresses authoritative styles of parenting, the essay did not earn Point 4 because an accurate aspect of the style was not identified. Point 8 was not earned because an application was not provided.

Sample: 1CC

Score: 2

This essay earned Point 1 with the description of “behavior based on the consequences of the subject’s actions.” Point 2 was not earned because the student does not specifically link one of Bandura’s terms to learning. The essay does not include a reference to specific attachment terms, nor a reference to specific parenting styles, and so did not earn Points 3 and 4. The student provides an example of punishment (e.g., no dessert) and earned Point 5. Point 6 was not awarded because the example incorrectly links Bandura to positive reinforcement rather than modeling. The student does not link a specific attachment style to an example of an action that can be taken to raise the child and so did not earn Point 7. Point 8 was not earned because the student does not identify or adequately describe authoritative parenting.