

Cambridge AS & A Level · Psychology 9990 · Notes

Satisfaction at work A2

Read online at pastopic.com/cambridge/psychology-9990/notes/satisfaction-at-work

Last checked 6 October 2026

Read first: [Research methods](#), [Validity, reliability and replicability](#)

© 2026 Pastopic. Free for personal study. Please share the link, not the file.

What you need to know

Satisfaction at work is the fifth topic of the Organisational psychology option (Papers 3 and 4). You should be able to describe, apply and evaluate:

1. Theories of job satisfaction

- **Herzberg's two-factor theory**, with **hygiene factors** and **motivators**;
- **Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory**, with its **job characteristics** and **psychological states**;
- the **techniques of job design**: **enrichment**, **rotation** and **enlargement** (for example Belias and Sklikas, 2013).

2. Measuring job satisfaction

- **rating scales and questionnaires**, especially the **job descriptive index (JDI)**;
- **Walton's quality of working life (QWL)**: its **eight conditions** and the **QWL evaluation scale**.

3. Attitudes to work

- **workplace sabotage**: its **methods** and **reasons**, through the key study by **Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1987)**;
- **Blau and Boal's absenteeism and organisational commitment model**: the **categories of commitment** and **types of absence**.

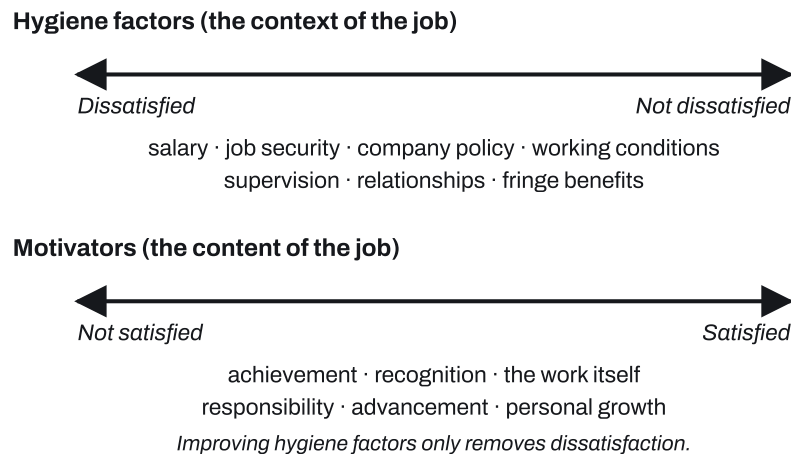
Use these **issues and debates** with the topic: application to everyday life, cultural differences, reductionism versus holism, idiographic versus nomothetic, generalisations from findings, individual and situational explanations, quantitative and qualitative data, psychometrics, validity and reliability. Paper 4 also asks you to **plan a study** on any part of it, using your AS research methods.

Understand it

Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959)

People used to assume satisfaction and dissatisfaction were two ends of **one scale**: good pay satisfies, bad pay dissatisfies. Herzberg's central claim is that they are **independent**: they come from **different** factors and lie on **two separate scales**.

Where it came from. Herzberg interviewed around **200 engineers and accountants** in the **Pittsburgh** area of the USA, asking them to recall times they had felt especially good, and especially bad, about their work. The good times and the bad times involved different things, which suggested two separate sets of factors.



Hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) are the **context** of the job. When they are poor, people are **dissatisfied**; when they are good, people are **not dissatisfied**, but are not made satisfied. They include **salary** (fair compared with similar jobs), **job security**, clear and fair **company policies**, **fringe benefits** (paid holidays, health care), **physical working conditions** (safe, clean, well-maintained equipment; examiners want "safe", not just "comfortable"), **supervision** and **relationships** at work.

Motivators (satisfiers) are the **content** of the job. When present, they make people **satisfied**; when missing, people are simply **not satisfied**. They are **achievement**, **recognition**, **the work itself**, **responsibility**, **advancement** (promotion) and **personal growth** (new skills).

For a manager: fix hygiene factors first, then add motivators. Pay is a hygiene factor, so pay and bonuses earn **no credit** as motivators.

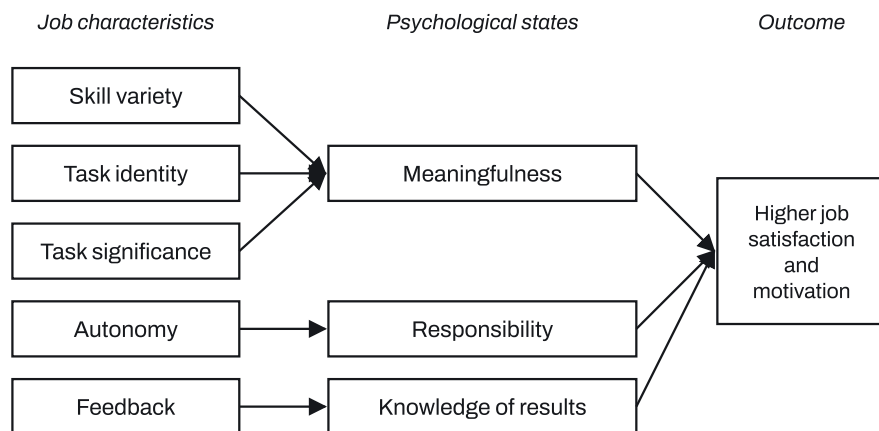
Evaluation.

- **Useful:** a clear list of what to fix and what to add, which could raise performance and cut turnover. It was **new** in rejecting the single scale.
- **Not replicated:** later research has not reliably found the same two sets, so validity and generalisability are in doubt. The sample (engineers and accountants in one US area in the 1950s) may not represent other jobs or countries.
- **Individual differences:** a worker saving to buy a home may find a pay rise the most satisfying part of the job, so for some people pay acts as a motivator.
- **Cultural differences:** in places where wages barely cover living costs, workers may care about pay and security far above interesting work, so the theory may fit wealthier countries best. Yet it **can be applied across cultures**: which factors people value differs (job security might count most where work is scarce, flexible hours where it isn't), but the two kinds of factor work the same way, so a multinational can tailor what it offers in each country.
- **Practicality:** some jobs offer little promotion or growth, and some firms can't pay above the minimum.

- **Reductionism:** two factors simplify something complex, but the theory is **less** reductionist than the older view that pay alone decides satisfaction.

Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory (1976)

This theory explains **how** the design of a job leads to satisfaction: features of the job create states of mind in the worker, and those states create satisfaction.



Job characteristic	Meaning	Psychological state it builds
Skill variety	the job uses many different skills	experienced meaningfulness
Task identity	doing a whole piece of work from start to finish	experienced meaningfulness
Task significance	the job affects other people's lives or work	experienced meaningfulness
Autonomy	freedom to decide how and when to do the work	experienced responsibility for outcomes
Feedback	the job shows clearly how well you are doing	knowledge of results (so the worker can grow)

A tailor who makes a whole suit has more task identity than one who only sews sleeves; a salesperson who sees daily figures gets feedback. When all three states are present, satisfaction and motivation are predicted to be higher.

Evaluation. It is **less reductionist** than Herzberg's theory (five characteristics, three states) and **practical**: a manager can find which characteristic is low and redesign the job. But it focuses on the job, not the person: two workers may react differently to the same redesign.

Techniques of job design

Job design changes how a job is organised to make it more interesting and satisfying, and often more productive.

- **Job rotation:** workers **move between tasks regularly**, at the **same level** of skill and responsibility (packing one week, labelling the next, checking quality the week after; or moving between departments). It adds **variety**, reduces **boredom** and builds skills the firm can use, but as responsibility doesn't change it is **unlikely to raise satisfaction much**. Shiftwork is **not** rotation: that is the same job at different times.
- **Job enlargement:** the job is expanded to **include more and/or different tasks**. Belias and Sklikas describe its aim as making the job more interesting so that what employees need matches what the organisation wants. **Horizontal** enlargement adds **more tasks at the same skill level** (a cashier who also stocks shelves), to cut specialisation and boredom and build new skills. **Vertical** enlargement gives workers **more say in how the work is done**, including planning and checking it, to raise their status and self-fulfilment.
- **Job enrichment:** the job is **redesigned to be more challenging**, with **more responsibility, more control** and **new, higher-level skills** (a care assistant trained to plan residents' activities, not just carry them out).

Enrichment versus enlargement: both add tasks and variety; enlargement (horizontally) keeps the **same skill level and responsibility**, while enrichment adds **responsibility and new skills** (vertically). Vertical enlargement overlaps with enrichment.

Weaknesses of job design: **training** costs time and money; new tasks can bring **safety risks** on a production line; repetitive jobs may stay boring, so satisfaction may not rise; **productivity may dip** while workers learn.

Measuring satisfaction: the job descriptive index (JDI)

The **JDI** (Smith et al., 1969) is a **self-report questionnaire** with **72 items** measuring satisfaction on **five facets**: the **work itself**, **pay**, **promotion** opportunities, **supervision** and **co-workers**. For each facet the worker reads short words or phrases and writes **Y** (yes), **N** (no) or **?** (can't decide) to say whether each describes that part of their job. Each answer carries a score, and the scores are summed for each facet: **higher means more satisfied**. Scores are compared with **standardised norms** from a large sample, updated regularly and broken down by job type, age, gender and education. Some versions add a "job in general" scale.

- **Strengths:** **easy** to give and answer (simple words, three choices), so it suits almost any worker, including staff with less formal education; **standardised**, so scores can be compared between people, departments, times and the norms; covers **five specific** areas rather than one vague question; widely used.
- **Weaknesses:** **forced choice**, so **no qualitative data** on why; may **miss** parts of satisfaction outside the five facets (hours, the commute); as a self-report, open to **social desirability** and fear that managers will see answers.

- **Applications:** find **which facet** is low and **act on it** (training so staff can win promotion); measure **before and after** a change; spot dissatisfied **individuals**. Always say what the firm would then do. Choosing new staff is **not** an application.

Measuring satisfaction: Walton's quality of working life (QWL)

Quality of working life is how far an employee's **personal and work needs are met** through the job while the organisation also meets its goals. Walton (1974) set out **eight conditions**:

Condition	In plain words
Adequate and fair compensation	fair pay and extra benefits
Safe and healthy working conditions	a sensible workload, a safe workplace
Development of human capacities	using and developing your skills, with some autonomy
Growth and security	chances to progress, train and keep your job
Social integration	good relationships at work, no discrimination
Constitutionalism	workers' rights, fair rules, freedom to speak up
Total life space	balance between work and family and leisure
Social relevance	pride in the work and its value to the community

The **QWL evaluation scale** has **35 questions** across the eight conditions, each answered on a **five-point scale** from **very dissatisfied (1)** to **very satisfied (5)**. For **fair compensation**, questions ask how satisfied you are with your pay, with your pay compared with colleagues', with the extra benefits (such as food, transport or health care), and with the rewards and share in the company's results you receive.

- **Strengths:** quantitative scores per condition; the scale shows **how strongly** someone feels, and the **mid-point** lets a truly neutral worker say so; covers more of life than the JDI (family time, pride).
- **Weaknesses of its items:** **complex words** many workers may not understand ("salubrity", "polyvalence", "remuneration", "alimentation", "recompenses"); **long questions** that need thought before answering, some asking about two things at once; **35 questions**, so workers may get bored, give up or tick anything near the end. Like any rating scale: socially desirable answers, opting for the mid-point, and answers forced onto a scale that doesn't fit.
- **Testing reliability:** **test-retest** (the same workers take it twice, weeks apart, and the scores are correlated) or **split-half** (score odd and even items separately for each worker and check the halves correlate strongly).
- **Testing validity:** **concurrent validity** (compare QWL scores with the same workers' JDI scores) or **face validity**.

Psychometrics: comparing the JDI and the QWL scale

Psychometrics is measuring psychological qualities with standardised tests that give scores.

	JDI	QWL evaluation scale
Dimensions	5 facets	8 conditions
Items	72	35
Answers	Y, N or ?	five-point scale
Language	simple	some complex words
Data	quantitative	quantitative

Similarities: both are **self-reports**, measure several dimensions (both include **pay**, **chances to progress** and **colleagues**), give **only quantitative** scores, and are **nomothetic**. **Differences:** 5 versus 8 dimensions; fixed Y/N/? versus a scale showing **how much**; the JDI's norms.

- **Reliability:** standardised items and scoring give consistent results, unless workers read questions differently (likely with the QWL's hard words).
- **Validity:** both have good **face validity**, but one score may catch a bad week (just after a row with a manager), and fear or social desirability can bias answers, which **anonymity** reduces.
- **Quantitative versus qualitative:** numbers are easy to compare but don't say **why**; open questions or interviews add reasons but take longer and risk **researcher bias** (so use two raters).
- **Reductionism:** each reduces satisfaction to a few scores; the QWL is more holistic, as it includes life outside work.
- **Individual and situational explanations:** each score records one worker's own feelings, yet most of what the items ask about (pay, supervision, safety) belongs to the workplace, so the measures sit between the two explanations.

Workplace sabotage and Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1987)

Workplace sabotage is behaviour by an employee **intended to cause the organisation a loss of production or profit**, such as deliberately jamming a machine to stop the line. Keep apart:

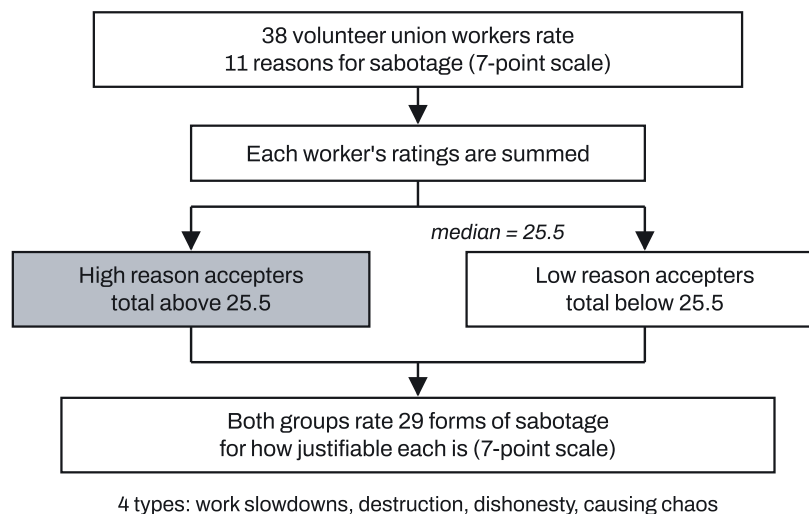
- **Methods (forms), what workers do:** **29** forms in **four** types, **work slowdowns**, **destruction** of machinery, premises or products, **dishonesty** (stealing to make up for low pay) and **causing chaos** ("forgetting" a switch, getting a supervisor into trouble).
- **Reasons, why they do it:** **11**, including **revenge**, **release of frustration**, **self-defence**, **to protect one's job**, **protecting oneself from the boss or company**, **"the foreman or company deserved it"**, **"they hurt me previously"**, **"an eye for an eye"**, **"no one was hurt"** and **"just for fun"**.

The key study. Aim: to find which reasons workers accept as justifying sabotage, and whether those who accept many reasons see more forms as justified. **Sample:** **38** volunteers, all **union** members, from an **electrical factory** in the **north-east of the United States**. The questionnaires were drawn up with an **employee who had recently resigned** from the factory.

1. Workers were told **not to write their names** or anything identifying.

2. They were told the questionnaires were for an **industrial psychology seminar** and that **management would not see** them.
3. They rated how far each of the **11 reasons** would justify sabotage on a **7-point scale**; each worker's ratings were **summed**.
4. The totals were split at the **median (25.5)**: **high reason accepters** above it, **low reason accepters** below.
5. On the **Sabotage Methods Questionnaire** they rated how justifiable each of the **29 forms** was, again on a 7-point scale.

They rated how **justified** sabotage would be; they were **not** asked to admit their own sabotage.



Results. High reason accepters judged **more forms of sabotage justified** than low reason accepters, especially **work slowdowns**, **destruction** and **causing chaos**. Setting up a foreman to get him or her into trouble averaged **2.74** for high reason accepters against **1.32** for low.

Why it was designed this way:

- **No names (confidentiality):** workers could stay anonymous, so management could not punish, demote or sack them for their answers.
- **The seminar cover story (deception):** knowing the true purpose, or thinking managers would read the answers, might make workers hide their views, making the data invalid.
- **A recently resigned employee:** knew the company and how its workers had really sabotaged it, giving insight no outsider could; and, not going back, had no reason to hide the truth.

Evaluation.

- **Generalisations from findings:** one **electrical factory**, so tools and methods may differ elsewhere (an office has no line to jam); one **country**, where other cultures may sabotage differently or not at all; what counts as sabotage differs between companies, and the list came from **one** former worker. (The sample size alone earned **no credit** in this question.)
- **Quantitative data:** easy to compare the groups, but no reasons **why** a form was rated as justified.
- **Median split:** workers just above and just below 25.5 are very alike but land in different groups.

- **Self-report and volunteers:** workers may still give socially desirable answers; volunteers may be those who never sabotage.
- **Application:** managers can find and tackle the reasons staff accept (grievances, unfair pay).

Reducing sabotage: **grievance meetings** with management followed by real changes; **fairer pay** or bonuses; making workers feel **valued**; **counselling**; practical checks (time cards, tags on parts).

Weaknesses: workers may be **afraid to speak** openly; **cost**; managers may listen but **not act**.

Other ways to study sabotage: a **semi-structured interview** (workers can expand on experiences) or an **observation** (participant or non-participant, perhaps CCTV) to record real sabotage. Interview weaknesses: lying or exaggerating, fear of losing the job, defining sabotage differently from the interviewer.

Blau and Boal's model of absenteeism and organisational commitment (1987)

Two attitudes predict absence and **turnover** (leaving):

- **Job involvement:** how far a person identifies psychologically with their job: how important it is to their self-image, how actively they take part, and how far their self-worth depends on doing it well.
- **Organisational commitment:** how far a person identifies with the organisation: accepting its **goals and values**, putting in **effort** for it, and wanting to **stay**.

		Job involvement	
		High	Low
Organisational commitment	High	Stars Medical absence	Corporate citizens Normative absence
	Low	Lone wolves Career-enhancing absence	Apathetic employees Calculative absence

Stars: lowest absence and turnover.

Apathetic employees: highest absence and turnover.

Category	Involvement	Commitment	What they are like	Type of absence
Stars	high	high	value the job and the organisation; great effort; highly valued	Medical: rare, unavoidable (illness, injury, a funeral, a sick child); excused
Lone wolves	high	low	care about their own work, not the organisation; may leave for a better job	Career-enhancing: absence used to further their own task or career goals

Category	Involvement	Commitment	What they are like	Type of absence
Corporate citizens	low	high	the work isn't personally important, but they identify with the organisation's goals	Normative: a habit rather than a decision, so it follows a predictable pattern
Apathetic employees	low	low	little effort; don't care about the organisation	Calculative: the most absence allowed before warnings or dismissal

Predictions: stars have the **lowest** absence and turnover; apathetic employees the **highest**, and are easy to replace.

Individual and situational explanations. An **individual explanation** says behaviour comes from **within the person** (personality, traits, attitudes, motivation). A **situational explanation** says it comes from the **environment** (working conditions, culture, leaders, rules). Blau and Boal's model is **individual**: each worker brings their own levels of involvement and commitment, and their absence and turnover follow from them; the type of absence also depends on the individual's own reason (medical for one, career-enhancing for another).

Using absence to measure commitment. For: absence is **objective**, easily recorded **over time**, and the worker's own choice, not a manager's opinion; normative and calculative patterns suggest low commitment. Against: absence may be **medical or family**; records don't give the **reason**; commitment is an **attitude** while absence is a **behaviour**; commitment shows in other ways (unpaid overtime, helping others).

Evaluation. Useful: a manager can raise a worker's involvement or commitment to cut absence and turnover. **Reductionist:** two attitudes can't cover every cause of absence (transport, family). It may underplay the **situation**: a toxic workplace lowers anyone's commitment.

Key facts and formulas

No formulas are given in the exam for this topic: everything below is "Learn it".

Fact	Status
Herzberg: satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent , on two separate scales	Learn it
Hygiene factors (prevent dissatisfaction): salary, job security, company policy, working conditions, supervision, relationships, fringe benefits	Learn it
Motivators (create satisfaction): achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, personal growth	Learn it
Hackman and Oldham: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback lead to meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of results	Learn it
Job design: rotation (change task, same level); enlargement (more tasks, horizontal or vertical); enrichment (more responsibility and skills)	Learn it

Fact	Status
JDI (Smith et al., 1969): 72 items, 5 facets (work, pay, promotion, supervision, co-workers), answers Y / N / ?	Learn it
QWL (Walton, 1974): 8 conditions; evaluation scale of 35 questions on a five-point scale	Learn it
Sabotage: employee behaviour meant to cause a loss of production or profit	Learn it
Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1987): 38 union volunteers, electrical factory, north-east USA; 11 reasons; 29 forms in 4 types; 7-point scales; median split at 25.5	Learn it
Blau and Boal (1987): stars (medical), lone wolves (career-enhancing), corporate citizens (normative), apathetic (calculative)	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 42 questions on this topic, from 2021 to 2026 (Papers 3 and 4; 32 different questions, as variants repeat them). One, **9990/32/M/J/25 Q13**, is really about McClelland's theory (Motivation to work), so it is in no type below. 23 of the others have parts of more than one type, so the counts add up to 79.

Question type	Questions
Define a term or outline a theory	12
Explain a strength, weakness or practical application	10
Recall the parts of a measure or model	9
Research methods applied to this topic	9
Plan or design a study	7
Describe and evaluate essay	6
Apply a theory to a workplace scenario	5
Discuss strengths and weaknesses with a conclusion	5
Apply an issue or debate	5
Giacalone and Rosenfeld key study	5
To what extent essay	4
Compare two measures or techniques	2

Papers before 2024 used the older syllabus, which also named the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Mowday et al. (1979) on commitment. Since 2024, Paper 3 has 4–6 mark questions (Q13 to Q15) and a 16-mark essay (Q16); Paper 4 has an 8–10 mark question (Q7 or Q8) and a 24-mark plan (Q12).

1. Define a term or outline a theory (12 questions)

[2]: **1 for the definition, 1 for a detail or example.**

- **Herzberg:** satisfaction and dissatisfaction are **independent**, plus what each factor does. "It has two factors" alone scores 0.
- **Job involvement:** must say identifying **psychologically** with the job.
- **Organisational commitment:** accepting the goals, effort for the organisation, wanting to stay.
- **Sabotage:** meant to cause a production or profit loss, plus a type (slowdown, destruction).
- **Rotation / enrichment:** what changes (task only, same level; or responsibility and new skills).
- **QWL:** personal and work needs met through the job; rewording the question scores 0.
- **Individual and situational explanations:** give **both**.

2. Explain a strength, weakness or practical application (10 questions)

Usually [2]: **name the point (1), then tie it to this theory or measure with a detail (1):** a facet, a word from the scale, a number, a real example. The points are in "Understand it". Older Paper 3 asked a strength **and** a weakness [6] on levels: both, each with a detailed example.

3. Recall the parts of a measure or model (9 questions)

- **JDI:** 72 items, five facets, Y / N / ?, scoring, norms. "It's a questionnaire" scores 0.
- **QWL:** conditions, each named with a detail ("**social integration:** relationships with other workers"); the pay items.
- **Blau and Boal:** which cell is which (a question may label them W, X, Y, Z: read rows and columns carefully), and the absence types with a detail. "Voluntary/involuntary" are not their terms and earn little.
- **Sabotage reasons:** any two of the 11 (1 each); not methods.
- **Hygiene factors:** name **and** outline; not motivators.

4. Research methods applied to this topic (9 questions)

Paper 4, [2] each: **name the method (1), apply it to this scale or setting (1).**

- **Reliability** of the QWL scale or the Sabotage Methods Questionnaire: test-retest or split-half, naming the questionnaire.
- **Validity:** concurrent (with the JDI) or face validity.
- **A psychometric test** must be named (JDI, QWL scale), not "a questionnaire". "**Other than self-report**" rules out questionnaires and interviews: use **observation** of work behaviour or **absence records**.
- **Other ways to study sabotage:** the method name alone scores 0; give the type and why it suits sabotage.
- **An open question** on reasons for sabotage, such as "Describe what you do at work when you feel you have been treated unfairly."

- **Weaknesses of volunteers or interviews** about sabotage (in "Understand it"), each applied to sabotage.

5. Plan or design a study (7 questions)

Paper 4 Q12 [24] since 2024 (before: design [10] + evidence [8]).

1. **(a) Plan [10]**, marked on levels: the **specific features** of the named method and **general features** (aim, hypothesis, sample and technique, procedure, ethics, data and descriptive statistics, validity and reliability). Cover every feature the question lists.
 - **Questionnaire: technique** (paper and pencil, online, postal), **format** (open and/or closed), example questions, **scoring**, number of questions.
 - **Structured observation: behavioural categories** (Giacalone and Rosenfeld's four types for sabotage), overt or covert, participant or not, event or time sampling, **two observers**.
2. **(b)(i) Describe the psychology [4]** in detail (horizontal and vertical enlargement with their aims; forms versus reasons of sabotage; Herzberg's factors; Blau and Boal's absence types).
3. **(b)(ii) Two features used [4]**: each feature and **where it shows in your plan** ("vertical enlargement gives workers a say in planning their tasks, so my questionnaire includes a rating of how much control they now have over organising their day").
4. **(c) Reasons and weaknesses [2 each]** for **your** choices, applied to **your** plan.

Ready to use: paper and pencil: more likely completed, controlled setting; but demand characteristics.

Online: larger, more varied sample, no researcher watching so more honest; but drop-out. **Postal:** large sample, no researcher; but treated as junk mail or not returned. **Closed questions:** same format for all, easy to score, many people quickly; but forced answers. **Open questions:** rich detail, workers explain feelings; but hard to analyse. **Behavioural categories:** agreed beforehand so observers know exactly what to record; but unplanned behaviours get left out or categories prove ambiguous. **Two observers:** inter-rater reliability can be checked.

6. Describe and evaluate essay (6 questions)

Paper 3 Q16: **(a) describe [6]** (8 before 2024), **(b) evaluate [10]** with a **named issue**.

1. **(a) Describe everything** named: "the JDI **and** the QWL" needs both or the mark is capped at 4. Use specific details.
2. **(b) Start with the named issue** applied to the theories or measures, then two or three more issues, each with an example and the other side. Without the named issue the cap is 5.

Pairings so far: measuring satisfaction with **psychometrics** (see the comparison section); theories with **reductionism versus holism** (Herzberg's two factors, Hackman and Oldham's five, three job design options to choose from); attitudes to work with **application to everyday life** (tackling sabotage reasons, raising involvement).

7. Apply a theory to a workplace scenario (5 questions)

Paper 3, usually [4]: **two suggestions, 2 each, at least one set in the scenario's workplace**. Name the idea (a motivator, a technique, an attitude, a sabotage reason), then show how it works **there**. Naming a technique only earns 1; a sabotage reason must be one of Giacalone and Rosenfeld's and fit the act (anecdotal reasons score 0). A later part may ask for a weakness **of your suggestion**.

8. Discuss strengths and weaknesses with a conclusion (5 questions)

Old Paper 4 [5]: **1 per point tied to the topic** (up to 4; untied points at most 2) + **1 for a conclusion** that judges, not summarises. Topics so far: closed questions about sabotage, absence as a measure of commitment, interviews on satisfaction, five-point scales for QWL (points in "Understand it").

9. Apply an issue or debate (5 questions)

[2] each: **general point (1), applied (1)**. Why Blau and Boal is **individual** (explaining why it isn't situational earns nothing); why Herzberg works across **cultures**; why sabotage findings can't be **generalised** (factory type, country, definitions).

10. Giacalone and Rosenfeld key study (5 questions)

Know the procedure in order and **why** each step was done. The two groups come from the **median split** of summed reason ratings (the four types of sabotage are not the groups). A difference in results needs **both** groups ("high reason accepters justified more forms, such as slowdowns, than low reason accepters"), or the foreman example with both means.

11. To what extent essay (4 questions)

Old Paper 4 [12]: argue both sides of a claim with research (the JDI, QWL, Blau and Boal), then conclude. Claims so far: only open questions can assess satisfaction; QWL can only be measured with five-point scales; commitment can be judged simply from attendance. The arguments are in the psychometrics and Blau and Boal sections.

12. Compare two measures or techniques (2 questions)

One **similarity** and one **difference**, each with examples **from both**: JDI versus QWL (the comparison table), or enrichment versus enlargement.

Worked examples

Example 1

Rosa's call-centre staff answer only billing queries, all day, reading from a fixed script, and never find out whether a caller's problem was solved.

(a) Using Hackman and Oldham's theory, explain **two** job characteristics that are low in this job. [4]

(b) Rosa is choosing between job rotation and job enrichment. Explain **one** difference between them, using the call centre. [2]

(c) Explain **one** strength of Hackman and Oldham's theory. [2]

(a) **Autonomy** is low (1): the fixed script means staff can't decide how to handle a call, so they won't feel responsible for its outcome (1). **Feedback** is low (1): staff never learn whether the problem was fixed, so they have no knowledge of results (1).

(b) Rotation would move staff between billing, sales and complaints calls at the **same level** of responsibility, adding variety only (1); enrichment would give them **more responsibility and new skills**, such as authority to issue refunds and to coach new starters (1).

(c) It is **practical** (1): it shows Rosa exactly which characteristic to change, for example sending staff a weekly summary of solved cases to raise feedback, rather than only telling her that staff are unhappy (1).

Example 2

In a hospital laboratory, Femi loves the research and works hard on every test, but often reads job adverts from other laboratories. Grace isn't very interested in her tests but is proud of the hospital and believes in what it stands for.

(a) Using Blau and Boal's model, identify each technician's category. [2]

(b) Outline the type of absence the model predicts for each. [4]

(c) Explain **one** reason why absence records might not validly measure Grace's commitment. [2]

(a) Femi: high involvement, low commitment, a **lone wolf** (1). Grace: low involvement, high commitment, a **corporate citizen** (1).

(b) Femi: **career-enhancing** absence (1), time away to further his own work or career, such as a course or an interview at another lab (1). Grace: **normative** absence (1), more habit than decision, so it follows a predictable pattern, such as the same day each month (1).

(c) Commitment is an **attitude**, absence a **behaviour** with many causes (1): if Grace missed a week caring for a sick parent, the records would show high absence, without the reason, although she is very committed (1).

Example 3

A bus company gives the JDI to its drivers. Their **supervision** scores are well below the standardised norms, while their other four facets are close to the norms.

(a) Explain why comparing the drivers' scores with the norms is useful to the company. [2]

(b) Suggest how the company could check that the JDI gives consistent results. [2]

(c) Explain **one** reason why the JDI suits the drivers. [2]

(a) The norms come from a large sample of workers, so they show what a typical score looks like **(1)**: the company can see that supervision, not pay or promotion, is where its drivers are unusually unhappy, and train its depot managers rather than spend money elsewhere **(1)**.

(b) Test-retest (1): the same drivers take the JDI again a month later, with nothing changed at the depot, and the two sets of scores should correlate strongly **(1)**.

(c) It is quick, with simple words and three possible answers **(1)**, so drivers can finish it in a break between routes, giving a high response rate **(1)**.

Example 4

(a) Plan a study using a questionnaire to investigate whether job rotation changes the job satisfaction of supermarket staff. Your plan must include details about the rating scale and the sampling technique. [10]

(b) (i) Describe one piece of psychological knowledge on which your plan is based. [4] (ii) Explain how you used two features of it to plan your study. [4]

(c) Explain (i) one reason for, and (ii) one weakness of, your rating scale, and (iii) one reason for your sampling technique. [2 each]

(a) Hypothesis: satisfaction scores will be higher after three months of rotation than before. *Sample*: 40 shelf-stackers from two branches, by **opportunity sampling** of staff on duty that week. *Procedure*: an **online** questionnaire before rotation; staff then rotate weekly between shelves, tills and the deli counter; the same questionnaire at the end. *Questionnaire*: 12 closed questions such as "How interesting is your job?" and "How often are you bored at work?", on a **5-point scale** from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), boredom items reverse-scored; one open question, "Describe how the changes have affected your working day." *Data*: totals before and after, compared by **median**; open answers coded by two raters. *Ethics*: consent, right to withdraw, **anonymity** (code numbers). *Reliability*: identical questions and instructions both times. **(All named and general features in detail: top band.)**

(b)(i) Job rotation (a job design technique, e.g. Belias and Sklikas, 2013) moves workers between different tasks regularly while their skill level and responsibility stay the same. It adds **variety**, so it should reduce **boredom**, and builds skills the employer can use; as responsibility doesn't change, it may raise satisfaction less than enrichment. **(4)**

(b)(ii) Rotation aims to cut boredom, so I ask "How often are you bored at work?" before and after **(2)**. Rotation keeps the **same level**, so all three tasks are on the same grade and pay, and any change in satisfaction comes from variety, not promotion **(2)**.

(c)(i) The 5-point scale gives a number to compare before and after **(1)**, showing **how much** more interesting a shelf-stacker finds the job, not just yes or no **(1)**.

(c)(ii) Workers may pick the **mid-point** to avoid committing themselves **(1)**, so a real drop in boredom on the deli counter could be hidden **(1)**.

(c)(iii) Opportunity sampling is **quick (1)**: I could ask staff already on shift, without a list of all employees and without disrupting the stores **(1)**.

Common mistakes

- **Mixing up motivators and hygiene factors.** Recognition and responsibility are motivators; salary and conditions are hygiene factors.
- **Taking "hygiene" literally**, as washing.
- **Leaving out job characteristics theory** in an essay on theories, or describing it wrongly.
- **Confusing enrichment and enlargement:** only enrichment adds responsibility and new skills.
- **Wrong JDI details**, such as the number of items: wrong details earn nothing.
- **Saying the JDI or QWL collects qualitative data.** Both are quantitative only.
- **Giving methods of sabotage when reasons are asked.**
- **Anecdotal absence** ("they were ill") instead of Blau and Boal's category.

How to get the marks

- **Point, then develop.** Most short parts give 1 for the point and 1 for detail, an example or application: write "point, because ..." or "point, for example ...".
- **Use the setting.** In a scenario question, full marks usually need at least one suggestion set in the workplace given.
- **"Outline" / "Explain what is meant by"** [2]: definition plus detail. **"Identify" / "State"**: the fact only.
- **"Suggest"** [2]: a sensible idea that fits the scenario, and why it would work there.
- **"Describe"** a measure or study [4]: specific details (facets, items, scoring, sample, a result); a bare list gets about half.
- **"Evaluate"**: lead with the named issue, go issue by issue, apply each, give the other side.
- **Numbers earn marks:** 72 items, 5 facets, 8 conditions, 35 questions, 38 workers, 11 reasons, 29 forms, 25.5.
- **Read the stem's limits:** "do not refer to absenteeism", "other than by questionnaire", "other than self-report".

Quick check

1. Explain the difference between **horizontal** and **vertical** job enlargement, with an example of each. [2]
2. State the five facets of the JDI and the three answers a worker can give to each item.
3. Nine workers' summed reasons scores are 14, 31, 22, 40, 19, 27, 35, 25 and 18. Find the median, and how many workers are **high reason accepters**.
4. Outline **calculative** absence in Blau and Boal's model. [2]
5. Explain **one** reason why the QWL evaluation scale might give less valid data about a worker's feelings than an interview. [2]

Answers

1. **Horizontal** enlargement adds more tasks at the **same skill level**, such as a hotel receptionist who also handles room-service orders (1); **vertical** enlargement gives more say in **planning and checking** the work, such as the receptionist drawing up the front-desk schedule (1).
2. The work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and co-workers; each item is answered Y (yes), N (no) or ? (can't decide).
3. In order: 14, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, 31, 35, 40. The median is the 5th score, **25**, since its position is $\frac{9+1}{2} = 5$. Those above it (27, 31, 35, 40) are high reason accepters: **4** workers. The worker on exactly 25 fits neither group, a weakness of a median split.
4. It is the absence of **apathetic** employees, **low** in both job involvement and organisational commitment (1), who take the **most absence allowed** before warnings or dismissal (1).
5. A worker can only choose one of **five fixed points** (1), so someone unhappy about one specific thing, such as a new manager, can't explain it, while an interview would let them say why (1).

Past questions to try

- 9990/32/M/J/24 Q15: two job design techniques for a factory and a weakness of one.
- 9990/32/F/M/25 Q13: high job involvement and low commitment in a bookshop.
- 9990/42/O/N/24 Q7: Giacalone and Rosenfeld's two groups, a difference in results, and volunteer samples.
- 9990/33/O/N/24 Q16: describe and evaluate the JDI and QWL, with psychometrics.