



Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCE
PSYCHOLOGY (WPS03)
PAPER 03: Applications of Psychology

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General Comments

There were few blank pages and the majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions. Knowledge and understanding was demonstrated by the majority of candidates.

From the two option units, Option A was the preferred choice of the majority of the candidates.

It was clear that candidates had a good working knowledge of many aspects of criminal psychology. Candidates who had chosen Option B, demonstrated a good knowledge of many aspects of health psychology and there was an improvement in their knowledge of studies.

Candidates would benefit from an improved understanding of social learning theory and how this can be applied in respect of criminological psychology.

It was pleasing to see the level of knowledge and understanding in respect of the cognitive interview process as used with witnesses. The candidates were able to not only describe the process in detail but also apply it in terms of witness accuracy.

The longer response questions requiring AO3 appeared to challenge students at the lower end of the grade boundaries. It is important for candidates to understand the requirements of the questions in terms of the taxonomy. When a question requires an assessment to be made, candidates must make a judgement. It is also important to apply the judgement accurately, therefore, as in assessing whether a study can be considered scientific, general evaluation points should not be given.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper candidates are offered the following advice:

- Candidates need to review their understanding and application of social learning theory.
- Candidates need to understand that when explaining a strength or weakness that it must be related to the scenario or study in question. Simply

identifying a strength or weakness without application is generic and not creditworthy.

- Candidates would benefit from revisiting the requirements of the questions by reviewing the taxonomies and working through how to apply these, particularly in respect of AO3.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q01a

Question Introduction

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates who were able to identify and justify at least one strength that was made directly relevant to Cassibba's study.

Q01b

Question Introduction

Many candidates were unable to identify or justify an improvement that could be made to Cassibba's study, giving a generic suggestion that was not creditworthy. Where candidates identified an appropriate improvement, the justifications were applied well and they were able to achieve the full two marks.

Examiner Tip

When the question asks for an improvement to a particular study, the identification and justification points must be in respect of the study in question and not a generic suggestion in order to be creditworthy.

Q02a

Question Introduction

This was a question that required candidates to apply their mathematical skills. The question required candidates to complete a data table and calculate the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test for a set of data. A large number of candidates were able to achieve one mark and correctly complete the ranked difference. A small number of candidates were able to achieve the full four marks and provide a correct answer for the data table.

Q02b

Question Introduction

This question was answered well by many candidates where they were able to use data from a table and interpret what the data showed. Those candidates who did not achieve well on this question repeated the results from the table without interpreting them.

Examiner Tip

In a question that requires a judgement to be made in respect of data shown in a table, for example, interpretation or conclusion, candidates need to comment on the data and not simply repeat it to be creditworthy.

Q03a

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to describe how Precious could carry out a meta-analysis in respect of the universality of attachment types. Few candidates achieved the full three marks but many candidates were able to describe how meta-analysis could be used in respect of the study for one and two marks.

Q03b

Question Introduction

A number of candidates were able to suggest an improvement that Precious could make to her study and justify it in terms of cross-cultural attachments. Where candidates did not achieve the marks, they suggested an improvement but did not link it to the scenario in terms of universality of attachment cross-culturally and so failed to address the question.

Q04

Question Introduction

Candidates generally answered this question well demonstrating accurate knowledge of Bowlby's 44 Juvenile Thieves study. A number of candidates answered this very well and were able to achieve the top of level 4 for their responses as they described the study stating accurate findings and then evaluated these with supporting evidence.

Examiner Tip

In an evaluate question, candidates need to be able to describe a study accurately, using the correct findings or statistics used in the study. When evaluating it, supporting evidence should be cited to justify a point of description.

Q05

Question Introduction

Some candidates were able to assess whether the study of Van iJzendoorn and Kroonenberg was scientific. Many candidates were able to describe the study but did not address the question as to how this was scientific only suggesting that it was/was not generalisable or reliable and therefore were restricted to Level 2.

As a level based question, it is important to note that an A01/A03 response was required which needed to show an equal emphasis between knowledge and understanding versus assessment and conclusion. Those candidates who scored highly on both skills were able to demonstrate accurate and thorough knowledge of the study and also assess whether key elements of the study could or could not be considered scientific and why.

Q06a

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to state what 'other race' effect was in relation to eyewitness testimony. Some candidates were able to detail 'other race' effect and relate this to eyewitness testimony. Many candidates misunderstood the question and linked the statement to racism as oppose to eyewitness testimony.

Q06b

Question Introduction

This question was not answered well by many candidates as they failed to link the strength of using an experiment in respect of eyewitness testimony, simply suggesting a generic strength which did not answer the question.

Q07a

Question Introduction

Candidates demonstrated an understanding of psychological case formulation and many were able to achieve two of the four marks available for the question. Some candidates repeated the stem and did not therefore answer the question.

Q07b

Question Introduction

Candidates on the whole answered this question well. There was a range of reasons as to why psychological case formulation may lack validity and this was successfully applied to the scenario.

Q8a

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to identify the level of measurement used in the scenario. This question was not answered well and the majority of candidates did not demonstrate any knowledge of levels of measurement. A common response was quantitative data or mean.

Q08b

Question Introduction

This question was answered very well, candidates were required to analyse data from a table and suggest whether it was significant or not. The majority of candidates were able to successfully state that it was not significant and supported the statement with accurate analysis of the critical and calculated values.

Q08c

Question Introduction

This question was also answered very well, candidates were able to suggest a weakness in terms of validity and justify this in respect of the scenario. Common responses focused on the lack of emotional impact and/or mundane realism of watching a crime on a video.

Q09

Question Introduction

Many candidates had a detailed knowledge of the cognitive interview process. Candidates were able to describe the stages of the process, often giving examples to show how it is commonly used. Some candidates were able to evaluate whether it was a useful process in terms of use with witnesses but this was often underdeveloped and therefore this restricted the available marks to level two or three.

Q10

Question Introduction

Some candidates struggled to provide a detailed response for this question. Many candidates demonstrated a very limited understanding of social learning theory and did not on the whole relate this to Bashir.

Many candidates focused their response on operant conditioning whilst the question was in respect of social learning from the media.

Candidates that did appreciate how the processes of social learning theory could be applied to the scenario were able to achieve level three.

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