



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

October 2020

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Psychology (WPS03/01)
Paper 1: Applications of Psychology

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

October 2020

Publications Code WPS03_01_2010_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2020

Many candidates attempted to answer all questions, however many left blank answer spaces. Knowledge and understanding were demonstrated by many of the candidates.

Option A was the preferred choice by majority of candidates and there was evidence of knowledge and understanding for many aspects of criminological psychology. Candidates who had chosen Option B, demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of how brain regions could explain stress.

Candidates would benefit from an improved understanding of the different research designs as many responses confused research design with research methodology.

It was pleasing to see the level of knowledge and understanding in respect of Piaget's stages of psychosocial development. Many candidates demonstrated an accurate understanding of the appropriate stages and correctly applied these to an age range.

The questions that required candidates to apply theories, concepts or research methods to stimulus material appeared to challenge many of the candidates. Whilst it was clear that there was a good working knowledge of the psychological concepts, these were not applied to the scenario and therefore did not answer the question. It is important that when stimulus material is given, that elements of the scenario are used in the response and not just the name given within the scenario.

Q01a

Question Introduction

Many candidates were unable to state structured observation which was the research method used for the strange situation procedure. Many cited observation which was not specific to this particular study.

Q01b

Question Introduction

Candidates gave a range of responses that were able to explain one weakness of the strange situation procedure well.

Q02a

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to apply their understanding of Chomsky's theory of language to a scenario. Whilst many responses demonstrated an understanding of the theory, they were not applied using information from the scenario.

Examiner Tip

Where the question requires a theory to be applied to information in a scenario, candidates should use elements of the scenario to support their descriptions.

Q02b

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to describe one strength of Chomsky's theory in respect of Kieron's language development. Few candidates achieved the full two marks as whilst they were able to identify a weakness this was not fully described using information from the scenario.

Q03a

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to give an open-ended question using stimulus from the scenario appropriately.

Q03b

Question Introduction

Few candidates were able to explain a weakness of Toby using an opportunity sampling technique. Candidates explained the type of people that may be in the shopping centre but did not relate this to the opportunity sampling technique.

Q03c

Question Introduction

This question required a strength and weakness of Toby using a thematic analysis to analyse his data. Whilst there was an understanding of thematic analysis, many candidates did not apply factors from the scenario in their response.

Examiner Tip

In order for an answer to be applied, it is important to include details from the scenario to support the statements. Using only the name of the researcher does not demonstrate application and is considered a generic response.

Q03d

Question Introduction

This question was answered well by many candidates as they were able to use elements of the scenario to suggest how the questionnaire about child and adult relationships could be improved.

Q04

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to discuss the cognitive development of Wahida and Khalid using Piaget's stages of development. They demonstrated accurate knowledge of the stages and developed some arguments.

To achieve level 3 and 4 it was important to develop the arguments as to which particular behaviours the children displayed were appropriate for their age stages.

Q05

Question Introduction

Some candidates were able to assess whether Erikson's psychosocial stages of development were scientific by giving a description of the stages and then accurately assessing whether the research could be considered scientific. Many candidates were able to describe stages of psychosocial development but not assess whether it was scientific, giving an assessment that was more general in description.

As a level-based question requiring an assessment to be made, it is important to address the requirement of the question as in this case where it had to be considered whether the stages could be considered scientific. Giving an assessment of real-life application for example did not address the question and therefore responses would be limited to the lower mark bands.

Q06

Question Introduction

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of self-fulfilling prophecy and many were able to describe how it could be related to criminological psychology.

Q07a

Question Introduction

Many candidates were unable to describe the experimental research design but described the research method used in the study.

Examiner Tip

Candidates need a working knowledge of the difference between research design and research method which will help them to achieve the marks in similar questions.

Q07b

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to calculate a mean score to two decimal places from the data in the scenario and this was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q07c

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to calculate the percentage to two decimal places from the data in the scenario and this was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q07d

Question Introduction

The weakness of the sampling method was answered well by many candidates as they were able to identify and justify a weakness of pre-trial publicity in respect of the scenario. Many candidates could identify a strength but were unable to link this to a fair trial.

Q07e

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to calculate the chi-squared to two decimal places from the data in the scenario. Many candidates were able to achieve 1 mark having successfully taken the expected value from the observed value. A number of candidates introduced errors at this stage and did not calculate the chi-squared accurately.

Q07f

Question Introduction

Many candidates gave the results of Sonia's investigation and the question required conclusions to be drawn from the results. When a conclusion was given it was often generic and did not draw on supporting information from the scenario.

Q07g

Question Introduction

Candidates were able to show an understanding of the cognitive interview technique but this was not applied to the scenario and generic responses were given.

Q08

Question Introduction

A number of candidates were able to describe the effect of 'other race' as an influence on the reliability of eyewitness testimony. However, they were unable to successfully assess the influence on reliability as more evidence or applications of the descriptive points were required. The responses were therefore limited to the bottom of level two in many cases.

Q09

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different factors that could influence jury decision making. The most common was pre-trial publicity and they were able to describe it and give examples. As the question asked to evaluate factors that could influence jury decision making it is important to describe more than one factor to access the higher mark bands.

Whilst many candidates were able to describe the factors that influence jury decision making they did not go on to evaluate how the factor had influenced jury decision making. Some candidates were able to apply the findings from Bradbury and Williams but few other examples were used to support or negate the influence of the described factor.

Both elements of the question need to be addressed in order to meet the criterion for the higher level mark bands.

Paper Summary

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

- Candidates need to review their understanding and application of thematic analysis when used as a research technique.
- Candidates need to understand the difference between research design and research methods.
- 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 the AO3 requirement in the 8-mark level based responses.