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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

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

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## **General Comments**

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

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

Option A was the preferred choice of the majority of candidates and knowledge and understanding in respect of many aspects of criminological psychology was evident. Candidates who had chosen Option B, demonstrated good knowledge, and understanding of the effectiveness of serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors as a treatment for anxiety.

Candidates would benefit from an improved understanding of the volunteer sampling when applied to a scenario as generic answers were given on the whole that would not have been suitable for the situation outlined. Further improvement is also required in respect of language development theories as knowledge of the theory was not correctly applied to the scenario.

It was pleasing to see the level of knowledge and understanding in respect of antisocial personality disorder when applied to criminal and antisocial behaviour. The candidates were able to accurately describe the disorder and explain why this may have led to criminal and antisocial behaviour.

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 and not provide general evaluation points.

## **Paper Summary**

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

- Candidates need to review their understanding and application of Chomsky's theory of language.
- Candidates need to understand the difference between cross-sectional and longitudinal 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 levels based questions.

## **Q01a**

### **Question Introduction**

The question required candidates to explain two strengths of the study by Van iJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988) and this was answered well by many candidates. The candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the procedure of the study and many were able to justify this in terms of a strength.

## **Q01b**

### **Question Introduction**

This question was not answered well by many candidates. It required candidates to explain an improvement to the study by iJzendoorn and Kroonenberg. The candidates suggested changing the methodology of the study completely or providing a conclusion rather than a suggested improvement.

### **Examiner Tip**

A two mark improvement question requires candidates to make a judgement as to how any changes may effect issues such as generalisability, reliability and validity positively.

## **Q02a**

### **Question Introduction**

Many candidates answered this question well as they had a thorough knowledge of ethical considerations and were able to apply it to the scenario.

## **Q02b**

### **Question Introduction**

Candidates on the whole, were able to successfully calculate the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test from the data table.

## **Q03a**

### **Question Introduction**

The majority of candidates were not able to describe a cross-sectional study in relation to the scenario of children's social development. Many candidates described a longitudinal study citing features of demonstrating development over time.

## **Q03b**

### **Question Introduction**

Few candidates were able to explain a weakness of Florian using a cross-sectional research method. Candidates explained that participants may drop out from the study, drawing on their understanding of longitudinal methods as oppose to cross-sectional.

## **Q04**

### **Question Introduction**

Few candidates were able to achieve level 3 and 4 for this levels based question. Candidates were required to discuss using Chomsky's language acquisition device why Ivy may be able to speak both languages.

Candidates did not demonstrate a secure knowledge of the theory and repeated the stem rather than applying the theory to factors from the scenario to explain why Ivy may have been able to speak both languages.

To achieve level 3 and 4 it was important to develop arguments as to which factors of the theory could or could not explain Ivy's linguistic abilities.

## **Q05**

### **Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to assess whether mindfulness could be considered ethical when used to enhance children's development. Few candidates had knowledge of how mindfulness could be used in children's development, mostly citing how it is used within mental health provision and for adults.

Some candidates demonstrated an understanding of ethical considerations in general but did not apply them to the question in respect of children's development.

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 mindfulness was ethical when used in children's development. Giving an assessment ethics generically for example did not address the question and therefore responses would be limited to the lower mark bands.

## **Q06a**

### **Question Introduction**

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of antisocial personality disorder and many were able to describe how it could explain criminal and antisocial behaviour.

## **Q6b**

### **Question Introduction**

Many candidates were unable to describe how antisocial personality disorder could be considered a credible explanation for criminal and antisocial behaviour.

### **Examiner Tip**

Candidates need a working knowledge of credibility as oppose to just reliability and validity as these were often cited as oppose to suggesting how the theory was credible.

## **Q07a**

### **Question Introduction**

Candidates where required to describe how Ren may have used a volunteer sampling technique. It was therefore important that they referred to aspects of the scenario rather than giving a general description of how a volunteer sample could be found. Suggesting a newspaper advertisement would not have been appropriate in this situation as he was researching service users of a charity and not the general public.

## **Q07b**

### **Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to explain one strength of Ren using quantitative data for his research. Many candidates were able to give a thorough explanation of quantitative data but did not relate it to the scenario, so were unable to achieve any marks.

## **Q8**

### **Question Introduction**

Few candidates were able to achieve the full 4 marks for this question which required them to explain one strength and one weakness of Myrtle using cognitive interviewing techniques with Jared. Some candidates were able to describe aspects of a cognitive interview but not why that made it a strength or weakness. Few candidates applied their knowledge of cognitive interviewing techniques to the scenario.

## **Q09**

### **Question Introduction**

Many candidates were able to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of the study by Bradbury and Williams (2013). Many accurately described the use of live trials as oppose to mock trials, demonstrating an awareness of the study.

Many candidates were able to evaluate how aspects of the study made the study reliable and valid. Some candidates were also able to evaluate factors that did not make it reliable and valid and were therefore able to access the higher mark bands.

## **Q010**

### **Question Introduction**

This was a levels based question that required candidates to assess the influence of post-event information on the reliability of eyewitness memory. Some candidates were able to describe post-event information and then use the findings from the Loftus and Palmer study to assess whether this had been an influence. Many candidates however did not address the question, simply describing and evaluating the Loftus and Palmer study.

It is important in a levels based question that requires candidates to make an assessment that they describe the factor in question and then use evidence and examples to make a judgement in order to achieve the higher mark bands.