



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**PSYCHOLOGY
AS**

SUMMER 2023

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Component	Page
Component 1	1
Component 2	4

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COMPONENT 1: PAST TO PRESENT

General Comments

There was an impressive amount of descriptive detail included in several of the questions this year and candidates should be commended for their recall. Overall timing seemed to have improved with the majority of candidates attempting every question on the paper and allocating an amount of time that reflected the marks available. Generally the structure of answers was good with candidates separating their longer answers into appropriate paragraphs, thus aiding the clarity of the response.

Several issues that have previously been addressed in examination reports and therefore addressed in CPD, were once again seen, and although these are addressed below it would be beneficial for candidates to revisit comments and guidance that has previously been given (materials available on EDUQAS website). This is especially relevant to the AO2 marks available on the examination and this is an area where candidates should work on identifying these questions and then making sure that they address the apply aspect of it. skill.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** Good response rate on this question and there was clear knowledge of the different assumptions of the cognitive approach with schemas being the one that was most utilised. Better answers on this question clearly made the link between schemas and why relationships were formed, and it was also good to see social exchange theory being linked to decision making. Weaker responses did mention schemas however missed the link to why schemas led to relationship formation. In some cases the candidates focussed on why relationships would not be formed, and this is not the focus of the question.
- Q.2** Excellent response rate with candidates showed a strong depth of knowledge of childhood experiences with the majority focussing on the psychosexual stages. The tripartite personality was also answered well. Stronger candidates showed detail and accuracy of both the assumptions whilst weaker candidates although generally able to name stages and parts of the tripartite personality often produced answers that were muddled in their detail.
- Q.3** This was the least answered question. There was a noticeable improvement in the level of detail that candidates were able to provide in relation to this question since this topic was last asked. This is a question where centres and candidates are encouraged to make use of the summaries of the studies that are provided on the website. Better responses were clear in their detail noting details such as it was subjective well being that was being measured rather than just happiness. These candidates were also able to report statistics within their answers. Weaker responses often covered a range of points but were lacking in detail.

- Q.4** This was the A02 question on the paper and as such required the candidates to engage with the scenario and discuss which of the two pieces of research was considered to be better. It was pleasing to see a high response rate on this question. Better responses addressed the statement by directly comparing the two pieces of research and often had mini conclusions throughout and it was particularly encouraging to see the wide range of points that candidates used to compare the two pieces of research on. Weaker responses did address the statement in a conclusion, but no attempt was made to otherwise compare, rather a description of both was presented. Candidates are also encouraged to be careful with the accuracy of their responses; several candidates said that Bowlby did not use females in his research when he did and also gave details of Loftus and Palmer's sample whereas the research paper only says that they were students.
- Q.5** The most popular choice was drug therapy and there were some well detailed answers with the best responses able to give details of the drugs for different disorders and details of how they work. Weaker responses lacked detail or were muddled and quite a few candidates included evaluation in their responses which unfortunately was unable to be credited.
- Q.6** The most popular option in this section was mindfulness. Better responses did give some details in their evaluation and often group therapy was compared to individual mindfulness and it was noted that mindfulness has been integrated into other therapies. However, most responses lacked this level of detail and were generic and the answers produced were able to be applied to many therapeutic applications.
- Q.7** Candidates were obviously confident in evaluating the biological approach and some very impressive responses were seen that were highly detailed and covered both the strengths and weaknesses of the biological approach. Weaker responses just described strengths and or weaknesses rather than analysed why they were a strength, or a weakness and some candidates focussed on only one aspect of the question e.g. strengths or weaknesses and this therefore limited the marks that were available to them.
- Q.8** This question required candidates to discuss the use of conditioning techniques to control children's behaviour. It also required a reference to social and cultural diversity. Whilst candidates were able to discuss conditioning techniques very few addressed both aspects of social and cultural diversity and appeared to have prepared set responses to the debate and this therefore limited what marks they could obtain. Better responses were detailed and there was reference to specific studies that related to the debate such as Gill, McAllister, Chaney and Lovaas and the evaluative element also included specific research. What was often missing was reference to cultural diversity although a few did utilise Lewis and his research on Japanese schools. A few candidates submitted responses that discussed conditioning techniques with children, but their responses were anecdotal and contained no identifiable psychological knowledge and therefore were awarded little if any credit.

Summary of key points

For sections of the specification that are related to classical research the original journal article or the summary article on the EDUQAS website should be used.

Work still needs to be done with the AO2 application questions where there are always 10 marks available on the paper. This could be in one 10-mark question as in this series or split into two or more questions. It would be advantageous to spend time recognising what these look like. If a quote or scenario is included these must be engaged with to access the application marks.

Candidates should be prepared to engage with the debate question rather than utilise standard responses as in this case where additional aspects needed to be addressed many limited the marks available to them by not covering all aspects of the question asked.

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COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOUR

General Comments

Candidates should be commended for the detail in many responses, specifically in the ability to provide strengths and weaknesses of methodologies. Time seemed to have been managed well, with most questions attempted. As highlighted in previous years, there was a lack of contextualisation for the scenario questions that means AO2 marks could not be accessed.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** The evaluation in this question was mostly basic without a discussion of the points raised. Much of the evaluation of ethics was focused around assumptions rather than specific commentary from Kohlberg's research. For example, many candidates explained the issue of consent or right to withdraw, neither of which are discussed by Kohlberg. Teachers should be aware that only information from the original research article are credit worthy at the higher bands, where evaluation needs to be contextualised. Conclusions were mostly basic, often a summary of what had already been presented and so received minimal credit. Most mid band marks were awarded for a lack of detail in the response or generic evaluation points (e.g. longitudinal research or gender bias without context of Kohlberg's research).
- Q.2** Answers to this question rarely achieved full marks. Many answers were basic with generic statements such as 'a weakness of longitudinal research is that it takes a long time'. Some candidates went further with explanation of how this would cost a lot of money but failed to develop this point to explain why. There was some confusion with case studies meaning that evaluation points were presented relating to studies of individuals which did not attract credit.
- Q.3** Most candidates could correctly describe how to calculate a median and mode in parts (a) and (b) but responses to describe the process of calculating the standard deviation drifted into justification of why this would be used as a measure of dispersion. Teachers should instruct candidates to read the command words of the question carefully. Many candidates could not to answer this question.
- Q.4** Few candidates were awarded full marks and did slightly better for part (a) than part (b). Most candidates could not explain the features of a confounding variable in full, but credit was given if the example was appropriate (i.e. a variable that only affected some of the participants). It was pleasing to see that many candidates could successfully operationalise the variables.
- Q.5** This question was mostly answered very well and many achieved full marks. It was pleasing to see so many candidates accurately identifying the different types of hypotheses.

- Q.6**
- (a)** Many candidates found it difficult to explain why the case study was appropriate in this research, using justification such as 'it is easy' which did not attract credit, or forgetting to link it to the scenario, which meant none of the AO2 marks could be awarded. Candidates should be reminded that all responses must be contextualised for any credit to be given for the scenario questions.
 - (b)** Part (i) was answered well with most candidates could articulate why the participant being related to the researcher would create researcher bias. This also meant that part (ii) was also answered well but marks were lost if the response was not contextualised to the scenario.
 - (c)** Very few candidates could explain why a line graph was appropriate. Many responses focused on how it made the data easy to plot on the graph or easy to interpret which did not attract credit. The graph was mostly plotted well; the most common reason for a loss of marks was for the lack of a title, or for axes labels that were not clear or not operationalised, for example stating 'age' rather than 'age in months'. Conclusions were mostly inferential. For those candidates who attempted to write a descriptive conclusion, there was a tendency to state findings rather than drawing a conclusion. In many cases, despite an accurate depiction of a line graph, the candidate disappointingly stated a conclusion for a correlation.
- Q.7**
- (a)** While this question was answered by most, candidates could not provide an accurate response, relying instead on suggestions about how the participants would feel about the prediction rather than psychological justification. In part (ii), many candidates could write a fully operationalised null hypothesis, where marks were lost, it was usually for not operationalising the variable of 'confidence'.
 - (b)**
 - (i)** This question brought a mixed response with many candidates explaining opportunity sampling rather than random. Repetition of the term in the question did not receive credit (e.g. she should select randomly). Most candidates were awarded a mark for explaining the process of putting names in a hat or using a random number generator without mentioning where the names were selected from (the target population or sampling frame).
 - (ii) & (iii)** Most candidates could explain the strengths and weakness of using random sampling but could not be awarded any AO2 marks when the response was not contextualised to the scenario.
 - (c)** The response often reworded the question (e.g. the professor could test them and then retest them) which was not credited. Many candidates offered the inaccurate response of using a new participant group in the retest and very few could articulate how the reliability had been assessed (i.e. if the findings were consistent).

- (d) (i) & (ii) When assessing the strength and weakness of conducting research in the field many candidates provided accurate evaluation points but failed to link their answer to the scenario and therefore could not receive AO2 credit. Candidates should be directed to look for words in the questions which guide the students to contextualise their responses, such as 'this study' or 'this research' to ensure they receive the credit for their accurate knowledge.
- (e) (i) & (ii) Candidates answered this ethics question well in most cases. Most responses were contextualised for the ethical issue but then became generic when explaining the way of managing the issue, losing marks in part (ii).
- Q7 (f) Candidates should be reminded that all elements of the justification for the choice of statistic must be contextualised to receive credit. The most marks were lost for an inaccurate statistic (Spearman's rho) which was frustrating to see when candidates had clearly written an experimental hypothesis earlier in this section.

Summary of key points

Once again, candidates should be aware that questions relating to classical research should be guided by the original journal article or the summary of the article on the Eduqas website.

AO2 application remains an issue with some accurate explanations or evaluations being able to receive credit as they've not been contextualised.



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