



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

WJEC EDUQAS AS PSYCHOLOGY

SUMMER 2016

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PSYCHOLOGY

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COMPONENT 1: PAST TO PRESENT

General Comments

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates attempted all questions and appeared to manage time appropriately. It was also interesting that although some candidates scored quite poorly on the direct recall questions that they often did better on the application and evaluative elements on the paper, and there were some appropriately creative answers to some of these types of questions. Although, for some centres, there was very little independence in the answers, with model answers being used which did not quite fit the question. Unfortunately these model answers led to low marks. There was a definite over reliance on the textbook. Many answers were taken directly from one textbook in particular. Reliance on textbooks and model answers is also likely to affect marks especially on the application elements (AO2) and any questions where engagement with a quote is required. Candidates should pay attention to the marks available for each question. In some instances where 2 marks were available candidates wrote long answers that although often gained good marks meant that there was less time to spend on longer questions.

1.
 - (a) Answered really well. Most candidates gained full marks.
 - (b) Lots of 2 and 3 marks awarded here. Candidates either did not explain conditioning well enough or became muddled, often with the neutral and unconditioned stimulus or the difference between punishment and negative reinforcement. Here most candidates included both operant and classical conditioning, however if one had been explained fully and accurately this could still access the full marks that were available. It should be noted that just describing what Pavlov and Skinner did without fully explaining what the aspects of conditioning were was not enough to gain all the marks.
2.
 - (a) Very well answered.
 - (b) Most candidates gave the findings of research rather than conclusions which led to around 3 or 4 marks often being rewarded. Marks were often given by default e.g. in reference to age, culture and money and their effects on happiness. Centres need to make it clear that findings and conclusions are two very different pieces of information as candidates often wrote what Myers and Diener found. There are conclusions sections to the original research articles and these should be what are used to teach conclusions.

3. There were few top band answers to this question. Some candidates got confused between the increase and decrease in activity in reference to the right and left hemispheres. There was also confusion about activity related to areas linked and not linked with violence. Better candidate answers mentioned the control group findings. These were needed to put answers into context (e.g. NGRI group had lower rates of activity in the left hemisphere than the control group). Candidates also frequently gave conclusions to this question (e.g. this suggests that they lacked emotion, etc.) Although marks are not taken away for this, the conclusions sections did not attract any credit.
4. There are 10 marks available for AO2 on each paper and in this series these were questions 4 and 5. These questions therefore needed candidates to apply their knowledge of psychology to the questions being asked. Too many candidates described drug therapy or psychosurgery with very little link to **why** a biological psychologist would use such therapies. Better candidate answers linked the assumptions to the question. In a few cases candidates described both therapies, and only one of these could be credited. Whilst others listed weaknesses of a therapy, and these would not explain why a therapy was chosen unless these weaknesses were less of a problem than other therapies.
5. This was another application question where candidates were asked to engage with the quote about relationships being a result of unconscious processes. Unfortunately, there was very little reference to unconscious processes in reference to relationship formation. Some candidates explained Bowlby's research, the tripartite personality and/or psychosexual stages, but not in reference to relationship **formation**. Whilst the material was often correct in its description, the lack of tying it to unconscious processes and relationship formation meant that these candidate's marks were limited. Often candidates considered maintenance or breakdown of relationships and again this did not match the question that was set.
6. This was answered quite well with both strengths and weaknesses being explored. Issues arose when answers were generic (e.g. the approach is not scientific), but with no reference to what in particular makes the approach unscientific. There were several well detailed answers to this question that just missed out on top marks as they failed to bring the answer together with a conclusion.
7. (a) In this section, the most popular therapy was Systematic Desensitisation. This question produced some good answers with the inclusion of counter conditioning, fear hierarchy, relaxation training and the different types of systematic desensitisation. Better answers also explained the role of modelling. In some instances there was confusion between in vivo and in vitro methods. Some candidates talked about the fear hierarchy without explaining its construction or the importance of working through and relaxing at each stage before moving on to the next stage of the hierarchy. In general Aversion Therapy was not answered with as much detail and often there was some confusion between the role of operant and classical conditioning in this therapy. A small minority included evaluative material in this answer that did not attract credit.

- (b) Another question that was mainly answered well. Both strengths and weaknesses were considered but some of these could be generic, e.g. therapy as being effective but with no research demonstrating how effective it was. Several candidates used Seligman's example of ancient fears and accurately described what this was however did not link it back to Systematic Desensitisation and the fact that the therapy may be less effective in dealing with these fears as they are a result of evolutionary processes. Better aversion therapy questions also included information on Symptom Substitution. Again as a longer evaluative question the most effective answers brought together the information with a conclusion based on the evidence that had previously been presented.
8. There was a range of ability demonstrated in this question. Some candidates described evidence related to eye witness testimony without discussing whether eye witness testimony is reliable or not whilst others covered a wide range of evidence and evaluated the evidence, however again did not fully address the debate. The debate questions require a mixture of both description and evaluation and should be brought together with a conclusion reviewing what has previously been discussed. It is worth noting that mini conclusions throughout do also attract credit. This often became an answer based on Loftus and Palmer. There was often range but not a lot of depth and arguments were not always well thought out. Almost like candidates had not engaged with the material and just wrote what they had learnt rather than showing debating skill. Although this particular question did not require candidates to refer to the quote this may happen in future exam series and therefore it is essential that candidates are prepared to use material related to this topic in a variety of different ways. These questions can vary in how they are asked and therefore centres providing model answers to their candidates are likely to hamper the effectiveness of their candidates' responses. It is also worth noting that whilst some credit can be given for non-psychological aspects such as economic and political implications, and indeed these do add to the depth of the debate, this cannot form the entirety of the candidates' responses. There were a small but significant number of responses that were written that did not display any psychological based knowledge, these were therefore only able to attract minimal credit.

PSYCHOLOGY

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COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOUR

General Comments

The examining team were generally pleased with the standard achieved by many candidates. It was clear that most candidates had a good appreciation of the gist of the research methods concepts covered in this examination, although some candidates demonstrated a lack of precision and/or application, and this vagueness cost them marks.

Overall, candidates need to read the questions thoroughly, paying particular attention to command words and the skills they elicit; especially be aware of the difference required for 'how' and 'why'. Candidates may also benefit from quickly scan reading all of the part-questions in the scenario questions, so they do not include content that would be better suited to later part-question. Candidates should know that nearly all answers to scenario questions require some form of link or contextualisation in the application of their knowledge to the novel situation. Marks will never be taken off for linking the answer to the novel situation, but marks are very frequently lost if the answer does not link well.

Section A

1. Most candidates were able to access some of the marks on this question. Many got 1 (a) and 1 (d) correct (although stratified was occasionally mistaken for systematic sampling in 1 (d)). Fewer candidates were successful in being able to identify ratio data in 1 (b) and very few identified a positive skew in 1 (c).
2. Many candidates were unable to give a precise definition of a directional hypothesis, although many were able to give an example of one which helped to contribute to their answers.
3. Few candidates were able to clearly identify many of the characteristics of an experiment. Although many did highlight the roles of IVs and DVs and/or the ability to draw cause and effect conclusions. Many relied on identifying the different types of an experiment, laboratory, field and natural experiment, but these did not receive credit here as they are types of experiment, not features of it. Some interpreted 'experiment' as 'research' and as such only received credit if any content was also relevant to experiments.
4. Most candidates were able to indicate a difference between qualitative and quantitative data, although many relied on basic contrasts between the depth of data, some candidates were able to demonstrate a greater appreciation of the contrast in these two data types.

5. Nearly all candidates were able to gain some credit on this question, with a significant minority achieving full marks for their answers. It must be noted that only details that are evident about the sample and the way in which the sample was selected that appeared in the original article received credit. Any discussion about the possible motivations of Milgram for why he chose this sample or sampling technique did not receive credit, as they do not appear in the original article.
6. This was disappointingly answered by some candidates. Some candidates just saw this question as an opportunity to describe the ethical issues that arose in Milgram's research, rather than answer the set question and as such they received minimal credit. Other candidates saw it as an opportunity to describe ethical issues and talk about how psychologists deal with them.

'Analyse ethical issues that arise in social psychological research' required the candidate to demonstrate AO3 skills, therefore it was expected that candidates offer some 'back and fore' discussion or analysis regarding why certain ethical issues might occur in social psychological research. Any appropriate ethical issue would have been accepted as long as it can be justified in terms social psychological research. The most common ethical issues discussed were; the use of deception or a lack of valid consent and a risk of stress, anxiety, humiliation or pain. Although some candidates referred to these issues by slightly different names, such as 'a failure to protect from physical and psychological harm' or 'a lack of informed consent', these were appropriately credited.

Many candidates chose to focus their answer solely on Milgram's research; although this is acceptable it tended to be a strategy more evident in weaker responses. Candidates with stronger answers focused more on why the ethical issue exists in social psychological research, rather than just how Milgram had demonstrated it.

Section B

7. (a) Most candidates were able to achieve full marks for this question. Some candidates achieved 0 as they calculated the mean rather the median score.
- (b) Most candidates achieved at least 1 mark for this question. Candidates need to be aware that if they draw inferential rather than specific conclusions from descriptive data they will limit their marks. Answers such as '*the median enjoyment rating of those participants who had read the positive review was higher than the median enjoyment rating of those who not read the positive review*' is appropriate for descriptive data and hence received 2 marks.
- (c) (i) Many candidates were able to spot that there were two modes in Condition 1 (70 and 75), and no mode in Condition Two. However in Condition 1, some candidates added the two modes together to achieve 72.5, which is obviously inappropriate for the modal score. A few candidates alas did not state that there was no mode for condition two, such as "Condition 2= " or stated "Condition 2= 0" and hence couldn't receive credit for this part of the answer.
- (ii) Many candidates discussed the problem of having two modes in Condition One and no modes in Condition Two, hence the mode would be an inappropriate measure of central tendency.

- (d) Most candidates received a good mark for this question. Nearly all were able to transpose the research from the field to a laboratory. Regrettably a minority also included some discussion as to why the laboratory based research would be better/worse than conducted in the field, this did not receive credit as 7 (d) is clearly asking about 'how' and this 'why' content is more suitable to 7 (e).
 - (e) Most candidates were able to discuss at least one strength of laboratory based research, the most popular being greater control over variables, and contrast this with limitations of field research. Although few offered the accuracy/detail that was expected for 5 marks, many candidates were able to attain 4 out of 5.
 - (f) This was disappointingly answered by most candidates. Some candidates believed that peer review included the peer repeating the research; others just gave a definition of peer review, which may have been eligible for minimal credit if their definition included an element of 'how' rather than 'why' peer reviews are conducted. Few were able to offer steps in the peer review process, and fewer still demonstrated an ability to apply these steps to this scenario.
- 8.
- (a) Most candidates were able to suggest a non-directional hypothesis for the research; however it was not clearly operationalised by many such as "there will be a difference in lie detecting abilities of police and the general public", rather than "there will be a difference in the number of correctly identified responses of police and the general public". Candidates who stated an aim, a null hypothesis or directional hypothesis received no credit.
 - (b) Most candidates were able to accurately identify a weakness of opportunity sampling and link it to this research, attaining full marks. Candidates without any link received a maximum of 1 mark.
 - (c) As there is often contention regarding the nature of histograms, the examining team were open-minded as to the assessment of this question. Candidates who applied the principles taught in GCSE Mathematics courses received credit; candidates who sketched a histogram in the way that Psychologists and psychological software (such as SPSS) usually display them received credit. Candidates should be made aware that many of the marks offered for 'graph' questions relate to skills such as appropriate labelling of the x axis or y axis, appropriate titles, appropriate keys etc. Although a minority of candidates did not attempt this question, those who did frequently achieved full marks.
 - (d) This was answered poorly by some candidates. The question required candidates to justify why the Mann-Whitney U test is appropriate. This required them to identify 'test of difference'; 'independent data' and either 'ratio data' or 'at least ordinal level data' and also to demonstrate links to the research. Candidates lost marks mainly because they offered no links to the research or only linked one element. Many candidates failed to identify a test of difference or frustratingly stated the level of measurement of the number of correct responses was ordinal.

- (e)
 - (i) Many candidates identified an issue of external validity such as problems with the population validity and hence did not receive any credit as the question specified internal validity.
 - (ii) Some candidates offered a brief definition of content validity, but did not apply it. Many candidates seemed to have little understanding of how content validity can be used to assess the validity of research or its component parts.
 - (iii) Again, as many candidates chose to ignore the 'internal validity' requirement of this question they received no credit unless their suggested strategies could have also influenced the internal validity of the research. Those candidates who did successfully answer this question offered ideas such as using a single/double blind procedure; having the actor read the statements 'live' to the participants; offering participants to answer 'unsure' instead of possibly guessing 'true' or 'false'.
- 9.
- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the appropriate question, question 6.
 - (b) Most candidates were able to explain why question 6 would produce qualitative data.
 - (c) Nearly all candidates were able to produce a question that would produce qualitative data, although some did lose some credit as they were either a little vague in their question or they asked multiple questions rather than 'a' question.
 - (d) Most candidates identified a method noted in the specification such as 'semi-structured interviews'. Candidates who offered methods not explicitly noted on the specification, such as 'unstructured interviews' also received credit as long as the method they stated could legitimately produce qualitative data. Most candidates achieved the 1 mark for identifying the method; most were also able to receive credit for the justification of their choice, although a minority missed out on a mark as they did not offer some form of link to the research. Unfortunately, again some candidates offered material that may have been credited in question 9 (e) as they referred to 'how' the method chosen could be used, rather than 'why' the method was appropriate (justification).
 - (e) Many candidates answered this question well, offering examples of questions that could be used by the therapist.



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