



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**PSYCHOLOGY
AS**

SUMMER 2022

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PSYCHOLOGY

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AS PSYCHOLOGY- COMPONENT 1: PAST TO PRESENT

General Comments

The descriptive detail included in several of the questions this year was impressive, 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 appropriate 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 their responses.

Several issues that have previously been noted in Examiners' reports were once again seen, and although these are identified below it would be beneficial for candidates to revisit comments and guidance that has previously been given and is available on the Eduqas website. Accessing the AO2 marks available on the examination, is again the key area that could be improved.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 A good response rate on this question with 97.2% of candidates attempting the question and a mean score of 2.7. A lot of candidates wrote more than was required to get the marks available. Better answers included a brief description of some components whilst weaker answers listed a range of components, however failed to describe the content of some of these. There was a good range of knowledge evident on this question with the vast majority of candidates choosing dream analysis, rather than psychodrama.
- Q.2 (a) This had the best response rate on the paper at 98.4% with a mean mark of 2.8. The best responses described evolutionary influences with reference to Natural Selection /EEA and also backed these up with relevant examples such as altruism, mate selection or phobias. The link between these examples and evolutionary influences was made clear. Weaker responses did not make links explicit for example mentioning mate selection however not linking it to survival of the gene pool; or they did not include relevant examples.
- (b) Another good response rate of 97.2% and a mean mark of 2.6 The best responses clearly described neurotransmitters and gave relevant examples of their effect on behaviour. Weaker responses either just described neurons without linking to neurotransmitters, did not give examples or gave incorrect examples. There were also answers that discussed hormones and these therefore gained little credit. Most popular choices were the link between Schizophrenia and high levels of Dopamine and Depression and low levels of Serotonin. A few candidates used other examples of neurotransmitters, and these also gained credit when used appropriately.

- Q.3 There was a good response rate on this question at 95.5% although the mean mark here was low at only 2.6. Better responses covered the findings and conclusions, correctly identifying the relevant structure and hemisphere of the brain and also used the conclusions drawn by Raine et al. Few candidates made clear reference to glucose metabolism. Weaker responses also failed to include conclusions, made no reference to the comparison group and incorrectly identified the hemisphere or structures within the brain. Others were generalised in their responses for example mentioning reduced activity in the limbic system, however not naming the region effected or acknowledging any difference between the activity levels in the left and right hemisphere.
- Q.4 (a) Response rate on this question was 95.1% with a mean mark of 2.6. Most candidates selected systematic desensitisation to evaluate. Better responses mentioned research that supported or refuted the effectiveness of the therapy and/or discussed known issues like symptom substitution or not being effective for all phobias/conditions. Weaker responses described the treatments rather than evaluating them, or used generic evaluation without examples to back this up.
- (b) This question had a lower response rate than 4 (a) at 91.5% but a slightly higher mean at 2.7. Again systematic desensitisation was most popular although some who had chosen this for 4 (a) then used Aversion therapy for 4 b. This was a valid approach for this question and Aversion therapy answers did tend to lead to a better response in evaluating the ethics with this being a therapy that raises issues of social sensitivity. Better answers actually evaluated the ethical considerations of the therapies whilst weaker responses tended to describe ethics and therefore attracted little credit.
- Q.5 This question had a response rate of 91.5% and a mean value of 2.5. It was good to see an improvement in terminology and descriptive content since the last time a question on relationships and positive psychology was asked with many mentioning 'signature strengths' and 'the good life'. Better answers gave examples of signature strengths or clearly related the good life assumption and forming positive connections to others as why relationships are formed. Weaker responses showed elements of the positive approach but did not link these back to relationship formation, or included details that were relevant to other approaches.
- Q.6 This question has the lowest response rate on the paper at 89.9% and a mean value of 4.5. Better answers were clear on the strengths and weakness of the positive approach and also mentioned real world applications in relation to mindfulness and resilience training for the US army. This was backed up with relevant examples and a conclusion was drawn. Weaker responses tended to be confused on the scientific nature of the approach and whilst some aspects such as happiness are difficult to measure scientifically. Answers tended to say it was not scientific and this therefore attracts little credit whereas if they had highlighted the problematic nature of measuring some of the concepts this would have been a valid comment. There was, in some responses, confusion around freewill and determinism with some saying that it is both and also around nature/nurture and holism and reductionism.

- Q.7 This question was the AO2 question on this paper with a response rate of 93.5% and a mean value of 3.5. Stronger responses did evaluate Watson and Rayner's study and kept making explicit references to the statement about the methodology and procedures being flawed and what it can tell us about human nature. Few candidates provided a conclusion to their answers. Credit was also given for evaluation other than methodology and procedures that was linked to what it told us about behaviour. A lot of the weaker responses often just described Watson and Rayner, and this could not attract credit or did evaluate but made little reference to the statement and therefore received limited credit. Care should also be taken to use the original study and summary from the Eduqas website as many students referred to myths about Little Albert and these aspects of the response were unable to attract credit.
- Q.8 This was the second highest response rate on the paper at 98% and a mean score of 9.9. There were a wide range of response to this question. Good to see a variety of evidence being used in order to construct responses and the majority of candidates were able to provide a response to this question. Better answers clearly discussed both sides of the debate and backed up their answers with relevant, well-chosen examples. Some candidates went beyond just summing up what they had said in their conclusions, and some gave very relevant and detailed social and economic implications. Weaker responses lacked detail and relevant examples or were not so effective in explaining the material that they used for example saying that rape crisis reports that 90% of rape victims can identify their victims but missing out that it is because they are known to them. A few candidates submitted responses that discussed eye-witnesses testimony, but their responses were anecdotal and contained no identifiable psychological knowledge and therefore attracted 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 as there is always 10 marks of AO2 available on the paper. This could be in one 10-mark question, as in this series, or divided over two or more questions. It would be advantageous to spend time recognising what AO2 questions look like. If a quote or scenario is included these must be clearly and repeatedly engaged with to access the application marks.

Clarity of responses is needed in relation to evaluation of the positive approach both in its scientific nature, freewill/determinism, holism/reductionism and its acknowledgement of the influence of nature and nurture.

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COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOUR

General Comments

It was pleasing to see many well-prepared answers for the questions in this examination, however the quality of answers offered by some candidates on this paper showed a drop in quality in comparison to what would normally be expected. It is a concern that many candidates could not provide detailed and coherent responses to some questions in this examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates tried to access the marks from this question, with a 98% attempt rate but most responses were not detailed enough for the full two marks and others disappointingly offered aims or findings, instead of a hypothesis.
- (b) Most candidates attempted this question (95.2%) although many could not write an accurate null hypothesis, instead often offering an alternative hypothesis or repeating the definition from the previous question.
- (c) Marks were lost because many candidates could not explain why a psychologist would accept a null hypothesis. Fewer candidates attempted this question at 94% and very few candidates achieved any marks.
- Q.2 Candidates were less confident with this question resulting in a 90.7% attempt rate and a very low mean score of 0.3. Despite naming the observation method in the question, many candidates responded with a sampling explanation.
- Q.3 This question also proved less appealing to candidates with an attempt rate of 90.7 and a mean score of 2.8. Better responses provided at least one strength and weakness of secondary sources, often comparing them to primary, but many candidates offered descriptive responses or confused secondary sources with case studies.
- Q.4 The four definitions provided mixed responses; the highest attempted was part a with 99.6% and the lowest was part d with 91.1%. Definitions tended to be brief and not able to access the full 2 marks available for each part of the question.
- Q.5 This question was well answered with an attempt rate of 98.8% and a mean score of 1.3. There were many candidates who confused confidentiality with anonymity and others reworded the question, which did not receive credit, such as 'when everything is kept confidential'

- Q.6 (a) This question was attempted by 94.4% of candidates with a mean score of 2.8. Many candidates were able to receive full credit for a very detailed response, but others provided a lot of detail but did not understand the demands of the question and only described one of the two features.
- (b) It was disappointing that only 91.9% of candidates attempted this answer with a low mean score of 4.2. Many responses were descriptive rather than evaluative and those that did tended to make a one-sided argument which received limited credit. Very few candidates could discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two features and reach a conclusion,
- Q.7 (a) Most candidates attempted this question (99.6%) but few achieved the full marks with a mean score of 1.2. Many candidates operationalised the independent variable or the dependent variable, but very few did both and many offered an aim or findings instead of a hypothesis.
- (b) (i and ii) These questions were attempted by most (over 99%) and achieved a mean score of 1.8 for each. Errors that did occur were usually due to incorrect addition of the values when calculating the mean, which may suggest a calculator was not used, or was used incorrectly.
- (b) (iii) This was the least attempted question on the paper at 87.9% and only achieved a mean score on 0.2. When candidates did accurately identify the mean as the most appropriate, they could not explain why or they provided a generic response and did not link it to the scenario, which is essential for the marks in AO2 questions in this section.
- (c) (i) This was attempted by 92.7% of candidates achieving a mean score of 0.7 which demonstrated good understanding of the experimental design.
- (ii) Less candidates attempted this question at 89.9% with a mean score of 0.6 with most answers being basic or not linked to the scenario.
- (d) (i) More candidates attempted this question at 97.2% and most did well with a mean score of 1.7. A variety of validity issues were offered which were mainly linked to the scenario.
- (ii) Another well attempted question with 94.4% and a mean score of 1.5. A range of suggestions were offered with most linked to the research.
- (e) Fewer candidates attempted this question at 93.5% with a lower mean score of 1.4. Some candidates offered detailed explanations of other methods such as interviews which were clearly linked to the research. Many candidates seemed to have misread the question and provided alternative methods which would produce quantitative data.

- Q.8 (a) (i and ii) Were well attempted at 95.6% and 94% respectively. Many candidates could correctly identify a correlational design.
- (iii) Many candidates seemed to be confused by the design of the study and tried to make the data fit into a series of bar charts, histograms or line graphs. Those that had correctly identified a correlation sometimes missed out on full marks with the absence of an appropriate title.
- (iv) This was only attempted by 89.9% of the candidates with a mean score of 0.8. In most cases where marks were lost, the candidate had attempted to draw an inferential conclusion from the scattergram.
- (b) (i) This question was answered reasonably well with an attempt rate of 96% and a mean score of 2.8. Most candidates could accurately describe the ethical issues but mostly lost marks for not making clear links to the research.
- (ii) Fewer answered this question at 91.5% but those that did achieved a mean score of 2.5. Similar to the previous question, when marks were lost it was usually because of a lack of application to the research.
- (c) Only 73% of candidates attempted this question and the mean score was low at 0.6. There were many offers of descriptive statistics. Errors mostly featured inaccurate inferential statistics that would have been appropriate for the design identified incorrectly earlier in the graph – many candidates believed this was a test of difference and therefore offered an incorrect inferential statistic for this question. Many responses were limited to the mark of 1 for identification as they failed to clearly link to the data in the research

Summary of key points

Candidates should be encouraged to demonstrate application in their answers to the scenario questions. Many marks are frequently being lost this way.

In longer AO3 questions of ten marks and over, candidates need to include a conclusion in their answers.

Mathematics knowledge needs to be developed; especially drawing appropriate conclusions from graphical representations.

When asked to 'Critically evaluate' candidates will not receive credit for just describing content. In this case, analysis, interpretation or evaluation are more relevant skills that receive credit.

Candidates should be aware of the typical requirements for shorter tariff questions and elaborate on definitions and explanations to achieve full marks.



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