



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2024

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
in Psychology (WPS03)
Paper 01 Applications of Psychology

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General Comments

Knowledge and understanding was demonstrated by the majority of the candidates.

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

Option A continues to be the preferred choice of the majority of candidates and there was evidence of knowledge and understanding for many concepts of criminological psychology. Candidates who had chosen option B, demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of how selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors could be used as a treatment for anxiety.

Candidates would benefit from an improved understanding of the properties of a structured observation compared to observations in general.

It was pleasing to see the level of knowledge and understanding in respect of the study by Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988). Many candidates demonstrated an accurate understanding of the aims, procedures and findings of the study. There was also an increased ability to apply the taxonomy of assess where consideration was made for how useful the study was in furthering our understanding of psychology.

The questions that required candidates to apply theories, concepts or research methods to stimulus material demonstrated a growing understanding of the need to use elements of the scenario in support of the working knowledge of psychological concepts.

Paper Summary

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

- Candidates need to review their understanding of the elements required to correctly title and label the axis of a bar chart.
- Candidates need to understand the difference between the properties of the different type of observations.
- Candidates should continue to revisit the requirements of the questions by reviewing the taxonomies used in the 8 mark level based responses. This would enable the candidates to understand the different requirements of discuss and evaluate questions.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q01a

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to accurately state the aim of Bowlby's (1944) study, citing both maternal deprivation and its correlation with affectionless psychopathy.

Q01b

Question Introduction

Candidates gave a range of responses that were able to explain one strength of Bowlby's (1944) study. There were a number of generic responses which did not use elements of the study and were not therefore creditworthy.

Q02a

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to draw a suitable graph to show the data from a scenario. Some candidates were able to achieve the full 3 marks which required an accurate title, axes labels and data plots. Many candidates did not give an accurate title and the X axis stated condition A and condition B without a description of the conditions.

Examiner Tip

To achieve a mark for a title, the independent variable and the dependent variable should be identified and clearly stated. All conditions need to be fully described to achieve the axis marks.

Q02b

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to describe one conclusion that could be made from the data in the scenario. Many candidates repeated the results from the data table but did not state what the data actually showed so did not achieve any marks. Some candidates were able to give an accurate conclusion which made a judgement about what the data meant as opposed to repeating the results.

Examiner Tip

To achieve 2 marks for a conclusion question, candidates need to use data from the data table and then make a statement which shows what it infers in terms of the investigation.

Q2c

Question Introduction

Many candidates were successfully able to describe an ethical issue in respect of the scenario with the majority choosing to use informed consent.

Q03a

Question Introduction

Few candidates were able to describe how a structured observation could be conducted in relation to the scenario. Candidates described how a general observation could be carried out but did not relate this to features of a structured observation, for example deciding on behavioural categories and tallying the behaviour of the children.

Examiner Tip

Candidates need an awareness of the different features of the different types of observation. If a scenario is also presented, these specific features should be related to the scenario for it to be a creditworthy response.

Q03b

Question Introduction

This question required a weakness of a structured observation as used in the scenario. Many candidates did not apply features of a structured observation, providing a generic description of observations in general.

Q04

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to describe the practice of mindfulness in some detail giving appropriate examples which was pleasing to see. A number of candidates also applied the features of mindfulness to the children in Mrs Adrier's school, helping them to achieve the higher levels in the mark band.

A number of candidates used research evidence in support for or against mindfulness and whilst the question required the candidates to discuss rather than evaluate, this was creditworthy in terms of its AO1 content. However, some candidates evaluated the use of mindfulness as opposed to discussing how it could be applied in the scenario which meant they were unable to achieve the higher levels of the mark band.

Q05

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to describe Van IJendoorn and Kroonenberg's study in detail, giving an accurate description of the procedure and findings and successfully citing the correct data. However, the question required the candidates to assess whether it had furthered our understanding in psychology and some of the responses given evaluated the study as opposed to addressing the requirements of the question.

As a levels 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 applied to our

understanding in psychology. Using examples explaining why it was reliable or valid, provided an evaluation but did not make a judgement on its usefulness, so candidates were unable to achieve the higher-level mark bands.

Q06

Question Introduction

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the attractiveness of the defendant and were able to state how it influenced jury-decision making.

Q07

Question Introduction

Many candidates answered this question well, which required them to give a strength and a weakness of using CBT to treat offenders. There was effective use of supporting studies which were applied as opposed to just being described.

Q08a

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to describe how a volunteer sampling technique could be used in relation to the scenario. The majority of candidates answered this question well using elements of the scenario to support their description of a volunteer sample.

Q08b

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to explain one weakness of the volunteer sampling technique in relation to the scenario. Many candidates did not achieve marks here as generic descriptions were given without reference to the scenario.

Q08c

Question Introduction

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. They were able to identify the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test as the most appropriate test, including reasons why, including being a repeated measures design, a test of difference and ordinal data.

Q09

Question Introduction

Candidates were required to explain two ways that stress and trauma may have influenced the reliability of eye-witness testimony in relation to a scenario. Many candidates used studies such as Yerkes Dodson and also biological factors, such as cortisol levels to explain how Belinda's eye-witness testimony may have been affected. However, candidates did not always explain further in respect of the point they had

raised in relation to the reliability of the eye-witness memory, so did not achieve full marks for the question.

Q10

Question Introduction

Many candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of studies that support or negate the role of self-fulfilling prophecy as an explanation of crime. They were able to give details of the research and then justify how it explained criminal and anti-social behaviour. The weakest area of the essays appeared to be the knowledge and understanding of the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy, with few references to some of the key aspects of the theory.

In order to achieve the higher levels of the mark band, candidates need to address both the areas of knowledge, understanding and the justification/exemplification of the knowledge identified.

Q11

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of the different elements of a cognitive interview, explaining what they were as opposed to just listing them.

The question required candidates to assess the usefulness of the cognitive interview technique with witnesses. Whilst many candidates were able to describe the elements of the cognitive interview successfully, they continued to evaluate rather than give consideration of the importance of the features in terms of usefulness in respect of witnesses.

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

