



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Pearson Edexcel

GCE Psychology 9PS0/02

Paper 2: Applications of Psychology

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The paper provided a range of question types over two sections, the compulsory clinical section and the topic section where candidates had to choose one topic out of criminological psychology, child psychology and health psychology. The most popular topic was criminological psychology with only one or two candidates answering child psychology or health psychology. There were very few unanswered questions, with most candidates attempting all the questions indicating that candidates are managing the time.

Some candidates did not explain strengths and weaknesses across the paper, centres should remind candidates that explain questions need a justification/exemplification. Applying the context within an answer is also missing in some answers. Candidates should be reminded of the fact that A02 questions require application to details given in the context throughout their answer.

Some candidates were able to gain strong marks through demonstrating their psychological knowledge in terms of the requirements of the command word. Other candidates did not always understand the requirements of the command word; candidates should be referred to the taxonomy of command words in appendix 6 of the specification. This was noticeable in some the extended open response questions of 8 marks or above, where there was sometimes isolated knowledge and understanding. The A03 points were sometimes not developed.

The remainder of this Examiner Report will focus on each individual question and specific examples with the aim of highlighting areas of good practice and some common errors which can be used to help prepare candidates for future 9PS0/02 examinations.

Clinical Psychology

Question 1a

This question required a description of how ICD is used for mental health. The best answers described how it is used, though most answers did not write enough to gain all the marks available. Most answers were able to gain at least 1 mark for an example. The weakest answers repeated the question saying that it was used for mental health.

Question 1b

This question required AO1 for identifying a strength and AO3 for then justifying the strength. The most common strength was based on the fact it is cross cultural. The best answers were able to justify the strength, however, most answers did not add any justification.

Question 2a

Candidates were required to describe a volunteer sample in relation to the scenario, with the best answers being able to do this. Most answers were unsuccessful in applying their answers to the scenario and were generic so could not gain any marks.

Question 2b

This question was focussed on why a random sample was better than a volunteer sample in relation to the scenario. Only the very best answers were able to identify why a random sample would be better in relation to the scenario and then go on to justify this. A lot of answers focussed on weaknesses of a volunteer sample rather than why a random sample would be better. There were a lot of generic answers which did not link to details from the scenario.

Question 2c

Candidates were required to identify a weakness in relation to the scenario and then justify the weakness. Those answers that could identify a weakness in relation to the scenario often failed to justify the weakness for the second mark. A lot of answers failed to link to the scenario so were generic.

Question 3b

Most answers were able to write a non-directional hypothesis, with very few directional hypotheses. The best answers got both marks as the two variables were operationalised within the hypothesis. Weaker answers failed to operationalise both variables so gained 1 mark.

Question 3b

The best answers were able to accurately calculate the standard deviation to two decimal places and gain all four marks. Some candidates only gained 3 marks as they did not read the question fully and failed to give their answer to 2 decimal places. A large number of answers showed no understanding of how to calculate the standard deviation.

Question 4

This essay required candidates to evaluate their practical. They had to show knowledge and understanding of their practical to gain the AO1 marks. Only the very best answers were able to do this accurately and thoroughly. Most answers only showed isolated knowledge and understanding of their practical. The AO3 element required evaluation of their practical. The best answers were able to use coherent chains of reasoning and show a grasp of competing arguments, leading to a conclusion. The weaker answers gave statements that showed some development of form.

Question 5

This 8-mark essay required candidates to show their knowledge and understanding of antipsychotic drugs for the AO1 and to apply this to the scenario for the AO2. The best answers were able to show accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding, and some had sustained application throughout. A lot of answers were either mostly accurate or showed isolated knowledge and understanding. Some had a partially developed discussion with occasional application.

Question 6

The 20-mark essay required candidates to assess a non-biological explanation of schizophrenia. The most common explanation was socio-economic. The best answers were able to show accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding, though a minority of answers only showed isolated knowledge and understanding. The AO3 tended to be weaker. Often arguments did not lead to an assessment or the assessment was superficial. There were quite a few blank answers for this question.

Criminological Psychology

Question 7a

This question required candidates to state two findings from their contemporary study. The most common study was Valentine and Mesout (2009). The best answers were able to give two accurate statements of the results. Most answers were able to give one statement of the results.

Question 7b

Candidates had to identify one strength in terms of reliability of their chosen contemporary study (AO1) and then justify the strength (AO2). The best answers were able to do both, with weaker answers being able to identify the strength but failing to justify the strength. Some answers did not focus on reliability as the question asked them to do.

Question 8

This question required candidates to describe risk management in relation to the scenario. Very few answers gained all the marks available as they failed to write enough different points. Most of those who attempted this question did link their answer to the scenario.

Question 8b

The vast majority of answers gained the mark for identifying the experimental/research design.

Question 8c

Candidates had to give one reason why qualitative data was better to quantitative when studying criminological psychology and most answers were able to do this. A minority of answers did not link to criminological psychology. Only the very best answers were able to gain the second mark for justifying why qualitative data was better.

Question 8d

Candidates had to identify a weakness in relation to the scenario and then justify the weakness. Again, there were a lot of generic answers which were not related to the scenario. Some answers identified the weakness in relation to the scenario but failed to offer a justification.

Question 9

This essay required candidates to show knowledge and understanding of theories that would explain the development of criminal behaviour and apply that knowledge and understanding to the scenario. The best answers were able to do this showing accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding through the use of a variety of different theories/explanation and then apply these to details from the scenario in a sustained, well-developed manner. Some answers were inaccurate in their knowledge and understanding or their answers were limited. Some answers gave a partially developed discussion.

Question 10

Candidates were required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, application and evaluation in the 16-mark essay. The best answers were able to give accurate knowledge and understanding of the ethical interview with sustained application and developed coherent arguments which lead to a conclusion being present. Some answers showed little understanding of the ethical interview, with a few writing about other types of interviews. Some answers had little application beyond repeating the name. Weaker answers often gave a limited evaluation.

Child Psychology and Health Psychology

No report due to the very low number of answers for these two topics.