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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCE
In Psychology (WPS03) Paper 1

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Publications Code WPS03_01_1901_ER

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Paper Summary

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

- Candidates need to review their understanding and application of the theories of: Erikson, stages of psychosocial development and Chomsky, stages of language development.
- Candidates need to understand that when suggesting an improvement to a methodology stated in the scenario that it is to improve that particular methodology rather than suggesting an alternative methodology.
- Candidates would benefit from revisiting the requirements of the questions by reviewing the taxonomies and working through how to apply these, particularly in respect of AO3.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q01a

Question Introduction

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates who used the response of 'two-word stage' to identify the stage that Sarah was in from the scenario.

Q01b

Question Introduction

Candidates produced a variety of answers in an attempt to describe why Sarah made grammatical errors according to Chomsky's theory of language development. Some candidates described Chomsky's theory but did not describe why Sarah made grammatical errors when forming sentences. A number of candidates produced responses of a very high quality, applying key terms such as transformational grammar in explaining why the errors occurred.

Examiner Tip

When the question asks why a behaviour has occurred it is important to give a justification and not just describe the scenario in relation to a theory.

Q02

Question Introduction

There was evidence from candidates answers that they understood the two stages of Erikson's psychosocial development referred to in the question. A number of candidates were able to identify the basic virtue attained at each stage and suggest how this impacts on development. A majority of candidates however could identify the basic virtue but were unable to explain how this impacted on development.

Examiner Tip

Candidates need to understand the impact of the eight stages of Erikson's theory on development. Whilst it is useful to name the basic virtue achieved at each stage this needs to be linked to each of the psychosocial crisis experienced.

Q03a

Question Introduction

Many candidates did not answer this question well. The most common reason given for using open-ended questions was to gather greater/more in-depth detail however this was not well explained and so did not achieve the second mark. The second reason was often a repeat of the first and therefore did not achieve any marks.

Examiner Tip

Reasons for using open/closed questions need to be justified to achieve two marks. In respect of open questions, a good response would link in-depth detail with improved validity for example.

Q03b

Question Introduction

This was a question that required candidates to apply their mathematical skills in calculating df for a data set. A majority of candidates were unable to calculate df correctly.

Q03c

Question Introduction

The majority of candidates answered this questions well and were able to calculate the correct ratio of males to females for the data set.

Q03d

Question Introduction

A number of candidates were able to suggest an improvement that Jared could make to his study and were able to justify it. Many candidates suggested using a different methodology as oppose to improving the method used in the research which failed to address the question.

Q04

Question Introduction

Candidates generally answered this question well demonstrating accurate knowledge and understanding and a grasp of competing arguments for both the Ashdown and Bernard (2012) and Ding et al. (2014). A number of candidates answered this very well and were able to achieve the top of level 4 for their responses. They not only demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the studies but were also able to offer competing arguments that were detailed and drew on alternative supporting/negating research.

Q05

Question Introduction

Some candidates were able to assess whether Punch's ethnographic research has furthered understanding in developmental psychology. Many candidates were able to describe the study but did not address the question as to how this had furthered understanding and so were restricted to Level 1.

As a level based question it is important to note that an A01/A03 response was required which needed to show an equal emphasis between knowledge and understanding versus

assessment and conclusion. Those candidates who scored highly on both skills were able to demonstrate accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding of how the application of an ethnographic approach to research had improved understanding in developmental psychology.

Q06a

Question Introduction

This was a one mark question but few candidates were able to achieve this score. Many candidates' definitions gave examples of anti-social behaviour that were criminal behaviours and not behaviour that went against social norms.

Examiner Tip

Candidates need to be clear that anti-social behaviour goes against social norms and causes distress/harassment/ damage/harm.

Q06b

Question Introduction

This question was answered very well by the majority of candidates. The candidates were able to engage with the scenario and correctly described both the behaviour the police would investigate and why this was a criminal offence.

Q07a

Question Introduction

Most candidates achieved two of the four available marks for this question. Many candidates used $n=10$ rather than $n=9$ (one difference =0 was not used) and so did not demonstrate a depth of understanding in respect of the statistical test calculation.

Q07b

Question Introduction

Candidates on the whole answered this question well. There was clear understanding of correlational research and this was applied when explaining a weakness in respect of the scenario.

Q7c

Question Introduction

The majority of candidates were able to suggest one improvement that could be made to research in attractiveness and length of sentence, however this was not often justified and so one of two available marks was achieved.

Q08

Question Introduction

A number of candidates applied key features of SLT to the scenario and were able to explain how the television series may be affecting Cassie's behaviour. Whilst much detail was given, there was some repetition and so candidates could not be credited for making the same point twice.

Q09

Question Introduction

Many candidates had a detailed knowledge of the Loftus and Palmer (1974) study. Candidates were able to describe the study in detail, indeed, for many there was too much emphasis on the study in terms of knowledge and understanding. Few candidates were able to successfully assess the credibility of the study, often putting the term credibility at the end of a sentence but not explaining how it made the point credible. In order to move through the levels, assessment needs to be developed, show an understanding of competing arguments and lead to a balanced judgement and in this particular instance meaning that the issue of the credibility of the study had to be addressed.

Q10

Question Introduction

Some candidates struggled to provide a detailed response for this question. The AO1 knowledge of CBT was generic and was not applied to use with offenders.

The AO3 responses were often generic and did not go on to explain how effective the treatment of CBT was as a therapy for offenders.

Where candidates appreciated that the response had to be related to offenders and effectiveness of the treatment to offenders, detailed responses were given that demonstrated accurate knowledge and understanding and an assessment that led to a judgement in terms of its effectiveness.