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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE Psychology 6PS01

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Introduction

This was the fourth exam assessing the new 2008 specification and it continues to be a very positive experience. It's pleasing to note that candidates and centres are showing continual improvements for questions with specific requirements and responding well to issues raised on previous examiner reports. Overall candidates appeared to understand the nature of the paper and the areas of the course drawn through the questions. Generally most candidates had a good attempt at all questions, which was very pleasing.

There were some real discriminators on the paper. Question 5 on the multiple choice which dealt with validity was only correctly answered by better candidates, but mixed up with reliability by others. Q13 clearly separated those who knew about features and concepts from the cognitive approach from those who did not. More importantly it highlighted those who could correctly interpret a question and what was required of them, from those that could not. Q15 also separated candidates who could think on their feet from those that were unprepared for questions like this designed for them to plan a study. It's not uncommon for candidates who simply rote learn material when revising to do less well on questions such as this and others like Q16.

There was no repeat of candidates falling down on the essay although again a significant few did just describe and evaluate Cue Dependent theory instead of the Godden and Baddeley study. This lack of distinction between a theory and a study still remains baffling and has beset some psychology students for a number of years. How to address this issue is still a challenge.

Other issues included Q12c, where a few too many candidates still decided to explain how Milgram's study was unethical rather than ethical as the question required. Marks are available for explaining Milgram's defence of his study, and this is particularly important for Unit 4 where ethics are discussed at a wider level.

Q15 (biii) was the first time anything on natural experiments had been asked, and even though it was a straightforward question, a number of candidates couldn't identify it as another type of experiment.

Multiple choice questions were generally well answered with most candidates gaining between 8 and 11 marks. The final four multiple choice questions were nearly always answered correctly suggesting candidates find these non methodological questions easier than those on methods. Question 5 was the least likely to be answered correctly with many candidates getting mixed up with reliability and answering with D instead of A. Only better candidates knew the purpose of a control condition for Q6.

Question 12(a)

Most candidates wrote enough to gain one mark but many failed to expand fully for the full two marks. These typically missed elaboration regarding obeying authority figures; or following orders from authority figures. A minority gave the aim from one of Milgram's variations but still received some credit. Better candidates could also introduce the idea of testing whether the Germans were different as expansion for a second mark.

12 (a) Outline the aim of Milgram's (1963) study.

(2)

To find out to what extent participants would obey an authoritative figure even if it meant causing the person physical harm and causing themselves to feel moral strain.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gets both marks

First mark about authority figure and then elaboration about causing physical harm/moral strain gets the second mark

Question 12(b)

This was generally answered well with students coming up with two explanations of obedience. Only the best candidates gained all four marks but for others there was simply not enough detail to warrant more than two marks. The use of prompts and participants being in the agentic state were common in these answers however not all students managed to elaborate to attain full marks.

Although the majority could identify many factors of Milgram's original study, weaker candidates just listed these and did not outline factors as the question required them to. The most popular responses from candidates were the verbal prods given by Milgram, the experimenter being an authority figure and wearing a lab coat and that the original study took place at Yale University. Again this latter feature was only properly understood and elaborated upon by those that comprehended why a prestigious setting would influence obedience.

It was pleasing to note just how many candidates were able to refer to Milgram's variations to justify why a feature caused an increase in obedience. The down town office block and presence of the experimenter in the room were used most effectively.

(b) Outline **two** features of Milgram's (1963) study that might explain why the participants obeyed.

(4)

One major factor is that the participants had volunteered, they had been paid good money for their time in the experiment and as such felt a duty to complete the experiment. Another deciding factor is that an experimenter was in the room at all times telling the participant to continue. According to descriptions the experimenter stood while the participant sat and also wore a white lab coat and made notes on a clipboard, this all creates an air of power and authority around the experimenter.



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Examiner Comments

This gets three marks

One mark for saying they were volunteers, paid and felt a duty to obey. This was close to another mark for volunteer, paid, duty but was not well elaborated and making just one point really.

No marks for the middle sentence. There were more than two features here so mark all and credit the best (this sentence could get the one mark as the point above did but only one of these features can be credited)

Then two marks for the examples of how there was power and authority (the experimenter stood, wore a coat, clipboard). One for power and authority and the other mark for elaboration.

Question 12(c)

There were common mistakes in this question, a few candidates misread the question and focused their answers on why Milgram's study was unethical. This question is similar to one a number of years ago on the old legacy specification where candidates made similar errors. These weaker candidates struggled with this and clearly would have been more comfortable stating why it was not ethical. Centres must be explicit in balancing ethical issues and not just focus on criticising Milgram on ethical grounds. His defence is equally creditworthy.

Only better candidates wrote sufficient to gain full marks here. Some were still adamant that there was NO right to withdraw. Others used the right to withdraw as a reason however did not elaborate on this enough to get the mark.

The candidates who scored well on this question tended to focus on the debriefing and that the participants could withdraw despite the verbal prompts.

The most successful answers were ones which talked about a good debrief (even stating correct percentages that were glad to have taken part) and that Milgram was a competent experimenter. The high scoring responses followed their answers through and were un-phased by the question.

(c) Milgram's (1963) study is widely seen as unethical. However, there are many ways in which his study was ethical.

Explain how Milgram's study could be seen as **ethical**.

(4)

The participants in Milgram's study had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Also the participants would have been debriefed after the study had finished to explain why they had been used for the experiment.

The participants ~~are~~ were also given consent ~~before~~ before the study, so they agreed to take part in the experiment.



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Examiner Comments

This gets two marks

No mark for right to withdraw as this is not explained. Debriefing gets one mark, as does getting consent to taking part in the experiment

There needed to be more elaboration for further marks

Question 13

This question was not well received by candidates and was poorly answered, with very few students attaining full marks. The majority did not talk about features but just explained a theory of memory or of forgetting (Levels of processing, Multi Store etc)

Many students understood the question in terms of writing about the structure of memory; these answers described very well the multi-store model but received minimal marks as the mark scheme clearly states that this is an example.

Candidates who did as required tended to use the computer analogy and then elaborate their answers further. Very few looked at methodology, those that did just mentioned lab experiments without much other detail.

The word "concepts" in the question was designed to help candidates focus on the old style assumptions etc and better candidates clearly knew this. However it was not obvious to weaker candidates who struggled. Centres need to take note that questions like this are not only the new spec equivalent of old key assumptions type questions, but are also more generic and encompass a wider remit of answers from one given approach. The candidate needs to understand 2-3 features of each of the 5 AS approaches.

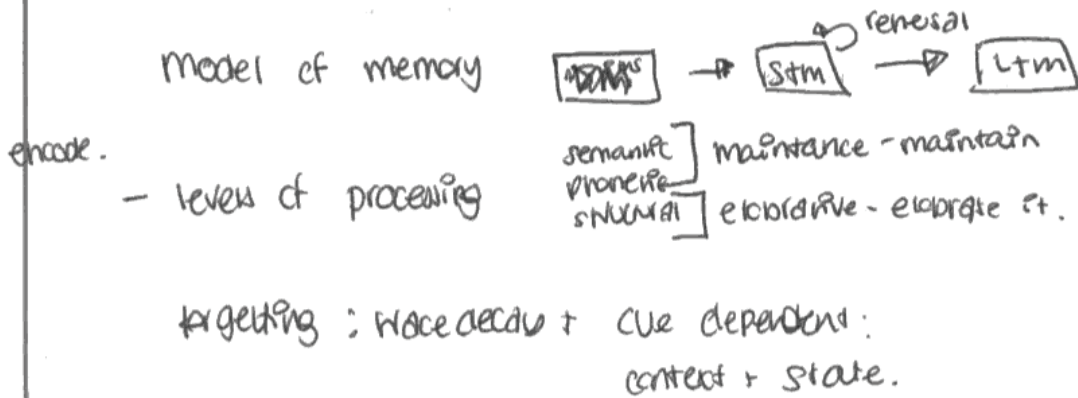
13 Each of the approaches in psychology has main features (underlying concepts) that define it.

Describe **one or more** main features of the Cognitive Approach in psychology.

The Cognitive Approach in psychology is all about the mind, dealing with how we remember and how we forget. One feature that deals with how we remember is that of the Model of memory, this states how we can remember + rehearse to remember in a 3 way stage. firstly sensory memory, this is information we can remember for 18-21 seconds and when encoded transfers to the short term memory where we can remember seven +/- 2 items altogether. If that info is then rehearsed it encodes to the long term memory where we have an infinite capacity available. This model states our mind works like a computer: input - process - output. Another feature of the cognitive psychology is theories of forgetting: one being cue dependent theory. This first deals with the

Idea we need a cue to remember something, which can bring in our emotional & physical state: context + state dependent

(Total for Question 13 = 4 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This gets three marks

There is an identification mark for it being about how the mind deals with how we remember and how we forget - as a feature.

Then another mark for all the detail about model of memory (as an example - this is the max 1 mark for details of a study/theory etc see mark scheme)

Then another mark for the computer - input, process, output - not as an identification mark but see mark scheme

The material on cue dependency is not credited as that max 1 mark has already been given

Question 14

Most candidates did well in this question scoring between two and full marks. Those that failed to score did so because they left the response blank or described the multi-store model.

Candidates who did as they were asked understood the different levels but there was a difference in the amount of detail candidates provided. Some were basic in their answers picking up the 2 marks on the mark scheme for identifying the levels and what the processing was. More developed answers providing elaboration on the levels with appropriate examples e.g. structural processing deals with how something looks for instance is a sentence written in capital or small letters.

A larger number than in previous series elaborated in terms of maintenance rehearsal and elaborative rehearsal. It was inclusion of this, and the first point on the mark scheme regarding memory being a consequence (by product) that set aside the good from very good answers. In this respect the question was an excellent differentiator, as it always is, from the majority that know the 3 levels of processing to those that can add points like those above to access full marks.

Some candidates misunderstood the question and described Craik and Tulving's study. Candidates must read the question carefully and distinguish in their class work and revision between theories and studies.

14 Describe the Levels of Processing model of memory.

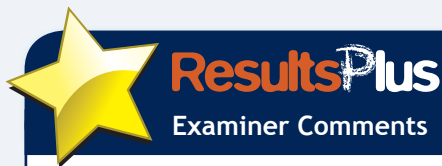
Levels of Processing (LOP) suggests that the deeper information ~~is~~ is processed, the more we can remember.

We remember more when information is ~~is~~ remembered by its meaning (semantic processing) rather than by ~~is~~ how it sounds (phonetic processing) or its appearance (structural processing).

Craik & Tulving (1975) did a study to support the idea of LOP, participants (ppts) were asked to process a list ~~of~~ of words ~~by~~ by ~~totally~~ counting the number of Capital ~~characters~~ characters in the words (structural processing), see if they rhyme with another word (Phonetic processing) or see if they could fit into a sentence (semantic processing).

Findings found that semantic remembered ~~80%~~ 80% of

words, Phonetics 25% and Structural 18% which is what the theory predicted.



This gets three marks

The first sentence gets one mark for saying deeper processing is remembered best. Then two marks for the list and meaning of each term - see mark scheme final bullet point (6th point)

No marks for the study - see mark scheme

Question 15(a)

The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify the correct IV and DV. Some inevitably mixed the IV and the DV up, others wrote an aim or even hypotheses to no avail. A few often stated the IV as gender so gained no marks. It must be made clear to candidates that as with the legacy Unit 5 papers, simple one word answers for either IV or DV will not gain credit.

15a_{ii} was generally answered well with students covering the majority of relevant areas. Controls were well thought through and some candidates came up with some very creative ideas. These were similar for most, such as ensuring that extraneous variables such as time of day were regulated and that participants used the same mobile phone to avoid other variables.

Good candidates wrote a thorough and well thought through answer. These candidates who focussed on the bullet points given in the question did much better, and have obviously seen previous series examination papers and mark schemes. These answers gave important information about sampling techniques either opportunity sampling or volunteer sampling. They also focussed on the research design and using independent groups because of the male female difference as set out in the previous question. However, only a few candidates mentioned setting up a suitable room to carry out the experiment.

Weaker candidates stated that they would be using a repeated measures design which had clearly not been thought through. Sampling was sometimes basic; most focussed on the procedure and didn't give enough information to move the answer on, or didn't give enough detail that we could repeat the process. These candidates didn't pay attention to the bullet points given on the question paper.

The question proved to be a real differentiator between those that could deliver appropriate detail and enable thorough replication, from those that could not. It also highlighted the difference between those that could adapt to a stimulus response question from those who were less flexible and relied more on rote learning.

- 15 (a) You want to investigate gender differences in the speed of texting on mobile phones in order to see who are the fastest, males or females. Cognitive psychology would suggest you use a laboratory experiment for this kind of investigation.



- (i) Identify the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) in this case.

(2)

iv is gender - male or female

dv is the speed of texting on mobile phones

(ii) Write a plan showing how you would go about your investigation.

In your plan you may wish to include:

- sampling
- procedure
- controls

(4)

I would use opportunity sampling which means that I would use the people that are available at the time I want to do the experiment. I would have a sample of 10 girls and 10 boys. I would ensure that they all had a mobile phone. I would then explain that I have my own mobile, which is just for the use of the experiment and I would then tell them my number. I would then give them all the same message to send me. When I have received all the messages, which the participants wouldn't know about because the experimenter's phone would be on silent, I would then find the first message received from both the males and the females and then get the quickest male and the quickest female to then send me a different message, and see who is quicker. I would do this five times, each time using a different message, making the results reliable.

The controls in my experiment would be that there is the same number of males and females at around the same age, they are all given the same mobile number, they are all given the same message to send and also they all start texting at the same time. Also when the fastest male and fastest female repeat this five times, they have five different messages but they are both the same and they also start at the same time.



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Examiner Comments

15ai) this gets two marks as both are correct

15aia) this gets four marks

opportunity sampling is appropriate as that will work, and they all have a phone, which is useful. Thinking of them all texting the researcher is good detail, and also details such as the phone receiving the texts being on silent.

Same number, same message, text at same time, a lot of detail here about controls / standardisation.

Question 15(b) (i)

Q15bi) and bii) were generally well answered and these are common questions which elicit the usual good responses from most candidates. However in both instances there was sometimes not enough detail for the second mark. This was usually down to lack of elaboration rather than incorrect answers.

Many candidates unfortunately are still writing that as it is a lab experiment it IS reliable rather than stating that the controls make it replicable which means it can be TESTED for reliability.

Similarly there are still a number of candidates that simply state they lack ecological validity without fully explaining what this means.

(b) Laboratory experiments have strengths and weaknesses.

(i) Outline **one** strength of a laboratory experiment.

(2)

Extraneous variables can be controlled
so there is no outside effects on the
results

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Examiner Comments

15bi) this gets one mark

This is the second marking point in the mark scheme so one mark only.
'Outside effects' needs more to be elaboration for the second mark.

Question 15(b) (ii)

(ii) Outline **one** weakness of a laboratory experiment.

(2)

Often very contrived tasks, and not in a real life environment, meaning the experiment may lack ecological validity



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Examiner Comments

This gets two marks

Contrived tasks, not real life situation, lacking ecological validity - okay for two marks as there is elaboration.

Question 15(b) (iii)

This was well answered with the majority of candidates gaining 2 marks here. Those that did not gain both marks always got the one for field experiments, and then just wrote down any other incorrect method, observations being the most common. It needs to be stressed that the specification does talk about three types of experiment and centres would be wise to focus attention on all three including natural experiments.

(iii) You will have studied two other types of experiment apart from laboratory experiments.

Name these **two** types of experiment.

(2)

1 field experiments
2 ~~natural exper~~ controlled experiment

(Total for Question 15 = 12 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This gets one mark

Question 16

Again in a similar way to January 2010 some candidates simply did not include reference to the example in their response. These application questions are proving to be real differentiators, and will continue to be. Some candidates are obviously flustered even though the knowledge is within their skill base, they just have difficulty applying it to an example.

Common responses included Social Identity Theory, and a few focussed on the ABC model of prejudice. Most could use information about an authority figure and being in an agentic state but didn't follow their responses on. Very few candidates included information about charismatic leaders, the authoritarian personality or realistic conflict theory in their responses.

Good candidates were able to apply their knowledge well. They would correctly apply the affective, behavioural and cognitive definitions of prejudice, and then do the same with the component parts of SIT. Weaker candidates did not refer to the material in the question at all. Many did not include examples or enough detail to gain good marks. A number of these candidates outlined an example of ethnic cleansing such as the Jews and Nazis, but made no reference to any psychology to explain it.

This was generally answered fairly well and nearly all students had at least some good knowledge of the study. Description was generally stronger than evaluation. The procedure was generally a bit weak, only mentioning the basics.

SECTION C

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend approximately 25 minutes on Section C.

- 16 Ethnic cleansing is a term used to describe the removal of one ethnic group, usually by force, from a particular area by another ethnic group. Imagine a country where two groups of people have lived together peacefully for many years but are now in conflict, with one group wanting to remove the other group.

Use your understanding of prejudice and obedience to explain this example of ethnic cleansing.

(6)

According to the social identity theory, we have a natural tendency to see ourselves and others as one or more social group. This is the concept of social categorisation. We categorise ourselves and others to our in group and out group. So the two groups of people where mention above will categorise themselves and others to in group and out group. Then they will identify with their in group by adopting ^{the} their behaviour or ^{attitudes} ~~attid~~. The two groups may wear ^{to} their ^{tradition} ~~typical~~ clothes wear contains their group symbol. This is social identification suggest by ~~the~~ the theory. ~~Also~~ This will result as their self-esteem tied to the status of their in group. They will try to find the difference between their out groups. And try to put down their out group to increase their self-esteem which is tied to their in group by putting ^{down} the out group, laying them as 'cheaters' or 'sneakes'. To show their in group favourism. ~~The Agency theory~~ This is ^{called} ~~is~~ social comparison suggest by this theory. The Agency theory suggest

that we will obey the authority figures in order to maintain the stable society. So, people may obey the orders from the social leader. The social leader of the two groups may want to remove the other ethnic group. So, they ~~order~~ ^{order} people to ~~do~~ ^{access} the ~~systematical~~ killing. The people may go to agentic stage ~~and~~ ^{or} experience moral strains ~~as~~ this is immoral. However they ~~are~~ ^{have} no choice but to obey and they will claim that they were not responsible for their action. This explains the ethnic cleansing possible. Also, people may obey to kill others because the authority have coercive, reward and legitimate power which makes ethnic cleansing possible.



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This gets six marks

One mark for categorise ourselves into in group and outgroup. One mark for adopting attitudes of the group etc like traditional clothes.

One mark for raising self esteem through status of in group.

One mark for putting the other group down other group/social comparison and example of cheaters and sneaks.

One mark for obeying orders from the social leader - may want to remove others

One mark for not being responsible for their actions.

The last point that lists types of power is not given a mark - though just needs a bit of elaboration to be creditworthy

Question 17

This was a dream question for most candidates but a significant few did not do as well as they could have. The main reason for this is that these candidates wrote about the theory of cue dependency rather than the study or again wrote about Craik and Tulving's LOP study. It was most evident on this question that a few had not planned their time effectively as some responses were rushed, unfinished or lacked sufficient detail.

Better candidates could discuss different types of validity and reliability in their responses showing a thorough knowledge of the study. More emphasis was placed on the aims and conclusions which helped improve levels. These candidates could provide the main points and were able to describe and evaluate the study in depth. An accurate description of results either as percentages or figures really made a difference.

In contrast weaker candidate's description consisted of statements such as "recall was better when it was the same environment as learning". Those who failed to describe well were unable to recall detail of the method; tended to just state the conditions and wrongly stated that the design was independent measures. For the evaluation there was some confusion over the study, many said that "as the experiment was conducted in a lab it lacks ecological validity". The evaluation was weak for many students and tended to be generic evaluation rather than specifically relating to this study.

Interesting points regarding the ethics of the study were made, some candidates put that it was unethical as the divers could have drowned because of making them concentrate on more than one thing at once, whereas better candidates talked about it being ethical because experienced divers were used.

*17 Describe and evaluate Godden and Baddeley's (1975) study of cue dependent forgetting.

(12)

Godden and Baddeley 1975, used ^{volunteer} ~~opportunities~~ sampling to ~~choose~~ ^{get} 18 divers to participate in their study. ^{They then} ~~created~~ ^{repeated} created 4 conditions in one, the divers had to learn a list of 36 random, 1-2 syllable words on land (the beach) and then recall the words in the same environment. In another condition, they learnt the words on land and then recalled them underwater (in the loch) and in another they did this, but the other way round, to learn them underwater and then recalled them on land. In the last condition, they ^{participated} ~~repeated~~ and recalled the words on underwater. They used repeated measures design so

that each ~~group~~ ^{condition} was performed by the same group of people, so no participant variables were present. The experiment ^{was done over 4 days}. They were also used a recognition test ~~at~~ before the experiment, so that they knew the next day's understood all the words and any effect to the dependant variable would be from the independent variable. ~~This was done over 4 days~~. The researchers found that in the dry-dry condition, there were ^{an average of} 11.4 words recalled and in the second condition, dry-wet, there were ~~an~~ an average of 8.6 words recalled, in the ~~dry~~ wet-dry condition there were 8.5 and in the last condition wet-wet there were an average of 11.4 words recalled.

This clearly shows that context does effect recall as when

the words were ~~to~~ learned and recalled in the same environment, the amount of words recalled was far higher than in a different environment.

This research is also backed up by Ferber and Standings research into context-reinstatement and exam.

~~The~~ As repeated measures design was used, the ^{participant} variables were reduced, however, order effects, such as fatigue and boredom may occur and demand characteristics may occur as they ~~would~~ may be able to guess the aim after doing ~~5~~ 4 of the same studies.

Also, volunteer sampling was used, which is ^{quick and} ~~easy and~~ easy, but is not very representative of their target population because they ~~participated~~ volunteered themselves, so there was an uneven number of males and females etc. Also,

This may have induced demand characteristics because they ~~would~~ ^{may} want to please the experimenter. This experiment had quite good ecological validity, as it was a field experiment and the divers were in their natural environment. However, the task they had to complete was not very ecologically valid as divers wouldn't usually be asked to learn and recall words underwater. Also, ~~as~~ as divers were used, the results ~~can~~ cannot easily be generalised to wider society and non-divers. Furthermore, as the sample was small, only 13, ~~this~~ ^{makes} ~~it~~ ^{it even} harder to generalise.

However, it does supply the cue-dependency with good empirical support. As it was a field experiment, ~~and it does~~ ^{it did not} have very good control, as extraneous variables cannot be controlled.



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Examiner Comments

This gets 11 marks

Level 4 description as it is very good and gives both breadth and depth, uses terms accurately and so on.

Level 3 evaluation as there is breadth rather than depth.

There is a good list of evaluation points most of which are relevant but not elaborated sufficiently which is why this essay was given 11 marks not 12 marks (the description was very good). 11 was thought to be appropriate because of lack of accuracy/elaboration in the evaluation.

The main distinction between more and less able candidates was and always has been the ability to elaborate. Higher scoring answers could back up a point with general and specific examples of research. Others find it difficult to provide relevant psychological research and instead rely on anecdotal information which is not creditworthy.

There are continuing signs of a gradual improvement in this area but it still remains the main differentiator amongst all candidates.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	80	59	53	48	43	38	33
Uniform boundary mark	80	64	56	48	40	32	

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