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Examiner's Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

October 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level

In Psychology (WPS01) Paper 1

Social & Cognitive Psychology

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## **General Comments**

Overall candidates completed this paper well. There were very few blank responses in the paper and the candidates appear to have shown realistic awareness of the mark allocation and the time restrictions to achieve the available marks.

As in previous series, most candidates engaged with scenario questions and gave some applied responses. There is still an issue of generic answers and candidates must ensure that they maintain their attention and continue to link the associated parts of the questions explicitly with the scenario,

Psychological knowledge was generally sound across both Social and Cognitive topics. Justification of points is less secure and only used effectively to build up chains of reasoning in very few cases.

## **Paper Summary**

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

Candidates should read the question carefully

Candidates should identify a strength of key theories and studies.

Candidates should be able to evaluate their own practical investigations

Candidates should avoid generic statements and try to make specific points.

## **Comments on individual questions:**

### **Q1**

#### **Question Introduction**

Most candidates were confident in identifying a factor that could affect conformity. A wide variety of appropriate answers were offered and thus the AO1 (knowledge) mark was achieved. Fewer candidates went on to provide a justification of how that factor affected conformity or give some evidence of research to show that it did have an effect. A few candidates talked about more than one factor

#### **Examiner Tip:**

Candidates must read the question carefully.

### **Q2**

#### **Question Introduction**

This question is based on a scenario so it is essential that the candidate reads the information provided carefully and engages with the details before attempting the question.

#### **Q2a**

Many candidates stated the IV confidently in relation to the scenario. A few, however, confused the IV with the DV and a couple of responses gave a generic definition of an IV which did not relate to this specific scenario.

#### **Examiner Tip:**

Candidates must know the difference between an IV and DV

#### **Q2b**

There were a significant number of generic responses to this part of the question. The answer must specifically relate to the investigation completed by Helena. More candidates could identify an appropriate weakness of Helena's study more confidently than a strength. The most popular response referred to the lack of generalisability. Few candidates went on to explain why a lack of generalisability is a weakness or to explain the point fully.

#### **Examiner Tip:**

Candidates should ensure that they have justified their point to achieve the AO3 (justification) mark

#### **Q2c**

Conclusions are difficult to express clearly and many candidates in this series and in previous series find it hard to write conclusions that are more than results. This question was attempted quite well.

#### **Q2d**

In the majority of cases the mathematical questions were completed competently and without error. The working was generally shown which is helpful.

### Q3

#### Question Introduction

This question has two AO1 Knowledge marks. There were very few excellent answers to this question. A few candidates drew a graph showing some awareness of normal distribution but they did not include labels or comments and thus did not answer the question. Several candidates talked about a lack of extreme values or outliers. Knowledge was largely confused and poorly expressed

### Q4a

#### Question Introduction

Each candidate is expected to carry out a practical investigation that analyses qualitative data on a topic from the social part of the specification. The response to Q4a should therefore reflect their own experience. There are two AO2 (Application) marks for this question. Most responses were generic and as such could be applied to any study. They were also lacking in detail and although thematic analysis was used as a term it was not described. Some candidates talked about studies involving animals. These seemed to be about reinforcement. Candidates must ensure that they know the practical investigation that goes with that approach, for example, the Social practical will be linked to conformity or obedience.

### Q4b

#### Question Introduction

There were two AO2 marks and two AO3 (justification) Marks for this question. A few candidates did not attempt this section. Many responses were again generic and could not be linked to the candidates' own study. A few candidates obviously had learnt from their own experience of a practical investigation and presented reasoned strengths and weakness and were able to achieve at least one of the AO3 marks.

**Examiner Tip:** Candidates should evaluate their practical investigations fully

### Q5

#### Question Introduction

This is an assess question which has four AO1 knowledge and understanding marks and four AO3 exemplification marks. As it is a levels-based assessment there is equal emphasis on AO1 and AO3. It was a straightforward question. Candidates were largely familiar with the different types of social power. Most candidates could give a brief description of at least two types of social power such as expert and reward power. A few candidates were able to give an accurate description of five types of social power. Only a handful of candidates could then assess this theory as an explanation of obedience. Most recognised that Agency theory was an alternate explanation but did not expand this idea fully. A few used this to demonstrate the idea of a competing argument but did not give a coherent chain of reasoning which assessed the significance of this theory. As a result not many candidates accessed the higher levels of the mark-scheme. Milgram's experiments were used to illustrate the types of power. These examples were not used effectively. A few candidates used authoritarian personality or locus of control to good effect.

**Examiner tip:**

Candidate should aim to develop logical chains of reasoning to give a balanced conclusion.

## **Q6a**

### **Question Introduction**

This question has 3 AO1 marks and involves description. The majority of candidates chose Sacchi as their study. They were able to describe some detail of the events in the procedure and some knowledge of how the photos were doctored. There was very limited information on the questionnaire and a lack of clear distinct points. Only a couple of responses featured the study by Darling. These were described in more detail

### **Examiner Tip:**

Candidates should learn full details of the procedure from Studies in detail

## **Q6b**

### **Question Introduction**

Some candidates were able to identify a weakness of their chosen study. For Saachi the most common weakness was that the sample was taken from the Italian population. Only some candidates could continue with this to justify their answer. The majority of answers were generic and did not link specifically to either Darling or Saachi

## **Q7a**

The vast majority of candidates carried out an accurate calculation.

## **Q7b**

### **Question Introduction**

The concept of random sampling was not fully understood. In many responses it was confused with opportunity sampling. Some references were made to asking random people to take part. A limited number of responses referred to either stratified or volunteer sampling. However most candidates made some reference to the scenario. There were a few excellent responses where candidates engaged fully with the scenario and also demonstrated a firm understanding of how a random sample could be obtained.

## **Q7c**

### **Question Introduction**

Most candidates had some knowledge of counterbalancing although they did not fully relate it to the scenario. A significant number of responses were generic.

**Examiner Tip:** Candidates should ensure that they link their responses back to the given scenario

## **Q7d**

### **Question Introduction**

The responses to this section did not always answer the question. Candidates did not necessarily relate back to the design of the word lists but instead included variables such as the quietness of the room. This therefore was not a high scoring question. Even where candidates did relate to the word lists they did not explain or justify their points.

## Q7e

### Question Introduction

Most candidates understood this notation and explained it clearly. A small number of candidates gave the opposite answer.

**Examiner Tip:** Candidates should review symbols and ensure that they can identify them accurately.

## Q7f

### Question Introduction

Most candidates related this finding to the Working Memory Model very effectively. Many gave a clear link to the phonological loop.

## Q8

### Question Introduction

This question was an 8 mark open response question which was assessed using the levels based marking criteria. There are four AO1 (knowledge and understanding) marks and four AO2 (Application) marks. There is equal emphasis on both assessment strands in this type of question.

As it is an applied scenario the response must relate explicitly to that scenario. Many candidates repeated the information given in the question rather than applying it. Candidates did not discuss the Multi Store Model fully and tended to go immediately to an alternative explanation such as reconstructive memory. Some candidates gave a good description of the Multi store model but did not go on to apply this to Femi and Asha's behaviour. Very few candidates achieved level 4 on the mark scheme as a thorough knowledge of the model was not provided and the discussion did not include a sustained application.

**Examiner Tip:** Candidates should be able to describe theories in detail

## Q9

### Question Introduction

This is an evaluate 12 mark open response question. There are six AO1 (Knowledge and understanding) marks and six AO3 (Justification) marks available. These should be demonstrated with an equal emphasis. Candidates could have used any psychological research into obedience to discuss in their responses. Most candidates only used research carried out by Milgram. Different variations of his original study were used. These were mostly described accurately although lacking in detail. Many responses contained superficial evaluative points and did not develop a conclusion or show awareness of competing arguments.

**Examiner Tip:** Candidates should practise developing an argument and elaborating their evaluation