

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCSE Psychology 5PS01 01

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Introduction

The paper allowed candidates across the ability range to show that they understood a range of concepts in psychology. They demonstrated their knowledge in unfamiliar contexts showing that they had developed, through effective classroom and exam-related experiences, a genuine capacity to 'think like psychologists', which is very pleasing at this level.

Many candidates answered the variety of knowledge-testing questions, such as Q1 and Q18 without difficulty and were also able to tackle similar questions testing more difficult skills such as application (Q6) and evaluation (Q17). In longer answer questions such as 20(b)/(c), candidates showed that they could think creatively about conducting experiments, suggesting that they had benefitted from first-hand experience of conducting practicals and in 19(b), about similarities and differences between the two theories of dreaming, candidates again demonstrated their ability to explore more deeply the material they had learned, offering some well thought out comparisons and contrasts.

Question 11

This question asked candidates about experimental controls. They had to identify a possible control in part (a) and explain their choice in part (b). To gain all three marks in part (b) it was important to describe both why controlling the variable they had chosen in (a) would be difficult and why it was important. A range of answers were produced, with many excellent ones explaining the importance of controlling the number of people in the shop, since they may obscure each other's view or talk to each other but that this is difficult because shoppers must be free to come and go, and trying to limit the number of shoppers might give away the experiment.

The candidate identifies the age of the witnesses as an appropriate uncontrolled variable in part (a). At the start of part (b), this is described in more detail, so this part cannot gain marks in section. However, the candidate goes on to give a good reason why this variable might matter, i.e. why it is important to control it.

11 Pranika is carrying out an experiment on eyewitness testimony in the 'real world'.

With the agreement of a shopkeeper, Pranika asks two of her friends to pretend to steal a pair of trainers from the shop. She then intends to ask shoppers about what they saw.

Pranika is having difficulty controlling variables in her experiment.

(a) Suggest **one** factor that might be difficult for Pranika to control in her experiment. (1)

~~The amount~~ ^{different} age groups age group

~~who is already saw what happened~~

(b) Explain **why** the factor you suggested in (a) would be difficult but still **important** to control in Pranika's experiment. (3)

~~Different ages lead to different results~~
~~of BPS~~

Different age group effects the results of what they saw.

For example if you was to ask children what they saw they might exaggerate and make stuff up which affects the aim of the study.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate only gains 1 mark out of 3 in part (b). To earn further marks they could give another example, such as the difficulty of older witnesses, who might be less able to see. Alternatively they could comment on the difficulty of selecting participants - to 'choose' shoppers might have made the aim obvious. The candidate also needs to say why it is important to control this variable, the most likely answer being to ensure that the findings of the study could be generalised to a range of age groups.



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Examiner Tip

With two-part questions like this, where you make a choice in the first part and discuss it in the second, make sure that you are sticking to the same idea in both parts.

This candidate gives an appropriate variable to control in (a) and offers points about both difficulty and importance in (b).

11 Pranika is carrying out an experiment on eyewitness testimony in the 'real world'.

With the agreement of a shopkeeper, Pranika asks two of her friends to pretend to steal a pair of trainers from the shop. She then intends to ask shoppers about what they saw.

Pranika is having difficulty controlling variables in her experiment.

(a) Suggest **one** factor that might be difficult for Pranika to control in her experiment.

(1)

Time

(b) Explain **why** the factor you suggested in (a) would be difficult but still **important** to control in Pranika's experiment.

(3)

This would be difficult to control as it would be hard to know when to ask the shoppers what they saw and after what time. If they waited too long, for example then the shoppers might have forgotten important

details. It would be important to control this as it could help between getting more detail from the shopkeeper about the robbery and getting fewer details from them as ^{over} time has passed they have forgotten things that happened. It is for this reason that she would need to control the amount of time after the robbery in which she asks the robbers so that she can get the most accurate eye witness testimony.

(Total for Question 11 = 4 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate's answer is very clear - they have stated their difficulty and important points correctly. However, there is not sufficient detail for 3 marks in part (b). The candidate could, for example, expand their first point to explain that Pranika might not have known when the participants started or stopped watching the crime, so timing would be hard.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Always make sure you read the question carefully. Some candidates did not read the text well enough and wrote about the shopkeeper's testimony, or about the shopkeeper reporting the crime, neither of which were relevant.

Question 13 (b)

This question was asking for conclusions rather than results.

(b) Palmer asked his participants to recognise the objects they had seen. He found that they were more likely to accurately recognise 'appropriate' objects than 'inappropriate' ones.

What did Palmer conclude from these results?

(2)

That participants ~~were more~~ would correctly identify the object after seeing an "appropriate" object and less after seeing an "inappropriate" object.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This candidate has made a very common mistake - they have just reworded the question rather than answering it, so they did not earn any marks.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that the 'results' of a study refers to the data the researcher collected, just like the 'results' of a football match is the score. The 'conclusions' of a study refers to what the researcher decided the results meant, rather like your conclusion about which team is best.

(b) Palmer asked his participants to recognise the objects they had seen. He found that they were more likely to accurately recognise 'appropriate' objects than 'inappropriate' ones.

What did Palmer conclude from these results?

(2)

Perception is affected by our perceptual set created by the context. This shows we use our schemas to create expectations about what we will see that affect our perception.



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Examiner Comments

This is an excellent answer, which clearly explains the conclusion about the way in which context creates expectations through the mechanism of perceptual set.



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Examiner Tip

There are some terms that are used on the specification that you need to learn: try to learn both a definition for each one and learn how to apply it to new situations. Try to imagine you are explaining the term to someone else who doesn't study psychology - could you give them an example from the 'real world'?

Question 13 (c)

This question asked for a strength and a weakness of Palmer's study, with two marks available for each evaluation point. In order to gain two marks the comment had to be specific to Palmer's study, rather than a generic point, i.e. one that could have applied to many similar studies.

This candidate has tackled both parts of this question, giving a strength and a weakness.

(c) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of Palmer's study.

(4)

The experiment was controlled very well, which improved the reliability of the results. It was

Other people may think a kitchen

Participants may have guessed the aim and tried pleasing the experimenter.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The idea that experiments are well controlled and that this improves reliability is correct and a general strength of all experiments, so can only gain one mark. To earn the second mark, the candidate could refer to specific controls in Palmer's study, such as always showing the images for 2 seconds.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates often make general comments, but watch out that they are true. Laboratory experiments do not automatically lack ecological validity for example.

This is an excellent answer, which makes each point relevant to Palmer's study.

(c) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of Palmer's study.

(4)

A strength of Palmer's study was that he ~~she~~ controlled how long a scene was shown for (2 seconds). This meant it was a valid test as it was the same ^{conditions} ~~controls~~ for everyone. A weakness of Palmer's ^{study} was that there was fewer results, as two people forgot their glasses. So by not having as much data it questions its reliability, as by having more data could have changed the results.



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Examiner Comments

The strength has been made relevant to Palmer by referring to 'a scene' and '2 seconds', and the point being made is clear. The weakness is also accurate and relevant to Palmer's study, and the candidate is correct that a smaller sample reduced reliability (as well as generalisability, which was another common correct answer).

Question 19 (b)

There were several important words that candidates needed to take note of in this question. Firstly, both similarities and differences between the two theories were required (otherwise the maximum mark available was 3 out of 5). Also, these had to be explained, again, brief comments could not earn full marks. As the question was about theories that explain dreaming, the idea that 'both theories explain dreams' was not a similarity. It was pleasing to see that more able candidates were able to effectively describe the idea that both theories result in the dream telling a story - Freud's theory through secondary elaboration and Hobson and McCarley's theory through the process of synthesis.

This candidate has attempted to tackle both similarities and differences, and although their differences are clear, there are various problems with the similarities they offer, so the mark can only be a maximum of 3.

(b) Explain both the similarities **and** differences between Freud's theory of dreaming and Hobson and McCarley's theory of dreaming.

(5)

Freud is a more subjective, whereas Hobson and McCarley are more objective, as their little interpretation is needed. Freud's methodology includes, Little Hans, case studies, slips of tongue, free association and dream analysis. Hobson and McCarley's methodology includes, brain scanning, EEG, animal experiments, and neurotransmitter functions. Freud's theory lacks credibility, as he has no scientific evidence, on the other hand, Hobson and McCarley's theory has credibility as they have scientific evidence. Freud's theory is both nature and nurture, whereas Hobson and McCarley's theory is just nature. Similarities of the two theories, is that both look at dreaming. Also, both studies have weaknesses - Freud's theory is non-generalisable, and Hobson and McCarley's theory (Total for Question 19 = 8 marks) is not all correct, as lucid dreaming suggests we can control are dreaming, as sometimes we know when we are dreaming.



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Examiner Comments

All the comments the candidate makes about differences are correct, and are in enough depth to reach 3 marks (although only dream analysis is a direct technique used by Freud to study dreaming). In their discussion of similarities, however, they make several mistakes. The candidate could earn marks for their nature-nurture point, either as a similarity or a weakness, but it needs to be explained. Freud considered both aspects of nature (the inborn unconscious) and nurture (some thoughts, desires and fears entering our unconscious from our experiences) whereas Hobson and McCarley's theory is based on nature - the biological functioning of the nervous system. The comment about lacking generalisability might be correct if suitable examples are given. However, it is not clear either why Freud's theory lacks generalisability (this needs to be explained) and the relevance of the point about lucid dreaming is not clear either, nor do the two points seem to be related.



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Examiner Tip

When you are writing about similarities and differences, make sure that you write your points as 'pairs'. For example 'Freud said dreams were meaningful, Hobson and McCarley said they were meaningless', rather than making unrelated comments, for example 'Freud said dreams were meaningful, Hobson and McCarley said activation was important'.

This is a typical 5 mark response.

(b) Explain both the similarities **and** differences between Freud's theory of dreaming and Hobson and McCarley's theory of dreaming.

(5)

Freud's theory of dreaming is believed that our dreams have meaning and that it has leaked out from our unconscious. Whereas in Hobson and McCarley theory of dreaming is believed that neurons ~~randomly~~ ^{randomly} activate causing ~~random~~ memories to be released and then later made into a dream. This therefore suggests ~~our~~ our dreams do not have meaning. We also know that Freud theory is subjective because it was done on the basis of his interpretations. Whereas Hobson and McCarley was done scientifically meaning is objective. Also a similarity is that both lacked credibility this is because we know that Freud is based around the idea of the unconscious something ^{unmeasurable} ~~unmeasurable~~ and in Hobson and McCarley is ~~something~~ that the experiment was done on cats so it is not able to be related to humans. Also both lack reality. Also Freud is qualitative whereas Hobson and McCarley is quantitative.

(Total for Question 19 = 8 marks)



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Examiner Comments

There are several differences, the first is an elaborated explanation about how the two theories differ in relation to what they suggest about meaning in dreams and later there is a good explanation of why the two theories differ in terms of objectivity/subjectivity. Importantly, there is also one clear similarity which is explained - it is an evaluation point rather than a descriptive one, about both theories in some ways lacking credibility. This is good thinking on the candidate's part. Similarities are harder to find than differences, although there are easier ways to gain the marks than this.



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Examiner Tip

Note how this candidate's use of the point about credibility differs from the previous example: it is the explanation that matters.

Question 20 (a)

This question wanted the name of the experimental design being used in the study. Several different terms were acceptable, such as 'independent groups design' and 'between subjects design', which are in current use by psychologists.

(a) Oliver decided that each participant would only be tested in one of the three conditions of the experiment.

Which experimental design is this?

(1)

Individual measures design



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate has made a common mistake, writing 'individual' instead of 'independent'. 'Independent measures design' would have been correct.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

You may well simply refer to 'independent groups' or 'independent measures' without using the word design. This is acceptable here as the question asks 'Which experimental design is this', i.e. the word design is in the question.

(a) Oliver decided that each participant would only be tested in one of the three conditions of the experiment.

Which experimental design is this?

(1)

~~Individual measures design~~ A laboratory experiment.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate has muddled up the terms 'research method' and 'experimental design'. The study is a laboratory experiment, but this is its research method, not its design, so this does not answer the question.

Question 20 (b)

In this two-part question, the candidate needed to think of a way to measure the effect of the images on the participants' dreams in part (i) and consider a possible problem with their suggested technique in part (ii). Part (ii) elicited some excellent answers, illustrating candidates' ability to 'think on their feet' about psychological research. They were able to suggest such problems as participants recalling the actual picture, rather than their dream, which would confuse the results and that the participants might have been able to lucid dream and deliberately change the dream to make it match the picture.

Answers like this are very common. For two marks in part (a) the candidate needs to offer a way of measuring the effect on dreams, rather than just name a data collection technique, i.e. they needed to operationalise their measure of the dependent variable.

(b) The next day Oliver and Hannah wanted to know whether the participants' dreams were affected.

This is the dependent variable.

(i) Explain in detail how Oliver and Hannah might have measured the dependent variable.

(2)

They could interview them or do a questionnaire for them to fill out.

(ii) Describe **one** possible problem with how you have suggested measuring the dependent variable in (b)(i).

(2)

They could lie on either of the two because there's nothing that's making them tell the truth.



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Examiner Comments

Either an interview or a questionnaire would be an acceptable answer here. The candidate needs to go on to say how, specifically, they could use this method to find out whether the dreams are affected. For example, they could add 'In the questionnaire I would ask if they had dreamt about apples and oranges or about trainers and boots'.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

When a question is worth 2 marks, look at what you have written: does it look detailed enough for a 2 mark answer? If not, think about how you can explain what you have said or add an example to make it clearer.

This candidate answered both parts of the question well, operationalising their measure in part (a) and giving a detailed answer using terms correctly in part (b).

(b) The next day Oliver and Hannah wanted to know whether the participants' dreams were affected.

This is the dependent variable.

(i) Explain in detail how Oliver and Hannah might have measured the dependent variable.

(2)

^{interview}
they could ~~ask~~ ^{interview} participants ^{in the morning} whether they had a dream and if so what it was ~~was~~ about, whether it was shoes, fruit, other or no dream.

(ii) Describe **one** possible problem with how you have suggested measuring the dependent variable in (b)(i).

(2)

participants ^{have forgot} may ~~forget~~ what they dreamt about leading to less reliable results and ~~the~~ the data collected is less valid as it may not represent what they actually dreamt.



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Examiner Comments

In part (a), the 'technique of 'interview', and the detail of the question they would ask is sufficient to see how usable data could be collected. In part (b), 'forgetting' and 'lying' by the participants are common answers for 1 mark. This candidate has gone on to explain that this would reduce validity because if they forgot, their answers to the question wouldn't reflect what they actually dreamt about.



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Examiner Tip

To add detail to an answer like part (a) you could give an example of a question you would ask or say how you would score the answers, for example counting up the number of people who said they had dreamt about shoes.

Question 20 (c) (i)

Both Hannah and Oliver's choices generated many good responses. A small number of candidates did not indicate which choice they were writing about and a minority also attempted to justify both or explain why one was better than the other. Many candidates could have improved their answers by saying why or how the problem they had identified would affect the participants dream report.

This candidate goes straight into answering the question. Many candidates who choose Hannah begin their response by stating that it is a repeated measures design. Whilst it is pleasing to see that they are able to accurately name the design, this is not required by the question so could not earn marks.

(i) Explain why **either** Oliver's **or** Hannah's suggestion might have been better than the procedure they actually used.

(2)

~~Oliver's~~ Hannah's suggestion may have been better ~~for~~ than the procedure they used because it could show ~~if~~ whether the type of gender, age and personality of the person affected the result, for example a picture might not affect one person but might affect another.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate clearly indicates that they understand the principle that Hannah's design will control for individual differences by giving examples of possible variables. This answer could gain full marks either by stating this explicitly, or by illustrating how such variables affect the results.



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Examiner Tip

In a 2 mark question like this, if you don't think your answer is detailed enough, think about trying to explain what you mean or giving an example. Here the candidate could say how either gender, age or personality could change the way the participant responds to shoes or fruit. Which gender might dream more about shoes anyway? What age group might eat the most fruit?

(i) Explain why **either** Oliver's **or** Hannah's suggestion might have been better than the procedure they actually used.

(2)

Oliver's idea would have been better, as the control group ~~could~~^c be dreaming about what they saw (which would be everything in the room). So therefore the control group would not have been helpful to the procedure they used.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has chosen a commonly used justification for Oliver's design, to stop the participants looking around the room. To earn the second mark they need to go on to explain why this mattered, for example, by saying that they might look at their shoes on the floor.



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Examiner Tip

If you are describing a problem with a design or research method, for example, try to give some detail about why it is a problem - what effect will the problem have on the dependent variable?

Question 20 (c) (ii)

Although there were some excellent answers to this question, many candidates could have improved their answers here. More able candidates suggested problems such as controlling what they looked at last, and giving examples, such as taking the participants' phones away.

This was a brief but effective answer.

(ii) Describe **one** variable that Oliver and Hannah could have controlled for the participants who saw the pictures.

(2)
The same beds as one may be less comfortable to sleep in and affected the participants' ~~sleep~~ sleep and dream.

(Total for Question 20 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR TOPIC B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS



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Examiner Comments

The candidate has chosen to suggest controlling the bed (other similar answers suggested 'where they slept') and has then given just sufficient justification for their answer.

Many candidates suggest controlling the time that participants spent viewing the images. More able candidates elaborate this in a range of ways, for example by suggesting how long the participants should be allowed to view the images for. A similar suggestion is controlling the time spent sleeping - as this affects the opportunity to dream.

(ii) Describe **one** variable that Oliver and Hannah could have controlled for the participants who saw the pictures.

(2)

They could have controlled the amount of time the participants saw the pictures for as if one person looked at the picture for longer than another it would affect them more and it would be more likely for that person to dream of the things they saw in the picture.

(Total for Question 20 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR TOPIC B - 30 MARKS



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Examiner Comments

This candidate provides a clear variable to control and explains why it is important to do so.



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Examiner Tip

When you are writing about controlling variables, think about how and why you would want to control them. This will help you to give fuller answers.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates should:

- try to give fuller explanations in 2 mark questions, using an example, an appropriate term in context, or by adding detail
- develop a strategy to remember the difference between research methods (such as case studies and experiments) and experimental designs (repeated measures and independent groups)
- ensure that when answering questions asking for similarities and differences (or equally, strengths and weaknesses), that they have included some of each
- practice writing 'pairs' of similarities and 'pairs' of differences, so that their comparisons are more effective
- make sure that they can apply all the terms they have learned, especially in research methods, by making up their own experiments and asking a partner to decide which is the dependent variable, which is the independent variable, what the experimental design is and going on to consider operationalising variables and finding problems with the study.

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