
GCSE

PSYCHOLOGY

8182/2: Paper 2 Social context and behaviour
Report on the Examination

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General comments

The purpose of this report is to highlight any areas of good practice and any areas for improvement stemming from students' answers in Paper 2 in 2022. Where appropriate, it will also offer guidance as to how future performances might be improved, for teachers and students.

This was the fourth series of examinations for the 'reformed specification - but only the second sat by all of the students entered for the qualification.

Because of the ongoing impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, advance information was provided for five of the eight topics. Advance notice was not provided for the Development, Research Methods, and Social Influence topics.

While the past few years has proved very challenging for both teachers and students, there was clear evidence of sound psychological knowledge seen in many of the students' answers. It was clear that teachers and students have worked very hard to be prepared for this paper.

Because scripts are marked online, there are some specific concerns about the ways students use the answer booklets and additional sheets, which centres need to be aware of so that they can advise their students accordingly:

- Most students are now using the additional sheets provided at the back of the booklet to continue answers that do not fit within the allocated area. Where the additional sheets are used to finish an answer, it is helpful if students indicate that they have done this.
- Students should be encouraged to clearly identify which question they are answering on the additional sheets. Where there are several questions with similar numbers, it is important that students identify the correct one - for example, writing '2.2' rather than just '2'
- Students should be encouraged to write in black ink because lighter colours do not scan well and make it harder for examiners to read students' work.
- Students should be encouraged to use sensibly sized writing as tiny handwriting results in answers that are very challenging to read. They should also be encouraged to write as legibly as possible.

Comments relating to students' performance on specific questions are provided below. It is hoped that these comments will be helpful in guiding the teaching of the specification and the preparation of students for future exams.

Section A: Social Influence

Question 2.1

Q2.1 assessed student ability to interpret and display quantitative data in graphical/visual form. The graph type asked for was a histogram. The data provided was not continuous and grouped and so this question was very carefully monitored during marking and awarding. Students were able to provide suitable graphs, informative titles, correct labels and plot the results from table 1, plus the item level data was in line with other items in this examination and our expectations.

This question was generally answered well, with over three-quarters of the answers gaining at least 2 marks. The mark that was awarded least often was the one for providing an informative

title. To be considered to be an 'informative title', an element of both variables needed to be present.

There were two common errors in doing this:

- using 'conformity' rather than dependent variable of 'total wrong answers',
- not including the independent variable of 'group size'.

Question 2.2

This question was generally answered accurately with the vast majority of students getting the available mark. The most common error was not simplifying the ratio.

Question 2.3

Answers to this question were mixed with only a third of answers gaining the full two marks.

Common errors included:

- just referring to the number of wrong answers (and not conformity),
- explaining why conformity had taken place, rather than outlining a conclusion

Question 2.4

The majority of students showed understanding of the need to use deception in order to prevent participants from changing their behaviour. However, only a third of answers accurately justified the use of deception by identifying why it is an issue for psychological research if participants change their behaviour. Some students just gave a description of deception.

Question 3

Almost half of answers gained at least 3 marks for this question. The most frequent issue was giving an answer based fully on Milgram's Agency theory and being in an agentic/autonomous state. Accurate answers most commonly addressed the social factor of perceived authority. The factor of proximity was used less often, and some responses provided explanations of Nathan's likely behaviour using both of these factors.

Question 4.1

More than three-quarters of answers were awarded one mark for this question and half of answers gained full marks. One common error was naming two dispositional factors or two social factors – rather than one of each. 'Expertise' and 'Cost of helping' were the most common answers.

Question 4.2

This question was generally answered well, with over half of the answers gaining at least 2 marks. One common error was giving a more 'common sense' response rather than one that used clearly identified factors that affect bystander behaviour.

Question 5

This question was not answered particularly well with less than half of answers gaining a mark of 3 or more. 10% gave no answer at all. This is somewhat unexpected given that Adorno is a named theory, and it was a standard 'describe and evaluate' style of question. It is possible this may be related to the fact that this topic was not covered in the advanced information. There were also a number of excellent answers though, with some very clear/detailed descriptions of the theory and excellent/elaborated evaluation points.

Common errors included:

- answers about agency theory rather than authoritarian personality,
- describing and evaluating Milgram's study,
- just describing and evaluating the F-scale.

Section B: Language, Thought and Communication**Question 7.1 and Question 7.2**

Both of these question was generally answered well, with over two-thirds of answers gaining two marks. Almost all students knew that Von Frisch's results showed that bee's dance as a way of communicating about a food source. Evaluative points typically involved the possibility that living in glass hives and feeding on sugar water would not reflect natural bee behaviour and the scientific value of the research.

Question 8

Although some students answered this question very well, only a third gained full marks. The main issue was students incorrectly stating that the difference between verbal communication and non-verbal communication is the use of 'speech' rather than 'words'. 'Speech' includes paralinguistics (tone, pitch, volume, and intonation etc) and is therefore a combination of verbal and non-verbal. Examples included within answers were able to gain some credit – however students often incorrectly identified sign language as non-verbal. Because it uses words to convey messages, sign language is classified as being a form of verbal communication.

Question 9

Some students performed well on this question with over a third gaining at least 4 marks. The students whose answers were based on Yuki's study of emoticons tended to gain the highest marks because they consistently identified the data to be collected. Other creditworthy designs involved investigating cultural differences in personal space or the interpretation of hand gestures by different cultures. It was possible to be awarded the 2 ethics marks even if the study design was not suitable for investigating the idea that non-verbal behaviour is learned. Generally students did well at this aspect of the question, and this can be seen in the marks that were received. Two-thirds of answers received at least two marks.

Question 10

This was the non-research methods synoptic question for 8182 this year. It was one of the most challenging questions across the two papers. However, students could pick up 4 of the 9 available marks simply by briefly describing the fight or flight response and Darwin's theory. Given the difficulty level of this question and the fact that synoptic questions are still relatively new to GCSE Psychology, it was pleasing that over half of students gained at least 5 marks. Very few students gave level 3 answers.

Many responses gave great detail about the fight or flight response, often going far beyond the command term of 'briefly'. Responses on Darwin's theory of non-verbal communication were less successful with more emphasis on 'survival of the fittest' and less on the origin of non-verbal communication.

Section C: Brain and Neuropsychology**Question 11**

The marks suggest that this was the most difficult multiple-choice question on the paper. Only half of answers gained both of the available marks.

Question 12

This question was answered particularly well with 90% of students gaining at least 3 marks.

Question 13

This question was answered fairly well with over half of students able to accurately sketch and label two lobes and the cerebellum or all three lobes. The frontal lobe was the most commonly provided accurate answer. The parietal and occipital lobes were sometimes in opposing positions and frequently misspelt. Recognisable spellings and rough sketching were considered to be creditworthy.

Question 14

Answers to this question were varied with only a quarter receiving full marks. Many answers gave very detailed breakdowns of all the different areas of the brain and the likely area affected in patient M's situation – without explicitly explaining localisation of function. This approach could still gain 2 marks, and almost half of answers did so.

Question 15.1

This question was answered fairly well with over half of students gaining 2 marks.

Common errors included:

- only describing the method of the study (i.e. not giving any results),

- describing the study of another named researcher - such as Asch, Tulving or Piliavin.

Question 15.2

This question was answered fairly well with almost two-thirds of students giving answers at level 2 or level 3. Most students wrote about the unrepresentative sample of patients with epilepsy and the scientific and precise nature of Penfield's procedure. Many were able to elaborate on their points in detail.

Question 16

Although half of students gained a mark of at least 3 marks – very few gained full marks. Generally, students were able to write a suitable interview question and also gain some of the ethics marks.

Common errors included:

- stating if data was 'quantitative' or 'qualitative' but not explaining why,
- writing questions aimed at patients rather than staff (e.g. suggesting patients should be asked questions while receiving a brain scan),
- identifying potential ethical issues of brain scans (e.g. the use of radioactive substances), rather than the ethics involved in carrying out interviews,
- addressing only consent and not covering the need for it to also be informed.

Section D: Psychological Problems

Question 17.2

This question was not answered very well with less than half being awarded any marks at all. The majority of answers described the influence of nature on depression, rather than evaluating the theory. Quite a number of answers focused on real life factors that might cause depression (e.g. bullying, trauma) rather than addressing the question.

Common evaluative points were about CBT being developed in response to the theory, how 'learned helplessness' research supports the theory and that there is also evidence supporting the 'nature' explanation.

Question 18

Although half of students gained at least 2 marks – very few gained all 3 available marks. Generally, students gave an appropriate reference to the article but there were very few accurate definitions of 'mental health'. However, there did seem to be less answers containing the common misconception that 'mental health' refers to the lack of it. This was often seen in answers in the 2019 exam and so this reduction is very encouraging.

One common error was using the same words that are in the term to explain it, (e.g. ‘mental health is someone’s mental wellbeing’). It is important that students understand the need to define all of the words within a term when asked ‘what is meant by’ or ‘give a definition’.

Question 19.1

This question was not answered very well with only a third of answers being awarded 2 or 3 marks.

Common errors included:

- giving a generic answer,
- describing random allocation rather than random sampling,
- describing a different sampling method (usually systematic or stratified).

Question 19.2

Almost 80% of answers were awarded at least 1 mark. Popular strengths included reference to the ‘lack of researcher bias’ in selecting the sample, while ‘time-consuming’ was commonly given as a weakness.

Question 19.3 and Question 19.4

The majority of responses received full marks for both questions.

The most common reasons that answers to 19.4 were not correct was either because the percentage was calculated as being 75 out of 100 (rather than 150), or the data in the bar chart was not used correctly.

Question 20

As with the other 9-mark question (Q10), over half of students gained at least 5 marks. Many responses provided some details of how aversion therapy could be used with addictions to alcohol, smoking or gambling. However, only a small number of students offered more than ‘aversion therapy is reductionist and self-management is holistic’.

Common errors included:

- describing self-management programmes without then using this to explain how they are holistic,
- evaluating aversion therapy/self-management programmes,
- comparing the two therapies but not in terms of their reductionist and holistic natures,
- misunderstanding the terms ‘reductionist’ and ‘holistic’ (e.g. reductionist is to do with reducing an addictive behaviour)

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.