

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel
GCE Psychology (8PS0)
Paper 1: Social and Cognitive Psychology

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General Comments

The examination structure provided a range of question types over two main sections, social psychology, and cognitive psychology, with a final extended response requiring candidates to address a theme that occurs in both social and cognitive psychology.

Good psychological knowledge and understanding was demonstrated by many candidates, and it was clear that they had a good working knowledge of the topic areas. There were very few unanswered questions and many of the questions were attempted in some detail which benefited the candidates.

Candidates showed particular strengths in evaluating the use of interviews and field experiments when conducting research in psychology. Many candidates also were able to accurately apply their understanding of Milgram's research into obedience to a scenario which was pleasing to see.

Areas of improvement to consider would be questions that require the calculations in respect of statistical tests. The candidates should also revisit Type I and Type II errors as this was an area where many candidates found it difficult to provide a creditworthy response.

The longer response questions requiring AO3 appeared to challenge students at the lower end of the grade boundaries. It is important for candidates to understand the requirements of the questions in terms of the taxonomy. When a question requires an assessment to be made, candidates must make a judgement. It is also important to apply the assessment to a concept if it is required by the question, for example, in respect of obedience, in terms of reliability and validity.

Paper Summary

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

- In a strength or weakness question, if candidates choose to use alternative theories or studies to support or negate the strength or weakness, it is important to use elements of the studies/theories rather than just naming them as this is not a justification point unless applied.
- Candidates need to understand when considering factors such as personality or individual differences that it is the theoretical knowledge of these concepts that need to be used as opposed to everyday descriptions which do not demonstrate psychological knowledge.
- Questions that require an improvement to an investigation need to use elements of the scenario and relate these in terms of the target population if some element of the sample has been chosen. Simply increasing sample size is not considered a suitable improvement.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q01a

Question Introduction

The majority of candidates could correctly define what was meant by the concept of 'superordinate goals', often giving an example to add detail to their definition.

<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Answer ALL questions.</p> <p>1 When studying social psychology you will have learned about realistic conflict theory (Sherif, 1966).</p> <p>(a) Define the concept of 'superordinate goals' as used in realistic conflict theory. (1)</p> <p>superordinate goals are a reward both groups wish to achieve, in order to earn this reward both groups would have to work together - reducing conflict.</p>

This response achieved 1 mark as it makes the link that the goal is only achievable if the groups work together.

Q01b

Question Introduction

The question required candidates to give two strengths of Sherif's realistic conflict theory. Many candidates were able to achieve 2 marks for the first strength relating it to real life application for AO1 and by using elements of the theory to show how this is achieved for the AO3 mark.

Many candidates gave a second strength, the most common response was that it was a credible theory. However, many candidates did not achieve the AO3 mark as they cited Sherif et al's (1954/1961) study to support this but did not use elements from the study in respect of credibility of the theory, simply stating the procedure from the study.

Examiner Tip

Candidates need to be aware that if the question asks for a strength of a theory, it is elements of the theory that need to be explained. It is not creditworthy to give the strengths for only the supporting study.

(b) Explain **two** strengths of realistic conflict theory (Sherif, 1966). (4)

- 1 One strength is that it is highly credible as it is supported by Sherif's Robbers Cave study in which he found that ~~peer~~ conflict will be created when there is competition over a scarce resource such as a prize ~~between the two groups~~ as the two groups of boys showed hostility towards each other when competing for a prize.
- 2 The realistic conflict theory can be applied to real life situations as ~~where~~ we can make two groups work together to reduce hostility. For example, in schools, making two students who show hostility to each other work together in a task to ~~achieve~~ achieve a reward can reduce conflict.

This response achieved 4 marks. Strength 1: 1 mark for the identification that the theory is credible because of supporting evidence from the study. 1 further mark for appropriate use of the findings from the study. Strength 2: 1 mark for identifying real life application with example. 1 further mark for suggesting how this could be achieved.

Q02a

Question Introduction

This question required candidates to describe one way personality could account for discrimination in relation to the scenario. Many candidates found this question challenging, focusing on everyday descriptions of personality, such as shy or unhappy rather than psychological explanations of personality. Suitable application should have been for example, use of authoritarian personality or social dominance orientation.

- 2 Natasha has just moved from a small rural school to a large city school and is finding it difficult to make new friends. The children in her class are mean to her and laugh at her accent. One girl in particular tells her that she is 'not good enough' and should never have been allowed to join their class.

(a) Describe **one** way that personality could account for the discrimination Natasha is experiencing.

(2)

Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto) could explain why Natasha is being discriminated since the girl that called her 'not good enough' may have a high SDO and therefore values hierarchy. Since Natasha is new, and foreign since she has an accent, she therefore has a lower status and is viewed as socially inferior and this leads to her being discriminated.

This response achieved 2 marks. The candidate has used two elements of social dominance theory to describe why Natasha was deemed not good enough and how her accent led to her being discriminated against.

Q02b

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to use the concept of 'in-groups/out-groups' successfully to describe how the situation could account for the discriminatory acts. However, the second mark was not often achieved as other elements of the scenario were not used, giving a generic response.

Examiner Tip

In an AO2 question with stimulus material, candidates need to use elements of the scenario, other than just the name when they identify or explain the concept required by the question. Once this has been done, it provides a more accessible route for achieving the justification mark.

(b) Prejudice and discrimination can also be affected by the situation.

Describe **one** way that the situation could account for the discrimination Natasha is experiencing.

(2)

The children may see themselves as an ingroup and Natasha as an outgroup. This means they adopt each others ideas and beliefs and see Hannah (the out group) as socially inferior to them therefore telling her that she isn't good enough to be apart of their ingroup.

(Total for Question 2 = 4 marks)

This response achieves 2 marks. 1 mark for using the concepts of ingroup/outgroup and applying this to Natasha suggesting that is why she was seen as inferior. A second mark was given for using another element of the scenario, not being good enough to be part of the outgroup. Both points were related to the stimulus material.

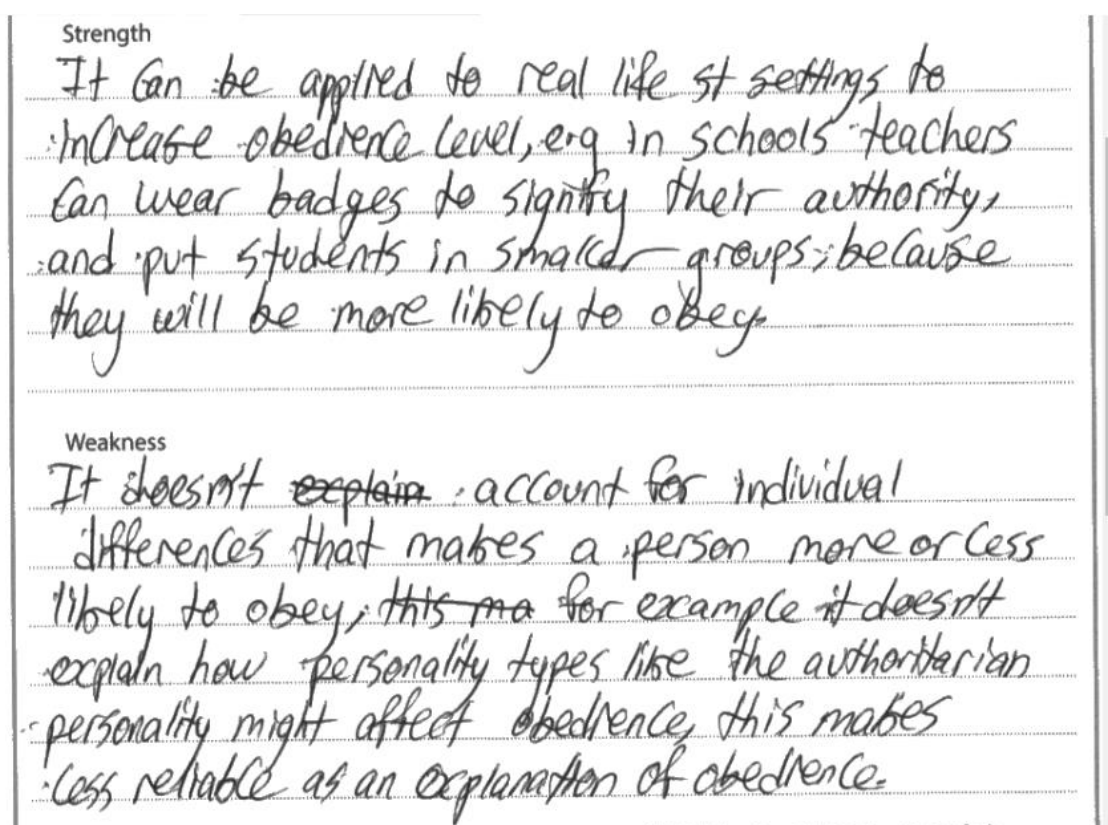
Q03

Question Introduction

Many candidates were able to access the AO1 mark in identifying real-life application as a strength. The AO3 mark was gained by demonstrating how this could be achieved in real-life in relation to social impact theory. In respect of the weakness, some candidates were able to apply alternative theories successfully to explain why obedience may not necessarily be solely due to social impact theory. However, many candidates just stated that there was an alternative theory without linking this to the elements that made it a weakness.

Examiner Tip

Alternative theories need to be identifiable and the findings applied if they are being used to support the stated strength or weakness to be creditworthy.



This response achieved 4 marks. 2 marks for the strength which clearly identified real-life application to schools for AO1 and giving examples of teachers and authority for AO3. For the weakness, individual differences were given for the AO1 mark followed by supporting evidence of different personality types for AO3.

Q04a**Question Introduction**

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate the median from a data table in the scenario. This was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q04b**Question Introduction**

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate the mean from a data table in the scenario. This was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q04c**Question Introduction**

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate the standard deviation from a data table in the scenario. Many candidates could accurately calculate the standard deviation. Some candidates achieved one mark of three, by correctly calculating the difference column.

Q05

Question Introduction

The question required candidates to apply their knowledge of Milgram's research into obedience to a scenario. This question was generally answered well by the majority of candidates. The candidates demonstrated a good understanding of many of Milgram's variations, using concepts from the research such as authority figure and non-prestigious location and applying these to two different elements in the scenario.

The screenshot shows a digital workspace with a toolbar at the top containing icons for drawing tools and text formatting. Below the toolbar is a text input area with a prompt: "Describe how Milgram's research into obedience could account for Elijah and his friends' behaviour." The response is handwritten in black ink on lined paper. The text reads: "Milgram's variation 10 (The run down office block) could account for the refusal to obey as the obedience in variation 10 was 48%, compared to the original study in which 65% had fully complied. This could be used as due to the manager being inside the fancy restaurant, Elijah and his friends had behaved however to due the change in setting/^{location}, the obedience drops as it becomes a more common place. Additionally, in the restaurant the manager has higher authority and therefore the children would comply but by being at the bus stop, this authority is no longer that powerful for Elijah and his friends to stop swearing."

This response achieved 3 marks. 1 mark for linking the scenario to being obedient to an authority figure. 1 mark, linked to the setting leading to obedience. 1 mark for the change in the behaviour at the bus stop.

Q06

Question Introduction

Essay

The question required the candidates to evaluate their chosen contemporary study in terms of reliability and validity. The most common study chosen was Burger (2009) and there were a smaller number of responses that used Reicher and Haslam (2006). Many candidates showed a detailed understanding of the studies in terms of their aims, procedures and outcomes. Some candidates were also able to use this understanding successfully in evaluating this in terms of reliability and validity. However, a number of candidates evaluated the study in terms of generalisability, ethical considerations and application which was not a requirement of the question and were not able to access the full range of marks in the levels based mark scheme.

Chosen study BURGER (2009)

Burger's experiment was a replication of Milgram's original (1963) experiment and despite it being much more ethical, there are concepts of reliability and validity that need to be taken into consideration.

Burger's study is deemed to be reliable because it is a follow on from Milgram's experiment which was a lab experiment. This means that not only are the experiments standardised procedures but confounding and extraneous variables are able to be taken into consideration and quashed. However, Milgram experiment lacked ecological validity: using

shock administration to research obedience is not a task that would occur in a real life situation. This same criticism applies to Burger. Contrastingly, Burger completed screening procedures before continuing with the experiment. For instance, asking anyone who had taken two or more psychology lessons to be deemed not able to

- take part because they could have a familiar
- link with Milgram (and therefore his original
experiment) which would allow for demand
characteristics. This increases the validity
of Burger's study. Another advantage ~~of~~ of
reliability was the idea that Burger (as well
as Milgram) recorded their experiment. This
means that other individuals are able to pay
the video of the experiment back and determine
participant's behaviour. This is known as inter-
rater reliability. Contrastingly, Burger stopped
individuals who were willing to exceed over the
150 V. This is a disadvantage ^{to validity} because in turn
Burger's results has ambiguity / uncertainty;

It is assumed that no participants would
exceed over the high voltage, but not allowing
them to do so means that nobody can be
for certain.

This response achieved 6 marks. The knowledge and understanding are accurate and was at the top of level 3. There are elements of Level 4, but it was not considered to be thorough. AO3, there were conclusions throughout and the chains of reasoning shows a grasp of competing arguments but this was slightly imbalanced, so did not achieve level 4.

Q07a

Question Introduction

The majority of candidates were able to describe the phonological loop in detail using key components such as articulatory control system and phonological store.

7 In your studies of cognitive psychology you will have learned about the working memory model (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974).

(a) Describe the phonological loop.

(2)

The phonological loop contains the articulatory store, which acts as an inner voice to rehearse dialogue, and the phonological store, which acts as an inner ear to mentally recreate sounds.

This response achieved 2 marks but is the minimum we would expect for a 2-mark response. The articulatory store is identified and just developed. The Phonological store is again, identified and just developed.

Q07b

Question Introduction

The question required one weakness of the working memory model, and this was answered very well by the majority of candidates. The candidates were able to identify a concept from the model and identified why this was a potential weakness. The justification was often weaker but was able to gain credit.

(b) Explain **one** weakness of the working memory model (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974).

(2)

The working memory model says the central executive delegates information to the slave systems, yet it is least expanded upon in the model, despite much of it being reliant upon it. This damages the credibility of the model as so much of the C-E is unknown.

Total for Question 7 = 4 marks)

This response achieved 2 marks. The AO3 is developed at the beginning of the response with reference to the central executive. The weakness is identified at the latter part of the response, lacking credibility but this is explained, so gains AO1.

Q08

Question Introduction

The question required candidates to explain two weaknesses of using case studies of brain-damaged patients when researching memory. Most candidates did not answer this question successfully as they identified problems with case studies in general but did not relate these to brain-damaged patients. The candidates who related the weaknesses to brain-damaged patients used examples of case studies such as HM and KF.

8 Explain **two** weaknesses of using case studies of brain-damaged patients when researching memory.

1 One weakness of using case studies of brain damaged patients when researching memory is that they lack generalisability. This is because ^{case studies are} ~~these studies are~~ carried out on a small group or individual. Therefore the results of one brain damaged patient is difficult to apply to all brain damaged patients as everyone is different / has individual differences and so their memories could work in different ways.

2 Another weakness of ~~brain~~ using case studies of brain damaged patients when researching memory is that they're difficult to retest for reliability. Although they are standardised, they lack good control. Due to individual differences, not every brain-damaged patient's memory is going to be the same so it is unlikely that the same results could be found if the study was to be carried out again.

(Total for Question 8 = 4 marks)

This response achieved 4 marks. 1 mark for the identification of lacking generalisability in respect of memory function then a further 1 mark for the justification in relation to individual differences in memory. For the second weakness, 1 mark for lack of reliability which is explained and 1 further mark for the justification of memory not being able to be retested.

Q09a

Question Introduction

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate a percentage from a data table in the scenario. This was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q09b

Question Introduction

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate a fraction from a data table in the scenario. This was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Q09c

Question Introduction

A mathematical question that required the candidates to calculate a Mann-Whitney U test from a data table in the scenario. Many candidates could accurately calculate the U value. Some candidates achieved one mark of three, by correctly calculating the total for both group 1 and group 2.

Q09d

Question Introduction

The question required the candidates to define what is meant by a Type 1 error. Many candidates did not give an accurate definition of the Type 1 error.

(d) Stefan was concerned about making a Type I error when analysing the results of his investigation.

Define what is meant by a Type I error. (1)

The null hypothesis is rejected when it should be accepted and the experimental hypothesis accepted when it should be rejected.

This response achieved 1 mark; it is an accurate description of a Type 1 error.

Q09e

Question Introduction

The question required the candidates to explain one improvement that could be made to Stefan's investigation. Many candidates gave a generic response and did not relate their suggestion to elements of the scenario.

Examiner Tip

The most common response suggested was that increasing sample size would improve generalisability. This is not suitable and is not a creditworthy response.

(e) Explain **one** improvement Stefan could have made to his investigation. (2)

Stefan could repeat the tests again every two weeks for a longer period of time or even for a in 2 months this would increase the reliability of his results as the scientists do the test multiple times instead of in their groups giving a more reliable indication (Total for Question 9 = 9 marks) when group is doing better rather than one test after two weeks.

This response achieved 2 marks. 1 mark for identification of an improvement which was related to the scenario, which was to repeat the study. 1 mark for suggesting how this would make the results more reliable, in relation to the scenario.

Q10a

Question Introduction

Most candidates answered this question well and were able to describe the sensory register (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968). Some candidates showed some confusion by describing the short-term memory.

10 During your course you will have studied the multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

(a) Describe the 'sensory register' as part of the multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

(2)

The sensory register is the first step in the multi-store model of memory. It takes in environmental input and transfers information to the short term memory when attention is paid to something.

This response achieved 2 marks. 1 mark for describing environmental input and 1 mark for the explanation of how this was transferred to short-term memory.

Q10b

Question Introduction

The candidates were required to explain one strength of the multi-store model of memory. This was answered well by the majority of candidates who most commonly suggested how alternative theories of memory supported it.

Examiner Tip

If citing alternative theories for AO3, candidates must use elements of the theory to suggest why it is supporting as opposed to just suggesting that other theories suggest that, without any form of explanation why.

(b) Explain **one** strength of the multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968). (2)

One strength of the multi-store model (MSM) is that it can be applied to the real world. The MSM suggests that ~~only~~ the short-term memory store has a capacity of 5-9 items ~~for~~ ^{and} a duration of 20 seconds. However, ~~with~~ ^{by} using methods such as 'chunking' the capacity could be increased. This supports the study as it can help professionals and students learn how to improve memory.

This response achieved 2 marks. 1 mark for suggesting it has real world application with reference to components of the model. 1 mark for relating this to the process of chunking.

Q11

Question Introduction

Essay

The question required candidates to assess the key question they had studied in respect of cognitive psychology. The most common response was the reliability of eyewitness testimony, however there was a growing number of responses in respect of Dementia and Dyslexia.

The majority of candidates demonstrated accurate knowledge and understanding in respect of their chosen key question. Several candidates when using eyewitness testimony evaluated only the study by Loftus and Palmer as opposed to eyewitness testimony which limited the ability to achieve the higher levels.

Examiner Tip

In a question using the command word 'assess', candidates need to demonstrate an awareness of the competing arguments for their key question. For example, with Dementia, how some of the memory models can explain the links to Dementia but equally why they may not be a suitable suggestion.

11 Assess the key question you have studied from cognitive psychology.

(8)

How can we use cognitive psychology to help patients with dementia.

Dementia is a illness that affects over 850,000 people in the UK and is said to rise to 1 million by 2025. Dementia is said to affect mostly elderly, however there are over 40,000 people who suffer with dementia who are under the age of 65. The most common type of dementia is ~~Alzheimer~~ Alzheimer. There is no cure for dementia however we are able to reduce ~~the~~ the affects of dementia by 5 years

which decreases the fatality rate of dementia patients. The symptoms of dementia is losing ~~one's~~ cognitive sight such as getting confused with basic things, depression, forgetting things, unable to make new memories.

Taking care help us understand why there are such symptoms of dementia. It is said that there are such symptoms because the long term memory is stored separately. The episodic memory is known to be lost first however childhood memories and early memories are lost last. Also semantic memory is also to be known last.

For example, the patient might ~~not~~ know who their friend is but might not know their name. Also patients with dementia get easily confused which makes ~~it~~ them irritated. ~~and~~ This is because they have gaps in the ~~memory~~ ^{memory} therefore when they are in certain situation they might not be able to fully understand the situation which makes them annoyed.

Also ~~dementia~~ ^{dementia} village is used to help people with dementia. This was used in the Netherlands where everyone there was a patient with dementia however they were not treated like a patients and didn't ~~have~~ ^{have} locked ~~the~~ door and rooms and didn't ~~have~~ ^{have} security ~~security~~. Also there weren't nurses or doctors there

~~home~~ security. Also there weren't nurses or doctors there but the workers who worked in the stores where nurses and they paid attention to the dementia patients. Everyone was allowed to do whatever they wanted like joining clubs and shopping. Recreational memory helps understand ~~what~~ how this works. The patients are able to ~~remember~~ ^{remember old} memories when they carry out their daily tasks which is known by schemes. This naturally gives patients way to recall old memories instead of frustrating time with unknown memories.

In conclusion using dementia village is a great way to help patients however psychologists don't agree with this because they think that dementia village is a way to ~~deceiving patients to believe untrue things.~~ (Total for Question 11 = 8 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B - 20 MARKS

This response achieves level 3, 5 marks. AO1 was bottom level 3 as the knowledge was more than mostly accurate. AO3 does give mostly coherent chains of reasoning but the use of the memory models did not fully demonstrate competing arguments, so was awarded at top level 2/bottom level 3, so was judged to be 5 marks overall.

Q12

Question Introduction

Extended Writing Essay

The question required candidates to evaluate the use of interviews and field experiments when conducting research.

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate accurate knowledge and understanding of both the methodologies, giving detailed descriptions. AO3 was equally pleasing with many candidates using studies they had been introduced to in both social and cognitive psychology to support the strengths or weaknesses of the methodology.

12 Evaluate the use of interviews and field experiments when conducting research in psychology.

(12)

Interviews are a research method used ~~an~~ which often collect qualitative data. There will be a one-on-one discussion with the ppt over the phone or in person, where the interviewer will ask a series of questions. One type of interview is a structured interview, where all questions will be pre-decided by the interviewer in a particular order. A strength of this is that it means the interview will be highly reliable as the questions can be easily replicated. It also ensures there is fairness ~~between the respon~~ when comparing responses of ppts. A weakness, however, would be that the interviewer is restricted in what they ask and cannot develop responses further with ~~ad~~ questions adapted to the specific ppt, thus limiting the detail of the data. Another type of interview is a semi-structured interview, which is where some questions will be predetermined by the interviewer whilst some will be made on the spot. A strength of this is that not only can ppt responses be

developed further by asking more relevant questions to the particular ppt, but also a relationship or bond can be built between the interviewer and the ppt. This means the ppt will feel more comfortable in giving responses, making it more likely they will give more truthful & natural answers, increasing internal validity. A weakness of this would be that it often requires a skilled interviewer to be able to draw out honest answers from ppt's who are able to use skillful questioning. Overall, ~~a star~~ there are weaknesses in using interviews as a research method as a whole; no matter the type of interview, it may be impacted by researcher effects. This is where the ~~in~~ researcher/interviewer will have certain expectations in mind which the ppt will ^{especially if leading questions are} may be able to catch on to, thus used causing them to alter responses to what they think the interviewer wants them to say, thus reducing validity. ~~Many of the interviewers~~

~~may not be used~~
Field experiments are when researchers conduct an experiment in the ppt's natural setting or environment, and leave everything as it is, except ~~for~~ for manipulating the

independent variable. A strength of this would be that since it is in ppt's natural environment, behaviour is more likely to be natural and honest, thus increasing internal validity. Moreover, there is likely to be more external validity as it will have more ecological validity as it is in ppt's natural environments and thus can be applied to other locations/settings. However, a large weakness of using field experiments is the lack of control ~~ppt's~~ researchers may have over extraneous variables, which may also impact the DV, the dependent variable thus reducing internal validity. Moreover, there may a concern for ethics as

in a field experiment, which may be an covert observation where participants don't know they're being in a study, there is a lack of consent. Ppt's may not have agreed to being in the study & may have taken part unknowingly, breaching ethical guidelines. However, it is a general consensus that by going into public, people are accepting the risk of being studied, thus arguing (Total for Question 12 = 12 marks)
it is not entirely unethical.

This response achieved level 4, 10 marks. AO1 was top level 4 as knowledge and understanding was thorough and accurate for both methodologies. AO3 was bottom level 4 as there was some imbalance in respect of field experiments, so 10 marks awarded overall in this example.