

PEARSON EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

UNIT 1 - WPS01

Social and cognitive psychology

EXEMPLARS WITH EXAMINER COMMENTARIES

June 2018 examination series

Introduction

Section A: Social psychology, totals 26 marks and comprises short-answer questions and one eight-mark extended open-response question.

Section B: Cognitive psychology, totals 26 marks and comprises short-answer questions and one eight-mark extended open-response question.

Section C: comprises one 12-mark extended open-response question on either social or cognitive psychology.

Exam duration: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Marks available for this paper: 64

Example 1 Application question

June 2018 Question 2c:

Michelle carried out a questionnaire to find out what factors people thought affected obedience. She conducted a thematic analysis on the qualitative data from her questionnaire and found the two most common themes were:

- **Presence of an authority figure**
- **Proximity of an authority figure**

(c) Explain one strength and one weakness of gathering qualitative data in Michelle's research. (4)

This question requires the candidates to understand the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative data to be able to relate a relevant strength and weakness to this scenario. It has two AO2 application to the scenario marks and two AO3 justification/exemplification marks. It is important to know both strengths and weaknesses confidently. This question is very specifically about Michelle's research and so the response must refer to this study.

For this scenario candidates were able to identify weaknesses more clearly than strengths. They did not often continue to say why this was a strength or a weakness and thus did not gain the AO3 justification mark. Generic responses were a problem as although candidates talked about qualitative data they often failed to relate their answer to Michelle's research.

Generally knowledge of some of the problems associated with qualitative data was sound but candidates did not apply this knowledge and show understanding.

(c) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of gathering qualitative data in Michelle's research.

*

(4)

Q02c

4

Strength

It allows for the participants to express their feelings and emotions and this can help better understand why the participant obeyed or rebelled. ~~and this helps the participant~~ It is not reductionist and this increases the validity of the data.

Weakness

It is hard to operationalise qualitative data to become objective so it is hard to score the observations (depends on experimenter so there's experimenter bias) and this decreases reliability.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores four marks.

Two marks have been credited for the strength and two marks credited for the weakness. In each case there is a nice link to the scenario and some justification of why this point is a strength or a weakness.

(c) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of gathering qualitative data in Michelle's research.

(4)

Q02c

0

Strength

One strength of gathering qualitative data is that qualitative data give the respondent to express their opinion freely. Michelle must have got honest detailed opinion and views of her respondents in her survey.

Weakness

One weakness is that gathering qualitative data is very time ~~costly~~ consuming.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores zero marks.

These points are generic and therefore not credited as they do not relate to Michelle's research. It is not sufficient just to mention Michelle in a response. A weakness or strength must also be justified – it has to be explained why it is a strength or weakness

Questions involving strengths and weaknesses usually have a specific focus. It could be a scenario or a strength and weakness of a theory or study. It is important to make sure that the response answers the specific question and refers back to that scenario, theory or study. Generic responses do not gain credit.

Example 2: Practical Investigation Question

Question: June 2018 Q4b

As part of your studies in cognitive psychology, you will have conducted a practical investigation.

(b) Describe the results from your cognitive practical investigation (3)

In this series and in previous series there has been uncertainty and confusion in candidates' responses to questions about their practical investigation. These investigations often form the basis of a question and should be written up carefully and revised thoroughly prior to the examination. Candidates should engage with this work and gain an appreciation of some of the difficulties of carrying out their own investigations. Responses should be specific to that investigation and contain detailed description or analysis.

It is important that candidates are also aware of the ethical implications of their research and are guided towards investigations that abide by the ethical guidelines of the BPS. Questions based on practical investigations will always focus on an investigation from one approach, for example, the Cognitive Approach. Candidates must be aware of which practical investigation is linked to which Approach.

Part b of this question asked for results. There were various ways that this could be answered. A candidate could compare the two different conditions of the experiment and suggest, for example, that more words were remembered in condition A. Candidates are encouraged to use figures where possible and to include the units that are being used for measurement. For example the time taken to recall a list of 10 words is measured in seconds. Mean scores provide a clear comparison. Awareness of the outcomes of the correct statistical test were also acceptable.

The most common error was lack of detail and clarity. It was not always possible to decipher what the candidate had been measuring. A surprising number of responses appeared to be discussing their Social or Learning practical investigation which could not gain credit.

(b) Describe the results from your cognitive practical investigation.

(3)

Q04b

2

The numbers of words recalled when the participant was ~~asked~~ had no suppression task i.e. condition one was greater - 25 out of 30 words were recalled. For condition two in which participants had to do a suppression task before recall, the results were lower - only 9 out of 30 words were recalled.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores two marks.

This is a clear answer. There are two distinct figures offered as results. The candidate has made the measurement obvious It is the number of words recalled out of 30 words.

(b) Describe the results from your cognitive practical investigation.

(3)

Q04b

1

~~Acoustically similar words were recalled more~~
Acoustically similar words were recalled more by participants as STM memory encodes acoustically similar words, ~~then~~ than semantically similar words.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores one mark.

This example shows that one mark was given for a statement that compares two conditions of the experiment.

The practical investigation for the Cognitive Approach must be an experiment and use a repeated measures design. The most test to analyse the data is the Wilcoxon. Very few candidates mentioned this and whether their results were significant or not. It is strongly recommended that candidates check the requirements of the practical investigations for individual approaches in the specification.

Example 3: Extended Response question

Question: June 2018 Q7

Evaluate Bartlett's (1932) theory of reconstructive memory, including schema theory. (8)

This is an essay question from the Cognitive Approach. The command term is 'Evaluate' which demands AO1 knowledge and understanding marks as well as AO3 justification and exemplification marks. It is a command term that is often used and it is strongly recommended that candidates look carefully at the different command terms and familiarise themselves with them.

A common error with this type of question is to concentrate on evaluative points without presenting the underpinning description. The evaluation tends to become generic unless specific details about a theory are included. Candidates should develop chains of reasoning allowing them to give a balanced conclusion.

A particular problem with this question was that many candidates focused on Bartlett's study rather than the theory. They went on to evaluate the study which did not answer the question or achieve marks. It is important for candidates to be able to discuss the features of a theory as well as presenting the research evidence.

7 Evaluate Bartlett's (1932) theory of reconstructive memory, including schema theory.

(8)

Q07

2

Reconstructive memory is when we can't remember the details of something so we add ideas to fill in the blanks from our schema. Bartlett states that our memory is not like a tape recorder. ~~Schema~~ Our schemas are ~~constructed with~~ constructed from our experiences.

Bartlett did a study called War of the Ghosts. Participants read a story and recalled after 15 minutes and after days, weeks, months and years. The results show that the story became shorter and new details were added to fill in the blanks. So this study supports the theory of reconstructive memory. Participants added new details from their schemas. ~~Bartlett~~ Bartlett's theory of reconstructive memory is related to real life too. For example when we are recalling our dreams, we add details to fill in the blanks if we can't remember some details. These are ~~done~~ added from our schema.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores two marks.

This is a very limited response but it does include some features of reconstructive theory and made a link to schema. A very brief definition shows some understanding. AO1 is awarded Level 1 as knowledge and understanding is very superficial.

The candidate has continued with support for the theory. Again it is a very limited discussion of the research evidence which fits the criteria for Level 1 AO3. The comments are repetitive.

Both AO1 and AO3 aspects have been addressed. It is a weak answer but can be awarded the top of Level 1.

Bartlett's (1932) theory deals with daily memory. It focuses on how our memory is affected by experiences and knowledges. It suggests that there are schemas for ~~ex~~ certain things in our memory. We either assimilate, shape and ~~com~~fabulate our ~~memories~~ ~~or~~ experiences and schemas.

Bartlett conducted his study on Cambridge students where they were presented with a native ~~an~~ American story 'war of ghost'. He used serial reproduction where they were asked to recall the story at variable time intervals. It was found that the students reduced the number of words in the story and also replaced some words.

There are many evidences to support Bartlett's findings. Loftus conducted a scientific experiment ^{on reconstructive memory} and reported results similar to Bartlett's. Ian Hunter also confirms reliability of Bartlett's study.

However Bartlett only conducted his experiment on British students. So his findings cannot be generalised to people of other cultures. Although Bartlett had a standardised story he didn't have any controls, standardised instructions or any control of how often ^{participants} they are to present their stories this makes the study highly subjective.

and also make it difficult to be repeated hence making it unreliable.

Barlett's theory however has proven to be useful in many aspects. For example, validation therapy has been based on this. It can also be used to help people with dementia by getting along with their schemas. Olive Weavings case study supports Barlett's theory, Olive Weaving although couldn't remember much and had memory issues he could remember that he loved his wife.

Barlett used a story, instead of numbers or words ~~other unreactable things~~ which gives the study ecological validity as it can be related to real life. But it can be also told to be not ecological valid as it's an lab experiment.

The main criticism of Barlett's theory is that he didn't show how memory is constructed or is transferred from short term to long term. Construction of memory is well explained by working memory model and transfer by multi store model. Therefore Barlett's theory can only be considered to be useful to a certain extent.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores five marks.

Knowledge and understanding for AO1 is accurate and shows some understanding of the theory of reconstructive memory and makes a definite link to schema theory. The knowledge and understanding lacks depth and elaboration.

There is a variety of AO3 points here which includes Bartlett's study but also mentions a few other pieces of research evidence. This has not been developed to any extent. There is a conclusion and some acknowledgement of alternate theories but this is limited and again it has not been developed. The candidate has focused the evaluation largely upon Bartlett's War of the Ghosts study. These comments could have been linked back to the theory. This would have shown coherent chains of reasoning and allowed this response to attain a high level three.

Example 4: Extended Open Response Question

Question June 2018: Q8

Damon and Elisa’s psychology lecturer is teaching his class about the importance of good research design when planning an investigation. He suggests that in their planning they need to consider field experiments and laboratory experiments. The lecturer gives them a scenario from which they need to plan an investigation.

Design and carry out an investigation to measure the short- term memory capacity of local 12- year old children.

The children will need to learn five number lists. The first list contains six digits and each following list increases by two digits, up to the final list of 14 digits. The children will be asked to recall the numbers from each list in the correct order.

Damon decides to carry out a field experiment with children from a local school. Elisa decides to carry out a laboratory experiment, bringing children to one of the research rooms at the university.

Evaluate whether Damon’s choice of a field experiment was a more appropriate method than Elisa’s choice of a laboratory experiment for this research scenario.

You must make reference to the context in your answer. (12)

The command term is ‘evaluate’ and so the candidate must show AO1 knowledge and understanding as well as including AO3 evaluations, arguments, justification and conclusions in their answer. There are also four AO2 marks for application so candidates’ comments should be firmly focused on the scenario. They must discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of laboratory and field experiments in terms of Damon and Elisa’s choices.

This is a very rich scenario which allows a candidate ample opportunity to develop a logical argument. This was often a missed opportunity as candidates only used a small part of the scenario to illustrate their response.

The main points recognised by candidates was the idea of ecological validity and some good points were made here although there was a tendency to be repetitive. Various inaccuracies about field experiments in particular were common. There is some confusion with a natural experiment and the exact features of a field experiment. The ethical implications were not represented clearly either.

This question expects a conclusion. The candidate should look at the competing arguments for each type of experiment and give a balanced conclusion which is appropriate for this scenario.

Candidates should ensure that they know the features of both laboratory and field experiments and have a realistic appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses so that they can apply them to different scenarios.

- 8 Damon and Elisa's psychology lecturer is teaching his class about the importance of good research design when planning an investigation. He suggests that in their planning they need to consider field experiments and laboratory experiments. The lecturer gives them a scenario from which they need to plan an investigation.

Scenario

Design and carry out an investigation to measure the short-term memory capacity of local 12-year old children.

The children will need to learn five number lists. The first list contains six digits and each following list increases by two digits, up to the final list of 14 digits. The children will be asked to recall the numbers from each list in the correct order.

Damon decides to carry out a field experiment with children from a local school. Elisa decides to carry out a laboratory experiment, bringing children to one of the research rooms at the university.

Evaluate whether Damon's choice of a field experiment was a more appropriate method than Elisa's choice of a laboratory experiment for this research scenario.

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(12)

Q08

6

Field experiment is done in natural settings and laboratory experiments are conducted in laboratories. Field experiment has ecological validity as it's done in one's natural environment whereas lab experiments aren't usually ecologically invalid.

It's easier to control participant variables and situational variables in field experiments so making the study more ^{valid} variable. Lab experiments also use standardised instructions making it reliable.

Extraneous variables can also be controlled in field experiments but it's more difficult. However, field experiments are done at any one occasion.

and so makes it difficult to be repeated and hence check for reliability.

Laboratory experiments are more vulnerable to demand characteristics. For example - here the children brought to the research lab will appreciate the scientific status of the lab and may answer accordingly to impress the experimenter.

However, here both of them are using the same task which is artificial and lacks task validity. Lisa's laboratory research makes it more ethical as informed consent can be taken from the students. Where as in Damon's field experiment, the students might be unaware of the fact that they are being observed and may take as regular task that they do in school, so informed consent aren't taken from the student. This may make the students stress later on when they will know that they were observed. However this can be compensated for by debrief where they will be informed that the whole reason of the experiment and the fact that the experiment isn't about any individual but memory in general.

Damon's experiment is likely to bring more natural and ecologically valid result but it's very difficult to observe. Which is because as the children are unaware of the study they may not pay much attention and just like other to just know some students

are less likely to complete their task, some may not complete it. This brings in the effect of extremes. It can be that those individuals have certain characteristics different in short term memory. Where as all in Elisa's study are more likely to complete their task.

Elisa will find it easier to derive cause and effect relationships because the other ^{extraneous} variables are well controlled.

However it can be said that Elisa's study is more reliable and scientific cause and effect relationships are can be more easily drawn where as Damon's experiment is more valid as it's in natural setting. All these variables ^{are} ~~their disadvantages~~ ^{have} ~~and~~ important and both ^{studies} ~~the~~ have their disadvantages ~~are~~ and advantages as discussed above. So it overall depends on who is able to conduct the experiment more efficiently and skillfully, trying to keep the in variables mind in there variable and trying to reduce the side effects where possible.

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores 6 marks.

This response is mostly accurate but largely underdeveloped. There is a real attempt to answer the question although the arguments are quite superficial and not always clearly made. Many opportunities to elaborate and explain points have been missed. Thus the AO1 knowledge and understanding is level 2.

AO2 and AO3 points are scattered throughout the essay and the candidate has made a good attempt to engage with the scenario. There could have been more application to the scenario given which would have added depth to the discussion. Further clarification might have been beneficial as participants are not necessarily unaware tht they are participating in a field experiment.

This candidate does attempt to make a conclusion although it is imbalanced. Overall this just allows this essay to achieve the top of Level 2.

- 8 Damon and Elisa's psychology lecturer is teaching his class about the importance of good research design when planning an investigation. He suggests that in their planning they need to consider field experiments and laboratory experiments. The lecturer gives them a scenario from which they need to plan an investigation.

Scenario

Design and carry out an investigation to measure the short-term memory capacity of local 12-year old children.

The children will need to learn five number lists. The first list contains six digits and each following list increases by two digits, up to the final list of 14 digits. The children will be asked to recall the numbers from each list in the correct order.

Damon decides to carry out a field experiment with children from a local school. Elisa decides to carry out a laboratory experiment, bringing children to one of the research rooms at the university.

Evaluate whether Damon's choice of a field experiment was a more appropriate method than Elisa's choice of a laboratory experiment for this research scenario.

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(12)

Q08

2

Field experiments are carried out in the real world
lab experiments are designed and carried out in an artificial
setting

lab experiments are controlled

Field experiments usually use opportunity samples

Damon could go to the local school and enter one class room
with 12 year old children

Damon can set up the experiment as a game of recall rather
than a test on memory capacity

Elisa can gather her sample via volunteers

Elsa will need to get informed consent and debrief the children

Field experiments are based in the real world giving it ecological validity

lab experiments are artificial making it lack ecological validity

lab experiments are controlled increasing reliability because they can easily be replicated

opportunity sample may not be reliable because the kids may not want to take part or may feel bored

Examiner commentary

This candidate scores two marks.

Much of this candidate response is underdeveloped, and there is a limited attempt to answer the question. For knowledge and understanding the candidate achieved level 1. There were isolated elements of knowledge and understanding.

There is also some AO2 application to the scenario although this has only been developed very slightly from the stem of the question.

The AO3 evaluation is present, although it has not been developed and is generic. Overall this is a limited attempt to answer the question. AO1, AO2 and AO3 are all present but there is no development for any of these assessment objectives so it is a Level 1 answer and gains 2 marks.

Candidates can structure their responses in any way, however the engagement with the taxonomy words (Assess, Evaluate, To what extent) should be used to guide their responses and be the focus of their answer. This is especially important in essays of 16 marks and above, where there is a heavier weighting towards AO3 and developing that skill early on should be beneficial to candidates in the higher tariff essays.

Often candidate responses are heavily weighted to knowledge and understanding, and improving the balance is a skill they could practice in terms of structuring coherent arguments that are centred around assessment points that draw upon elements of their knowledge and understanding.

Levels based mark schemes

In any LBMS question candidates will need to draw upon underpinning knowledge and understanding (AO1) which may be then be used to apply to a context or scenario (AO2) and/or make judgements and reach conclusions (AO3).

AO proportions will be reflected in proportions of indicative content in a mark scheme.

The mark tariff will determine the amount of detail required of a candidate in order to address the question. In conjunction with this the command word used in the question will determine the emphasis necessary in terms of AO1, AO2 and AO3.

LBMS are broken down into levels where each level is represented by a descriptor that articulates what a candidate is required to demonstrate in their answer to achieve that level.

The requirement for and focus of AOs will be transparent for both candidates and markers as the taxonomies published in the specification establishes the requirements of a candidate's response mechanism and following rules will be applied to maintain a consistent and reliable focus.

Further information about levels based mark schemes can be found on the [IAL Psychology web page here.](#)

'Evaluate' levels-based marking WPS01 June 2018 Q7

Level	Mark	Descriptor
AO1 (4 marks), AO3 (4 marks) Candidates must demonstrate an equal emphasis between knowledge and understanding vs evaluation/conclusion in their answer.		
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-2 Marks	Demonstrates isolated elements of knowledge and understanding. (AO1) A conclusion may be presented, but will be generic and the supporting evidence will be limited. Limited attempt to address the question. (AO3)
Level 2	3-4 Marks	Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Candidates will produce statements with some development in the form of mostly accurate and relevant factual material, leading to a superficial conclusion being made. (AO3)
Level 3	5-6 Marks	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Arguments developed using mostly coherent chains of reasoning leading to a conclusion being presented. Candidates will demonstrate a grasp of competing arguments but evaluation may be imbalanced. (AO3)
Level 4	7-8 Marks	Demonstrates accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Displays a well-developed and logical evaluation, containing logical chains of reasoning throughout. Demonstrates an awareness of competing arguments, presenting a balanced conclusion. (AO3)

WPS01 June 2018 Q8

Level	Mark	Descriptor
AO1 (4 marks), AO2 (4 marks), AO3 (4 marks) Candidates must demonstrate an equal emphasis between knowledge and understanding vs application vs evaluation/conclusion in their answer.		
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-3 Marks	<p>Demonstrates isolated elements of knowledge and understanding. (AO1)</p> <p>Provides little or no reference to relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques & procedures). (AO2)</p> <p>A conclusion may be presented, but will be generic and the supporting evidence will be limited. Limited attempt to address the question. (AO3)</p>
Level 2	4-6 Marks	<p>Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1)</p> <p>Line(s) of argument occasionally supported through the application of relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques & procedures). (AO2)</p> <p>Candidates will produce statements with some development in the form of mostly accurate and relevant factual material, leading to a superficial conclusion being made. (AO3)</p>
Level 3	7-9 Marks	<p>Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1)</p> <p>Line(s) of argument supported by applying relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques & procedures). Might demonstrate the ability to integrate and synthesise relevant knowledge. (AO2)</p> <p>Arguments developed using mostly coherent chains of reasoning leading to a conclusion being presented. Candidates will demonstrate a grasp of competing arguments but evaluation may be imbalanced. (AO3)</p>
Level 4	10-12 Marks	<p>Demonstrates accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding. (AO1)</p> <p>Line(s) of argument supported throughout by sustained application of relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques or procedures). Demonstrates the ability to integrate and synthesise relevant knowledge. (AO2)</p> <p>Displays a well-developed and logical evaluation, containing logical chains of reasoning throughout. Demonstrates an awareness of competing arguments, presenting a balanced conclusion. (AO3)</p>