



Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice

**18th June 2008
10.00am – 12.30pm**

EXAM PAPER

Instructions for Candidates

Time allowed 2 hrs 30 minutes

Answer ALL questions in Section 1

Answer TWO questions from Section 2

Section 1 accounts for one third of the final result.

Section 2 accounts for two thirds of the final result.

All answers must be written in your Examination Answer booklet.

The research problems contained in this material are fictional, any similarity to any real-life organization, company or business is entirely unintended.

Section 1: Compulsory question (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

This section tests problem identification and problem solving using a number of skills. The answers in this section account for one-third of the total marks.

Read the following case study and answer ALL the questions below.

A major supermarket chain operating in several markets across the European Union is considering ways to reduce the environmental impact of its business practices. One suggestion has been to stop the provision of plastic carrier bags in all of its stores. Instead, shoppers would be encouraged to buy a branded reusable bag made of cotton. However, the Chairman of the company is concerned that such a change in policy might have a negative impact on profit and sales.

Prior to making a decision, the supermarket needs to assess how the suggested change is perceived by customers and by key groups of opinion formers, such as consumer groups, environmental bodies, journalists and politicians. It has commissioned quantitative research to be carried out in the 4 countries which represent the largest or growing markets for the company (UK, Poland, Greece and Italy).

Your research agency, which has offices in each of the target countries, has won the contract for the project. The agency proposes to conduct a telephone survey using CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing), with each office taking responsibility for carrying out the fieldwork in its own country. The results will then be fed back to the agency's central office in London for analysis. The supermarket has given a deadline of 3 months for the completion and reporting of the research.

- a)** Describe the benefits of conducting the fieldwork separately in each of the countries concerned as is proposed here, versus the benefits of conducting all the telephone interviews centrally from the UK.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

- b)** Describe the main issues you would need to consider for the sampling and recruitment processes. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

- c)** The supermarket chain is keen to get maximum benefit from the project and wants to make sure that reporting takes on the most appropriate form to achieve this. They are keen to use the results both locally, to influence shoppers in the individual countries, and globally, to reflect their international brand. Outline the approaches you could offer for reporting the results, giving reasons for the choices you have made.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

Section 2: Optional Questions (Recommended time: 100 minutes)

The answers in this section account for two-thirds of the total marks.

Answer any TWO questions from the six listed below. Give a full answer to each of the questions you choose.

1. A small charity needs to gather information to inform its next fund-raising campaign. A member of staff has suggested adding questions to an omnibus survey.

a) Discuss the strengths and limitations of selecting an omnibus survey as opposed to other research methods that the charity could have used.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

b) Taking into account the limitations which have been identified, what steps can a charity take to ensure that a suitable omnibus survey is selected? Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

2. You work for T@3, a company which owns a small chain of teashops in London. The T@3 chain specialises in traditional afternoon tea, with a large menu of different teas and cream cakes. The company now wants to expand its business to one more city in the UK. It is considering three major tourist destinations – Edinburgh, Oxford and Brighton. However, it first needs to commission some market research to identify the most appropriate place to open its next teashop.

a) Outline the types of information which should be included in the brief in order to provide a basis for appropriate research. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

b) The marketing manager of T@3 has decided that money could be saved if the desk research for this project is carried out in-house. Outline a programme of secondary research which the company could undertake to find out about the potential market for its brand in each city. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

3. Personal interviewers, who are prepared to conduct interviews in respondents' homes, are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit.

a) Discuss the benefits and limitations of in-home face-to-face data collection. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

b) An electrical goods company wants to test consumer reactions to a new type of vacuum cleaner which is ready to go into production. Identify two possible alternative methodologies which may be used in preference to in-home interviewing for this project. Describe the benefits and limitations of each in gathering the information which is required.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

4. Rowbury, a major confectionary company, has recently acquired Maybury's, a small company which produces fine chocolates using essential oils for flavouring. Maybury's employees have been guaranteed employment with Rowbury. Rowbury now needs to decide whether to rebrand Maybury products as 'Rowbury fine chocolate'. It has approached an insight provider to help the company gain the insight needed to inform the decision.

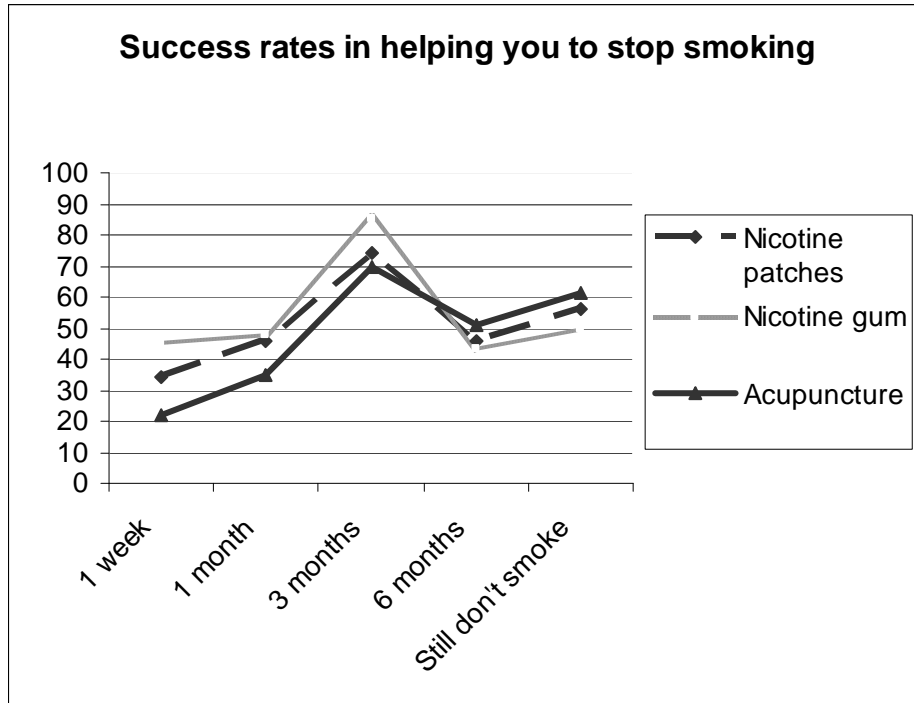
a) Describe what you understand by the term 'insight' and how it differs from more traditional market research. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

b) Describe the types of research information that the insight provider might use to help Rowbury make their decision, and how that information could be gathered. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

5. For the past year, a chain of pharmacies has been offering a range of support for people who wish to give up smoking. Among its services, it offers free nicotine patches, free nicotine gum and free acupuncture treatment. The company has recently conducted a survey among users of this service to find out which treatment has been most successful in helping them stop smoking.



- a) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the graph in conveying information about the research findings, giving reasons for your suggestions.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

- b) The pharmacy chain would like to use these findings and others from the survey in marketing materials to promote the usefulness of nicotine patches, nicotine gum and acupuncture in helping people to stop smoking. What advice would you give to the company on the use of research findings in marketing material? Give reasons for the suggestions you make, with reference to the MRS Code of Conduct where appropriate.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

6. A government agency is conducting a nationwide research project to find out ways of increasing engagement in politics. You are the lead researcher for the qualitative phase of the project, working with a team of 3 colleagues. Each of you will be conducting 4 group discussions.

- a) Describe the steps you would take to ensure consistency of approach across the 16 groups. Give reasons for each of the steps you suggest.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

- b) As the lead researcher, you are responsible for analysing the data and writing up the findings. Outline your approach to the analysis, giving reasons for the approach you take.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

Notes Page



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