

MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice

Preparing for the Exam: Section 1 - Question

Section 1 of the examination contains a 'mini case study'. 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.

The following question appeared in the MRS Advanced Certificate exam in June 2008. The weighting guide which follows each question is designed to help you work out how much information you need to put in each question. In this mini case study, the three questions are weighted equally. Therefore you should try to ensure that you focus your time and efforts equally across all three questions.

Read the question then allow yourself 50 minutes to write your answers. When you have finished, you can compare your answer with the Section 1 - Answer Guide.

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)