



MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice

**UNIT 2 – The Practice and Context of Market & Social
Research**

Assignment Materials & Tasks – June 2012 Assessment

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

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Unit 2 – June 2012 Assessment Materials
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Introduction

This document provides the material for the June 2012 assessment session of Unit 2 of the MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice. It contains the tasks and materials on which your assignment should be based. These materials include a description of a research context, a proposal for a research project designed to address the research problem and four tasks related to the materials.

The research problem and proposal contained in this sample material is entirely fictional. Any similarity to any real-life organization, company or business is entirely unintended.

Mode of assessment for Unit 2 Principles & Practice of Market Research

You are required to complete all four tasks. These are externally assessed and externally moderated.

Assignment specifications

Each task is designed to be completed in essay format and should address the issues detailed in the specifications table for that task. Copies of task specifications can be obtained from your centre.

The total word count for all four tasks should fall between 5000-7000 words (excluding appendices). Word limits for individual tasks are provided for general guidance. Appendices of material used to illustrate points made within the assignment may be included if you feel these are necessary. However, appendices should not be used to extend the word limit.

Assignments that considerably exceed the 7000 word limit (by more than 10%) will be graded as 'non-compliant' as they do not comply with assessment criteria and cannot be assessed with the qualifications framework.

Candidates **must** include a word count at the end of the assignment.

All assessed components of the MRS Diploma should be completed in English.

Assessment weighting

The tasks are weighted in accordance with the weighting ascribed to each area within the syllabus description and also with the level of analysis required within each assignment.

Task 1	25% of total
Task 2	25% of total
Task 3	25% of total
Task 4	25% of total
Total	100%

Presentation of your assignment

The assignment should be printed on A4 white paper, with a one-inch margin around the text. Text size should ideally be 11pt.

Make sure that each section within your assignment is easy to read by:

- using headings and bullet points effectively;
- avoiding over-brief note form. If you include notes, you should ensure they make your points clearly and overtly;
- ensuring that your use of English is clear, accurate and appropriate to a client audience.

All four tasks should be secured together and submitted as one assignment. The assignment should be secured with a staple in the top left hand corner. Please do not bind your assignment by any other means.

Number of copies

You are required to present three hard copies of the assignment in its final form for formal assessment to your centre co-ordinator by the centre's specified deadline. All copies must include an Assignment Cover Sheet. One copy of your assignment will be retained by your centre. The remaining two copies will be sent to MRS for external assessment.

Overall Result

No overall grade is awarded for the MRS Diploma. The *certificate* issued to successful candidates will give the level of achievement in each unit of assessment.

Pass requirements

In order to complete a unit successfully, candidates should meet or exceed the Pass requirements highlighted in the assessment sections of the handbook.

In order to be awarded the Diploma, candidates must achieve a Pass grade (or above) in all 4 units of assessment.

Grading System for each unit of Diploma assessment

Unit 1

Answers will be awarded a band grade (Distinction, Pass or Fail). In order to pass the examination, candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade in all three questions.

All candidates must pass Question 1. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade in either question 2 or 3 will normally be expected to achieve a strong Pass grade in the other question. Guidance on the general assessment criteria for each grade can be found in the following table.

Units 2 & 3 and 4

Candidates are given an overall band grade (Distinction, Pass, Fail). The assessment criteria for each assignment is included in the assignment specifications. In addition, the level descriptors provide guidance for the expected depth and range which are expected to be demonstrated at pass, distinction and fail grades. In order to pass the assessment candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade for each task within the assignment. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade for a task will normally be expected to achieve a strong Pass grade or above in one or more of the remaining tasks to pass.

Unit 5

Candidates are awarded a band grade (Distinction, Pass or Fail). In order to pass the examination, candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade in all three questions. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade in one question will normally be expected to achieve a strong Pass grade or above in one of the remaining two questions to pass.

For full guidance on the levels of attainment required for awarding each grade for all Units please refer to the **Full Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines Handbook**.

The Research Problem

Background

'Leopard' is a leading international toiletries brand, owned by DeoGlobal Ltd, and targeted at young men between the ages of 16-24. The range currently includes deodorant and shower gel. It is the market leader in the UK, the USA and Canada, and is one of the top 10 brands in the South American, European and Asian markets. The brand is also popular in Africa/Middle East and in the Pacific region, and has recently been introduced to the Chinese market. It is a lead player in a very competitive sector, with other manufacturers hoping to encroach on its market share. It has depended on constant product development, innovation and a creative and dynamic communications strategy to keep its young male customers loyal and engaged and to keep ahead of its competitors. One of its most important strategies has been to develop new varieties of its existing products, to appeal to its existing market of 16-24 year old males. To date, this has largely involved developing new fragrance lines, and using different advertising appeals, mostly based on a sporting and freshness theme.

The new global Brand Manager for 'Leopard', Andrew Hind, has been given the task of revitalising the 'Leopard' brand by possibly extending the product range to include, for example, hair products, shaving products and body sprays and by developing new fragrances and a new marketing communications approach. There is concern within DeoGlobal Ltd. that over-extension of the brand may dilute its current high brand equity, and may lessen its global appeal to its chosen market segment. However, as its competitors are constantly innovating and seeking to extend their market share through the use of aggressive advertising, sponsorship and other promotional activity, deciding to do nothing is not an option.

Andrew has decided to commission research to help him in his task of keeping 'Leopard' number 1 in the USA and the UK, and maintaining and increasing the brand's share in its other markets. He specifically needs:

- Information on current usage and customers attitudes toward the existing brand
- Potential consumers reasons for buying other products
- Ideas for new product development, in terms of fragrance, product range and a new creative communications approach

He contacts *The Ideas Machine*, spends two hours briefing them, and asks them to prepare a proposal.

The Proposal

The Ideas Machine has produced the following research proposal for DeoGlobal Ltd.

LEOPARD TOILETRIES

Client's Information Needs

The client, DeoGlobal Ltd, is seeking to extend its range of toiletries marketed under the brand name 'Leopard', and to develop new varieties of the existing products with new fragrance. It is also looking to develop a new advertising and communication strategy to help promote and launch the new variants of the product. DeoGlobal wish to understand current customers' usage of the existing product range, and their attitudes towards the brand, and potential customers' reasons for buying competitors products. They have asked us to help them in generating ideas for new product development, in terms of fragrance, product range and a new creative communications approach.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

- to understand existing customers' reasons for using toiletries in general, and for using Leopard toiletries in particular.
- to explore customers and potential customers attitudes towards Leopard.
- to explore attitudes towards Leopard in comparison to comparable competitor brands.
- to generate insights which will help in new product development, in terms of fragrance, a new product range and a new advertising and promotional strategy for the new range.

Research Programme Proposed

Initially, a three stage research programme is recommended, involving qualitative and quantitative research. We recommend that the qualitative research be carried out first, so that the findings can inform the detailed design of the quantitative phase.

Qualitative Research

This stage of the research is intended to explore attitudes towards buying toiletries generally and Leopard toiletries in particular. It is also intended to establish perceptions of the brand and of the brands main competitors (list to be provided by DeoGlobal Ltd.).

We first propose to conduct an online social media monitoring study, using content analysis to help us understand some of the main issues that the target group (males ages 16-24) are discussing in relation to toiletries and grooming in general. The social media to be used will be selected after discussion with DeoGlobal Ltd, and will be chosen to reflect the global reach of the product. We would aim to look at social media networks used by young men from most of the major global markets and potential markets for male toiletries.

We then propose conducting twelve focus groups in six major world cities, to reflect the global reach of 'Leopard', as detailed in the grid below. We envisage that the groups will comprise the following members, so that each group is homogenous by age, sex and purchase behaviour:

Country	'Leopard' Consumer	Non –'Leopard' Consumer
USA	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24
UK	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24
Canada	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24
China	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24
Australia	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24
India	12 males, 16-24	12 males, 16-24

We do not propose setting a quota for social class or income group, as we need to explore the attitudes of the whole range of people in the market place. The discussion guide for the research will be written by us in collaboration with the client. Each group will last for two hours, and will take place in a centrally located viewing facility, with one way mirrors to allow the clients to unobtrusively observe the proceedings. In addition to the use of one way mirrors, we would invite the creative department of DeoGlobal and its associated creative and advertising agencies to participate in the groups, and interact with the respondents, to help in the generation of new ideas. The groups will be recorded.

Qualitative Sampling:

We will recruit respondents through social media and online forums, inviting interested young men to contact us. Those responding will then receive a screening questionnaire, and those chosen (using criteria based on product usage) will be assigned to the appropriate group. We will aim to exclude anyone working in the media or research sector, and those who have any professional association with the toiletries sector.

An inducement of £50 (or a sum of equivalent value in each of the different countries) will be paid to each participant in the groups.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The results of the focus groups will be fully transcribed before analysis, and a written report and oral presentation of the main findings will be given to the client before the commencement of the quantitative phase of the research. We will work with the client to help them interpret and understand the research finding, and would then seek to help in the development of new prototypes of possible new products and variants of the existing product.

Quantitative Research

We propose conducting face-to-face mall/street interviews with a representative sample of 2000 young men in the USA and 1000 in each of the UK and Canada, using twenty representative sampling locations in the USA, and 10 in the UK and Canada, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). Face –to-face interviewing would allow us to fully demonstrate prototypes of new 'Leopard' products. We have chosen to test them in the USA, UK and Canada, as 'Leopard' is the number one toiletry brand in these markets.

This stage of the research would enable us to determine attitudes toward prototypes of new 'Leopard' variants resulting from the first stage of our research programme. Any additional areas suggested by the findings of the qualitative phase of the project will be incorporated into the questionnaire, which will be designed in consultation with the client

Quantitative Sampling

A quota controlled sample will be selected, using an interlocking quota based on age, sex, and occupational status, to give a broad sample representative of the USA, UK and Canadian population as a whole.

Final Data Analysis and Reporting

The quantitative data will be analysed using survey analysis software, and a copy of the processed data will be made available to the client if required in a format to be agreed. An oral presentation of the main findings of both the qualitative and the quantitative research will be given two weeks after the end of the fieldwork period, and a written report containing the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative phases will be provided six weeks after the end of the quantitative fieldwork.

TASKS

Task 1: Project Analysis Task

(1,250 – 1750 words)

(Weighting: 25% of total)

This task requires you to evaluate the fitness for purpose of the above proposed programme of research as contained in the proposal document.

Your answer should provide evaluations of:

- The definition of the research problem being investigated.
- The fitness for purpose of the proposed programme of research.
- The usefulness to Andrew Hind of the programme of research which has been outlined, with specific reference to the research objectives and the decisions to be taken.

Task 2: Analysis of the Research Sample

(1,250 – 1,750 words)

(Weighting: 25% of total)

This task requires you to analyse and evaluate the sampling plan proposed for this research project.

In your answer you should:

- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches to sampling identified for both qualitative and quantitative phases of the research, in relation to the given research objectives, and with reference to relevant statistical theory.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the size and composition of the qualitative and quantitative samples, in relation to the given research objectives and analysis plan.
- Identify the statistical tests which could be applied in analysing the quantitative data provided by this sample, with justification for their use.
- Evaluate the fitness for purpose of the sampling proposed for all phases of this research.

Task 3: Developing and Evaluating Data Collection Tools (1,250 – 1,750 words)
(Weighting: 25% of total)

This task requires you to prepare and provide a detailed rationale for a data collection tool or tools.

Either:

Qualitative Stage

- a) Devise a topic guide for use in the focus groups. The topic guide should provide sufficient information for the moderator to gather the data required in relation to the appropriate research objectives.
- b) Provide some rationale for the structure and design of your topic guide, identifying its strengths and limitations in relation to gathering the information required.

Or:

Quantitative Stage

- a) Design 6 questions, to include appropriate response formats and instructions for completion, for inclusion within the face to face street/mall interview questionnaire to determine respondents' attitudes towards prototypes of new 'Leopard' variants .
- b) Provide a rationale for the inclusion of each of your six questions, identifying the strengths and limitations of the questions in relation to gathering the information required.

Task 4: Reporting and Contextualising Research Findings (1,250-1,750 words)
(Weighting: 25% of total)

This task requires you to specify the format and prepare an outline content of the **final** research presentation (**the oral presentation of both the qualitative and the quantitative research**) which will be made to the client at the end of project. You should refer to the research proposal and to your own identification of gaps in this proposal to help you determine the main areas to be covered.

In your answer you should:

- Specify the format and outline content, in the form of headings and subheadings, of the final research presentation.
- Justify the format and content choices made in terms of managerial decision making.
- Specify the proposed audience for the final presentation.
- Discuss how possible research findings should be used by the client.
- Outline any barriers to implementation of the research recommendations.
- Specify any further research or specific sources of information which could be consulted to aid managerial decision making.



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