

**OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN, GAILLIMH
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY**

SUMMER EXAMINATIONS, 2000/01

M.B.S. DEGREE EXAMINATION

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Professor P. Willman

Professor R. Green

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Time allowed: **THREE** hours

Please attempt **THREE** questions. All students must attempt **Question 1** in Part A, in addition to **ONE** question in Part B and **ONE** question in Part C.

Please use **separate answer books for each question.**

PART A

1. You are a contract market researcher who has been retained by a Dublin-based publishing company. This company has approached you with a view to determining whether there is a market opportunity for a children's book club in the Dublin area. Children's book clubs involve parents agreeing to join a group or club (typically operated by a publishing company) that offers a wide variety of children's books for purchase at prices below those typically available. The publishing company that operates the book club makes its money from annual subscription fees and sales of books and, in addition, benefits from scale economies in book purchasing. The concept of book clubs is relatively undeveloped in Ireland, in part because in the past such clubs were operated from the UK and were not tailored to the preferences of Irish readers. Moreover, you believe that the advent of the Internet may provide an opportunity for more widespread acceptance of book clubs than has occurred heretofore.

After due consideration, you agree to accept the assignment. However, because the publishing company wants quick results, you will have no opportunity to develop a population frame for the proposed research. Consequently, you will have to work with generally available information on households in the Dublin area.

**please turn over
contd./**

Assignment:

Outline what research you believe is required and how it should be undertaken. Your design should include the following:

- a) Overall research design (what type of study is proposed)
- b) The research question(s)
- c) The investigative questions
- d) Outline of the sampling design proposed

(50% of Total Marks)

PART B

2. Answer parts a) and b) below:

- a) Provide an operational definition for each of the following:
 - i) Stress
 - ii) Job Enrichment
 - iii) Market Share
- b) You have been asked by a well-known nation-wide charity “Work for All” to carry out research into the effects of long-term unemployment throughout the country. The charity intends to use the findings of this research as part of a major campaign to highlight public awareness about the effects of long-term unemployment. The charity has drawn up a list of names and addresses of people who are or were long-term unemployed with whom they have had contact over the past six months. Write a covering letter to accompany the postal questionnaire. You may include any relevant information you wish.

(25% of Total Marks)

3. Answer parts a) and b) below:

- a) Propose one or more hypotheses for each of the following variable pairs, specifying which is the *IV* and which the *DV*. Then elaborate the basic hypothesis to include one moderating or intervening variable.
 - i) The Index of Consumer Confidence and the business cycle.
 - ii) The level of worker output and the closeness of supervision of the worker.
 - iii) The degree of personal friendship between customer and salesperson and the frequency of sales calls on the customer.

contd./

- b) You are the head of a research team and are reviewing a draft project report written by a member of the team in respect of a recent assignment. You come across the following paragraph on the nature of academic writing from the introduction section to the report:

“The ... lack of ready intelligibility (in scholarly writing), I believe, usually has little or nothing to do with the complexity of the subject matter, and nothing at all to do with profundity of thought. It has to do almost entirely with certain confusion of the academic writer about his own status ... To overcome the academic prose you first of all have to overcome the academic pose ... ”

Re-write, in shorter form, the above paragraph to be more understandable.

(25% of Total Marks)

PART C

4. Answer parts a) and b) below:

- a) “If a control group is part of an experimental design, one need not worry about controlling for other exogenous variables.”

Discuss.

- b) Briefly outline the ways in which laboratory experiments differ from field (ex post facto) experiments.

(25% of Total Marks)

5. Answer parts a) and b) below:

- a) “Whenever available, it is advisable to use instruments that have already been developed and repeatedly used in published studies rather than develop our own instruments for our studies.”

Discuss.

- b) Briefly describe why validity is an important concept in measurement.

(25% of Total Marks)