

Session 13 – Smoking issue in Turkey

RIA Training, 6-8 July 2009

In this interactive case study, participants will work in smaller working groups with the aim to go through all the main elements of a full RIA (the problem definition, identification of options, consultation, analysis and presentation of benefits and costs). The case study is based on smoking issue in Turkey, which was very controversial recently leading to new law on full ban of smoking in public places.

Each group will present its RIA components to the entire class including a commentary by the instructors and participants. Each group should select a presenter.

For the purpose of this exercise, assume you are at the stage before adoption of the Law on ban of smoking in public places, i.e. the full ban of smoking in public places has not been decided and is just one of the possible options in dealing with the problem.

The RIA presentation on the case study should for each group include Full RIA components. Use full RIA format (see template on full RIA).

Read the full RIA Template and Case Study for 15 mins individually and work in your group for 2.5 hours to draft full RIA.

Case Study – Smoking in Turkey Tobacco market

Turkey is the world's eighth-largest tobacco market. The Turkish people consume an estimated 115 billion cigarettes a year.

In 1994, a group of physicians formed the group "Tobacco Control" to push for tougher restrictions on smoking in public spaces and a comprehensive advertising ban. In late 1996, under pressure from these activists, the Turkish Parliament passed one of the strictest tobacco control laws in the world. The law banned cigarette advertising from TV and radio, prohibited print ads using any cigarette "name, trademark or trade name," forbidden any advertising "encouraging" people to smoke and ended tobacco company sponsorship of sporting events. The sale of cigarettes to anyone under 18 was prohibited, and smoking was restricted in airports, schools, public transportation, hospitals and other public facilities.

Unfortunately, the legislation has not proven very effective, as tobacco companies learned how to deal with advertising bans. One of their tactics has been to print "Price Announcements" to newspapers which often "announce" that prices have not changed. Another example was that The Philip Morris had taken the name Marlboro out of its ads, but the brand's distinctive red and white chevron was everywhere. In Istanbul's trendy Ortakoy neighbourhood, sidewalk cafes use red and white Marlboro umbrellas and trays, provided free by Philip Morris. As 19 year-old Ahmet Tastan, pointing to a red chevron in one store, explains, "This doesn't say Marlboro, but we understand it. The law didn't change anything."

Although smoking prevalence reduced slightly (from 43% in 2000 to 40% in 2005), Turkish officials say cigarettes represent a serious health concern for Turkey, the country of 71 million, where some 60 percent of men, 20 percent of women, and 11.7 percent of schoolchildren smoke. On the European continent, the average smoking rate hovers around 30 percent, though Greece's rate is 45 percent.¹

¹ Turkish leaders push for smoking ban, January 09, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0109/p07s02-woeu.html>

According to a recent report by the Turkish Statistics Institution, of Turkish smokers, 25.2 percent plan on quitting smoking, and 27.8 percent of those people plan to quit within the next 12 months. 4.6 percent of smokers are indecisive about quitting. But 40.6 percent of Turkish smokers tried to quit in the last year. Young people between 15 and 24 have the highest desire to quit. In this age group, 47.2 percent have tried to quit in the previous 12 months.²

The report also shows that both smokers and nonsmokers are aware of the dangers of smoking in terms of health. Among the smokers, 94.5 percent have noticed the warnings on cigarette packages in the previous 30 days.

Tobacco industry

Turkey ranks fifth in world tobacco production and sixth in exports. Tobacco ranks sixth in terms of the total value of culture crops in Turkey. The exports of tobacco generate 2-3 per cent of its total export earnings. Turkey is a net exporter of tobacco products. Being one of the most labour intensive agricultural production activities, tobacco production is an important source of employment.³

In Turkey, Philip Morris International has 41% of the cigarette market share and British America Tobacco on acquiring Tekel, Turkey's state-owned cigarette company, went from 7% to 36% of the market.

Turkey used to be one of the world's leading tobacco producers, and the tradition of smoking has a history that goes back centuries. Furthermore, cigarettes are cheap, with domestic brands costing around \$1.50 a pack.⁴

Turkey's excise tax on cigarettes is about 58 percent. Cigarette tax in European Union countries is about 62 percent to 83 percent of the retail price, depending on the country, according to the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association.⁵

International evidence about ban of smoking in public places

Ban of smoking in public places have been discussed in many countries. In 1998, the UK Government made clear that "completely smoke-free enclosed public places are the ideal", but "[did] not think that a universal ban on smoking in all public places is justified while we can make fast and substantial progress in partnership with industry".⁶

There was a voluntary agreement in UK, led by the hospitality industry, in which signatories were committed to "increase provision of facilities for non-smokers and the availability of clear air". The detail behind this was later launched formally as the Public Places Charter.

However, an independent evaluation in 2003 showed that the key target had not been met and nearly half of pubs that were Charter compliant allowed smoking throughout and only a handful were entirely smokefree. Later, in 2006, UK introduced full ban of smoking in public places.

Worldwide, action has been taken to reduce people's exposure to the risks of secondhand smoke. Ireland introduced a ban on smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces in March 2004. In America, California has had a state-wide ban since 1998, while New York passed smokefree legislation in 2003. In total some nine US states have legislative bans. These bans have been effective in protecting people from secondhand smoke. The Journal of the American Medical Association documented a significant improvement in respiratory health among bartenders after the passage of the Californian smoke-free workplace legislation. In New York, cotinine levels (a nicotine by-product which is used to measure levels of secondhand smoke) in non-smoking bar and restaurant

² <http://www.tobacco-facts.net/2009/05/smoke-like-a-turk-not-just-an-old-saying>

³ <http://people.deu.edu.tr/sedef.akgungor/tob.ppt>

⁴ Turkish leaders push for smoking ban, January 09, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0109/p07s02-woeu.html>

⁵ <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aKl.Y.8VfC34>

⁶ UK Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment – Smokefree Aspects of the Health Bill, 2004

staff declined by 85%. Montana saw a 40% drop in hospital admissions for heart attacks during a 6 month period of smokefree workplaces. In Ireland, almost total compliance with the ban has been reported, with surveys showing that 97% of premises inspected being compliant in respect of the smoking prohibition, and 99% of all smokers who visited a pub either smoking outside or not smoking at all. Almost one in five smokers chose not to smoke at all when out socialising. Later other countries, including Spain, Ukraine, Sweden, and Montenegro passed laws banning smoking in some or all public places.

The UK Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health report on the health risks from secondhand smoke, from 1998, concluded that exposure to secondhand smoke is a cause of among other conditions:

- lung cancer
- ischaemic heart disease
- asthma attacks
- childhood respiratory disease
- and sudden infant death syndrome.

There is also evidence of an association between secondhand smoke and reduced lung function.

Debates in Turkey

Banning smoking was until recently completely unthinkable in Turkey. But such bans are now common in Europe. Health campaigners say one in five deaths in Turkey is tobacco-related.⁷

The full ban would outlaw smoking in all enclosed public places, including bars, cafes and restaurants as well as taxis, trains and outdoor stadiums. Smoking includes cigars, pipes and the traditional water pipe, or nargile, a popular attraction for tourists.

Opponents of full ban of smoking in public places argue that existing bans on smoking in hospitals, schools and other public buildings are already widely flouted. There have been many warnings that implementing full ban will prove a nightmare. They also question how the newly-legislated fines – 50 Turkish lira for those lighting up and 5,000 lira for bar and cafe owners who allow smoking on their premises – will be imposed. Many smokers too are outraged by what they see as an infringement of their civil liberties, and are warning that they will ignore the new law.

But against this, the new law is being strongly praised by health campaigners. They point out that smoking-related illnesses cost Turkey up to 3bn lira a year. The anti-smoking lobby has on its side a powerful supporter in the shape of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

On January 2008, a topic on ban of smoking in public places was initiated on the forum of www.kusadasifans.com.⁸ Below are the opinions of the participants to the forum:

- I'm an ex smoker and therefore won't be affected by this but this will be very strange as we are so used to it in Turkey. It kicked in here in Portugal January 1st and it's not going down well, the Portugese that were staying in this hotel at the time just ignored the ban causing the British and Irish guests to have a lot to say about that.
- I suppose it will take a bit of getting used to as I smoke like a trouper. I think the coffee houses etc won't obey the ban as it is part of the Turkish culture and it will take time to enforce but it's like anything else if you do it for long enough it becomes the norm.
- I'm a smoker but always trying to give up – fail miserably when in Turkey so it is a good thing I think. In New Zealand it has been illegal to smoke in public places for so long I can't remember when it wasn't!!! Remember the ban in England and when I went to New York and found it amazingly good cutting down as couldn't smoke anywhere so welcomed the law

⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7171245.stm>

⁸ <http://kusadasifans.com/forums/Law-Smoking-Ban-Turkey-t4362.html>

change in the UK as forces me to cut back! A lot of my friends have given up since the law change in the UK.

- I have to say I'm a heavy smoker, but finally I am thinking about giving up. So it might help me in one way, but I still feel sorry for smokers.
- Oh no, I don't like that. I was hoping it wasn't going to happen in Turkey (I'm also a smoker).
- All I can say is that I'm gutted... The law is on now in France since the 1st of January and I was so happy to enjoy my cigarette while drinking an Efes in bars for New Year! Just to say: yes for the restaurants, but for the cafés and bars... please come on!!!!
- I like any smoking ban in any country. It's about a month that this law is in Iran too, I love it, when you go to cafe and restaurants you can breathe.
- I'm definitely in favour of a smoking ban! As an asthmatic it plays havoc with my breathing, especially as there's no smoking in Ireland so I'm not used to sitting in smokey places.

There was also an article in newspaper where the owners of a pub, Ali Uluisik, was worried about the ban. He said that alcohol and cigarettes go hand in hand for many Turks. If they can't enjoy both together in a pub or cafe, he said, "it will push them to dark corners — they'll drink outside in parks or cars. It will be worse than if they were inside."

A couple of blocks over, Gul Cavus, owner of the trendy Cafe Cocktail Patisserie, had similar concerns. "I don't know what I'm going to do," she said. "Already we're losing business because of the economic crisis." But, Cavus added, she's not sure the law will actually be enforced. "It's Turkey," she said, smiling. "We like to go against the rules."

Sercan Tokmak, manager of the Fincan Cafe, recently quit smoking and supports the ban. "I'm not comfortable with so much smoke around me," he said. "I know it will be bad for business, but it's good for health."