



UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT & FINANCE

Postgraduate & Mid-career Development Unit

Master of Business Administration (MBA)/MBA in Finance/MBA in Marketing/MBA in HRM Weekend Programmes (Semester III First-half) Examination – April 2017

MBA 625 – Research Methods I

Three (03) Hours

Answer both questions from **Part I** and any three questions from **Part II**

This paper has seven (07) questions on five (05) printed pages

Part I

1. In research, the word 'problem' does not have the same meaning in which it is used in the practical social world.
 - i. State the difference between (a) a *practical* problem and a *research* problem and (b) an *applied research* problem and a *pure research* problem
(05 Marks)
 - ii. Briefly explain why a pure research problem could be envisaged as a 'puzzle.'
(05 Marks)
 - iii. In identifying a *pure research* problem in management, the researcher is required to move between observations of the practical business world and the world of literature. Explain the *different ways* in which a researcher could engage in this exercise in identifying a problem worthy of research.
(10 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)

2. The philosophical approach of a research has wide ranging implications for the way in which the study is conducted.

i. "Although there are some similarities in the epistemological assumptions of the two research philosophies 'interpretivism' and 'critical theory', there are fundamental differences between these two philosophies". Explain this statement with regard to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of these two philosophies to research.

(10 Marks)

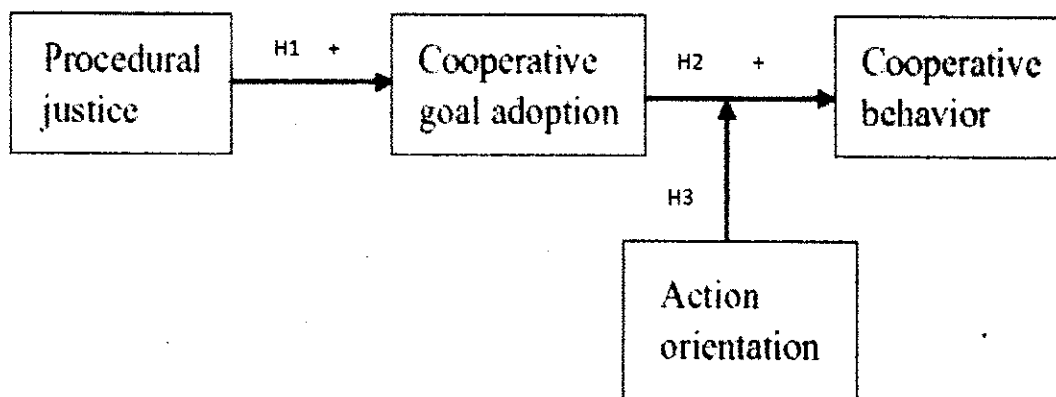
ii. 'When it comes to discussions of ontological and epistemological assumptions, pragmatic researchers would "simply like to change the subject" (Rorty, as quoted in Creswell, 2009, p. 11).' Explain how this position of pragmatic researchers could have implications for how they conduct research.

(10 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)

Part II

3. i. Based on the following conceptual model answer the questions given below.



a. Write the three hypotheses of the model.

(06 Marks)

b. Identify the different types of variables in the model and name them.

(04 Marks)

- ii. A total of 309 members of a research panel who worked for at least 12 hours a week across a wide range of Dutch companies participated as focal employees. For their participation they were allowed to choose certain gifts. Of participants, 105 were females. Participants' mean age was 44.51.

The focal employees also invited their supervisor to respond to some items, of whom 103 participated (Mean age = 46.78; 32 females).

The focal employee and supervisor questionnaires were administered online. Focal employees forwarded a link to the questionnaire to their respective supervisors. Each supervisor reported on one focal employee only. To ensure that the questionnaires were completed by the correct sources, we emphasized the importance of integrity in the scientific process, stressing that it was essential for the focal employee and the supervisor to fill out the correct questionnaires.

Answer the following questions based on the above description.

- a. State the research design of this study.

(04 Marks)

- b. State the sampling technique and sample size used in this study.

(03 Marks)

- c. Identify two procedural remedies taken in the research design to avoid/reduce Common Method Variance (CMV).

(03 Marks)

[Based on van Dijke, M., De Cremer, D., Brebels, L., & Van Quaquebeke, N. (2015). Willing and able. *Journal of Management*, 41(7), 1982-2003]

(Total 20 marks)

4. i. Write a sample question/item for each of the following levels of measurement:

- a. Nominal
- b. Ordinal
- c. Interval
- d. Ratio

(02 marks each)

(08 Marks)

ii. Operationalise 'psychological empowerment' from the paragraph below:

Empowerment distinguishes between situational attributes (e.g., management practices) and job incumbent cognition about those attributes (e.g., psychological empowerment). It is said both conditions are required to empower employees. Psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational concept manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create psychological empowerment.

Meaning was measured using Tymon's (1988) three items scale. A sample item was "The work I do is meaningful to me". Competence was measured with three items adapted from Jones's (1986) self-efficacy scale. A sample item was "I am confident about my ability to do my job". Self-determination's three items were adapted from Hackman and Oldham's (1985) autonomy scale. A sample item was "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work". Finally, impact's three items were adapted from Ashforth's (1989) helplessness scale. A sample item was "My impact on what happens in my department is large". A seven-point Likert response format was used for all items.

[Adapted from Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442-1465]

(12 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)

5. i. Briefly explain the advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data in a research.

(08 Marks)

ii. What is stationarity in a time series data set, and why stationarity is important in time series data analysis?

(04 Marks)

iii. How does a researcher decide whether a pooled data model, fixed effects model, random effects model or dynamic panel data model is appropriate to a given longitudinal data set?

(08 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)

6. Among the strategies of inquiry in qualitative research, case study is a popular approach.
- i. What are the key strengths of the case study approach?
(08 Marks)
 - ii. In your view, are multiple cases always better than a single case? Give reasons for your answer.
(06 Marks)
 - iii. Differentiate between a holistic case and an embedded case.
(06 Marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**

7. i. While sampling is important in research in general, it is used differently in qualitative research when compared to its use in quantitative research. Elaborate on this statement highlighting the importance of sampling, and unique features of sampling in qualitative research.
(08 Marks)
- ii. "Purposive sampling rather than random sampling is appropriate for qualitative research". Describe the above statement.
(06 Marks)
- iii. Explain how one could decide 'how many is enough' with regard to the sample size (such as the number of interviewees for data collection) in a qualitative research project.
(06 Marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**
