

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

Bachelor of Business Administration Honours in Accounting (Semester V) Examination –
August, 2021

ACT 3312 – Research Methods

Three (03) Hours

Answer All Questions

This is an Open Book Examination

This Paper Consists of Two (02) Questions Printed in Four (04) Pages

1. Having followed ACT 3312 – Research Methods course in Semester V, students of the Department of Accounting are having various discussions on research projects that they are planning to undertake in Semesters VI and VII. Students are raising the following concerns and seek information to be used in making various decisions in carrying out the research work.

- Whether to select basic/pure research option or applied research project option.
- Nature of the research problems which suit to a basic/pure research and applied research.
- Whether to do a quantitative research or a qualitative research.
- Whether data should be collected from a population or a sample.
- How to select the most appropriate data collection method?
- What are the procedural differences in carrying out quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis?

Answer the following questions with a focus of assisting the students by providing clarifications on the above concerns raised in their discussions.

- i. Explain different objectives that can be accomplished by carrying out a basic/pure research and an applied research project.

(06 Marks)

ii. Explain with examples the process of identifying different gaps in establishing a research problem for a basic/pure research and an applied research project.

(10 Marks)

iii. Briefly explain the differences in philosophical assumptions to be adhered in conducting a quantitative and a qualitative research.

(08 Marks)

iv. a. Describe in which circumstances a population should be used in collecting data for a quantitative research and when a sample becomes a valid alternative for using data from the population (census).

(04 Marks)

b. Discuss the process of selecting an appropriate sample for a quantitative research.

(06 Marks)

v. Describe the process of developing hypotheses in case of undertaking a quantitative research.

(08 Marks)

vi. Explain how a researcher can customize different data collection methods to suit for a quantitative and a qualitative research.

(08 Marks)

vii. Briefly explain the steps of carrying out an analysis for a cross sectional data set collected for a research.

(10 Marks)

(Total 60 marks)

2. The following extracts are based on a discussion among a group of third year undergraduate research students who are currently following the Research Methods course and are intending to undertake a research study in the area of accounting in the future.

- Student 1: “I don’t like statistics, so I want to select the qualitative methodology. However, I am not sure whether qualitative methodology would be suitable for the research I hope to do”.
- Student 2: “Since I am going to do a qualitative study, in my literature review I am thinking of only including qualitative research articles”.
- Student 3: “I want to do a qualitative study, but I do not know what the correct number of interviews is to be conducted. Also, I am not sure whether I should collect data only from interviews, or whether I could use any other data collections methods”.
- Student 4: “If I am doing a qualitative study, I am wondering whether I can collect data only from one organisation, or whether obtaining data from a larger number of organisations is better”.
- Student 5: “If I am collecting data through interviews, should I voice record interviews”.
- Student 6: “I know that a research proposal is a very important component in a research study. But then how could I do a good research proposal”.

Using your knowledge on research methodology in general, and qualitative research in particular, you are required to answer the following questions, with a focus on clarifying the above concerns of students.

- i. Explain with examples the circumstances under which undertaking a qualitative research would be most appropriate.

(08 Marks)

- ii. Describe the importance of a literature review and how research articles could be selected in carrying out a literature review.

(06 Marks)

iii. Elaborate on how a researcher could decide on the appropriate number of interviews to be conducted for a qualitative study, and whether data for a qualitative study should be obtained only from interviews.

(08 Marks)

iv. In a qualitative research study, should data be collected only from one organisation or a larger number of organisations? Give reasons for your answer.

(06 Marks)

v. In your opinion is it necessary to voice record interviews, and how could a researcher make the decision whether to voice record interviews or not. Provide reasons for your answer.

(06 Marks)

vi. Explain the features of a well formulated research proposal.

(06 Marks)

(Total 40 marks)