UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

Bachelor of Business Administration (Level II – Semester V) Examination, 2019

HLM 3300 / MKT 3313 – Research Methods

Three (03) Hours

Answer <u>Four (04)</u> Questions in all including Question <u>No. 1</u> and any other <u>Three (03)</u>

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1. Charith was browsing around a supermarket with his friend Sumith one day when he noticed that there was a new fairness cream introduced for men: *Fair Men*. He wanted to try it, but felt shy to buy; "face cream is a woman's product" he thought. As a third year Marketing undergraduate his own shyness made him curious about marketing this type of grooming products. He asked Sumith about this and Sumith agreed that he too would think twice before buying a fairness cream. Surely, other men must be feeling the same way? Doesn't that make it difficult for marketers? Back at the university, they discussed this over with a few friends and found that they also felt similar shyness.

    Charith and Sumith had been thinking about research problems for their final year project and they thought this might be a good area to research. However, Charith wanted to do a pure research while Sumith was interested in doing an applied research. So they decided to discuss it with their lecturer. "Sounds interesting. So what research ideas do you have at the moment?" she asked.

    "Well… we thought one of us could do a research to try to find a good promotional message that will help the marketers of *Fair Men* to overcome male shyness relating to their product. That would be an *applied research,* won't it? Can I do that?" asked Sumith eagerly. "Yes, if you do a research to find that, it would be an *applied research*. But don't jump into developing a *research problem* about promotional messages yet. First you should speak to the company management and find out whether they have a *management decision* problem relating to the marketing of *Fair Men*, and then do a thorough *background study*. Only then will you be able to develop a good research problem" said the lecturer. "What about me?"

asked Charith. "I want to do a *pure research*". "Read some literature in the area of male grooming," advised the lecturer. "And see if you can identify a *knowledge gap*. You can *define your research problem* through that".

"I'm glad that I don't need to bother about reading boring theory and literature," said Sumith. "Ah, maybe not right at the beginning" smiled the lecturer. "But remember that *theory* does have a role to play in *applied research*".

i.   Why did the lecturer say that Sumith's research idea would be an *applied research*? Explain with reference to the key characteristics of an *applied research*.

(08 Marks)

ii.   The lecturer wants Sumith the find out whether the company marketing *Fair Men* have a *management decision problem* and then do a *background study* in order to develop a *research problem*.

a.   Briefly describe (in one sentence) the difference between a *management decision problem* and *a research problem* in an *applied research*.

(03 Marks)

b.   Explain the activities that Sumith could undertake when he conducts the *background study* and show how these activities will help him in identifying the research problem. (You should link your answer to this specific scenario as much as possible without simply giving a general description.)

(12 Marks)

iii. The lecturer asks Charith to identify a *knowledge gap* in *defining his research problem*.

a.   Briefly define in your own words the term *knowledge gap* in relation to *pure research*. (One sentence is sufficient.)

(03 Marks)

b.   How can one identify a *knowledge gap*? Describe in one sentence using your own words.

(02 Marks)

c.   Explain how Charith can find the two kinds of *evidence* needed to support his ideas when *defining his research problem*.

(08 Marks)

iv.   Briefly explain the role played by _theory_ in _applied research_.

(04 Marks)

(Total 40 Marks)

2. i.   _Summarising_ and _synthesizing_ literature are two key activities in undertaking a literature review.

   a.   What is meant by _synthesizing_ literature in a _pure research_?

(02 Marks)

   b.   What is the purpose of _synthesizing_ literature in an _applied research_?

(03 Marks)

   c.   Using the process you followed in your group assignment as an example, explain how one could _summarise_ literature using a _synthesis matrix_ and make use of the _synthesis matrix_ to _synthesise_ the summarised literature.

(12 Marks)

   ii. Briefly (in about two or three sentences) describe the _funnel approach_ in writing a literature review in a _pure research._

(03 Marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

3. i.   Briefly describe the components of a good _conceptual framework_ in a positivistic quantitative pure research.

(06 Marks)

   ii. A researcher proposes "sales staff friendliness leads to higher customer satisfaction"

   a.   Identify the _independent_ and _dependent_ variables in the above relationship.

(02 Mark)

   b.   What is meant by _independent_ and _dependent_ in a relationship like this?

(05 Marks)

   iii. Following are a few relationships proposed by a researcher about the Sri Lankan tourism industry:

   a.   High _service quality_ in a hotel leads to high _loyalty_ of hotel guests because high _service quality_ leads to high _satisfaction_ and then high _satisfaction_ leads

to high *loyalty.* In the above description, is *satisfaction* an *independent*, *dependent*, *mediator* or *moderator* variable?

(02 Marks)

b. Draw the conceptual model depicting the relationships given in (a) above.

(03 Marks)

c. There is a positive relationship between *price* of hotel rooms and tourists *purchase intension* when they select a hotel to stay. However, the strength of this relationship changes depending on the *nationality* of the tourist. The relationship is stronger for Indian tourists than for English tourists. In this description is *nationality* an *independent*, *dependent, mediator* or *moderator* variable?

(02 Marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

4. To do *positivistic quantitative* research one requires large samples. In *interpretive qualitative* research, what is more important than a large sample is getting a sample that comprises *information rich* cases. In qualitative research often the researchers do not specify sample size before the research, but attempt to achieve *saturation* during data collection.

   i. What is meant by *saturation* in the above statement? (One sentence is sufficient.)

   (02 Marks)

   ii. Briefly explain why positivistic quantitative research requires *large* samples and interpretive qualitative research requires *information rich* cases, with reference to the *aim* of research in the two different philosophies.

   (08 Marks)

   iii. The management of *Frangipani Holiday Resorts* wants you to conduct a research on the satisfaction of the employees working in their hotels. There are three key employee categories in this large hotel group: front office (300 employees), food and beverages (600 employees) and housekeeping (600 employees). The management is willing to provide you with the list of employees along with information regarding the category in which they are employed. You plan to use a sample of 150 employees in your study with proportionate representation of each

employee category. Briefly (in a few numbered sentences) explain the steps you will follow in selecting the sample using the *stratified random* sampling method.

(10 Marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

5. When conducting research researchers collect various different types of data using different methods of data collection.

   i.   Differentiate between *quantitative* and *qualitative* data (in one or two sentences).

(03 Marks)

   ii.   Briefly differentiate between *primary* and *secondary* data (in one or two sentences) and give *two* examples of sources of *secondary* data available to a Sri Lankan management researcher.

(05 Marks)

   iii.   You are conducting an applied research to identify the food preference of guests at the *Eco Hotel*. The hotel offers a selection of both Sri Lankan and Western food for lunch. You want to conduct a *structured observation* to identify which type of food is preferred by the guests, based on their gender (male and female) and age (adult and child).

   a. What is the most common *purpose* of a *structured observation*? (One sentence sufficient.)

(03 Marks)

   b. Develop a *coding schedule/sheet* to record the observations in this structured observation exercise to collect data you think are relevant for the study.

(09 Marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

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