UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

Bachelor of Business Administration (Semester V) Examination, 2020

MKT 3313/HLM 3300 – 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> questions

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1. Prabodha is a student reading for the BBA degree. He is interested in doing a research about consumers' use of taxi services such as Uber and PickMe. He had noticed that older people find it difficult to use the mobile App of these services and are, therefore, somewhat reluctant to use these taxi services. He decided to have a discussion with his research methods lecturer about focusing on this idea in his research.

   "It's an interesting idea. Do you want to do a _pure_ or _applied_ research?" asked the lecturer. "A _pure research_" Prabodha replied. "Then you'll have to do an extensive _literature review_" she said. "If you do an _applied research_, literature won't play as a big a role although you will still need to do a _literature survey_. So do a lot of reading."

   Following the lecturer's advice Prabodha did an extensive literature review. In his initial readings he identified that the business model used by taxi services such as Uber and PickMe is discussed as the 'Sharing Economy' in the literature. Therefore, he searched for and read literature about the Sharing Economy. He also read research papers on consumers' use of technological products since his observation about older consumers was related to a technology related element of the service (i.e. mobile Apps).

   Prabodha used some _features_ of _Google Scholar_ to _find literature_ related to his research project. He also made use of the _reference lists_ of papers that he read to _increase_ his

collection of literature. As he progressed with his reading, he developed a *synthesis matrix*. He knew it would help him to *synthesise* all the literature he read. Then, synthesising the literature, Prabodha defined his research problem as follows: 'Is the consumers' intention to participate in the Sharing Economy affected by the interaction between technological factors and consumers' age?' Then he developed the conceptual model in Figure 1 in relation to this research problem.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model
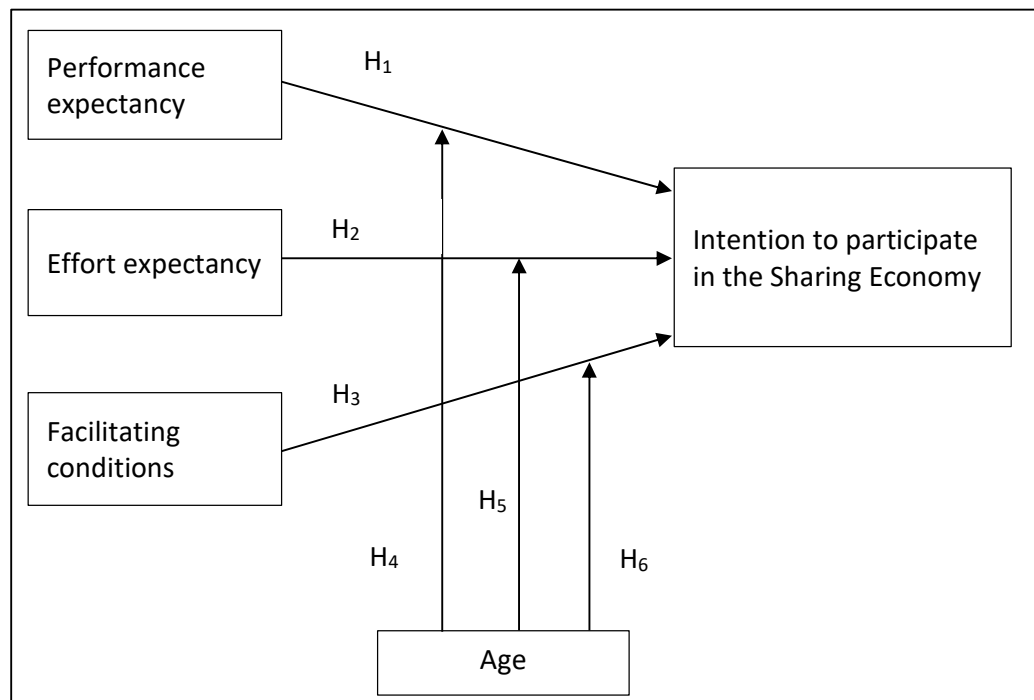
 'Performance expectancy', 'efforts expectancy' and 'facilitating conditions' in Figure 1 are concepts related to technological factors. Prabodha had identified in the literature that *when these three factors increase* in relation to a given technology, consumers' *intention to participate in services* utilizing that technology also *increases*. He adopted that idea in relation to mobile apps of the Sharing Economy in his conceptualisation.

Now Prabodha is ready to move on to the next stage of his research.

i.   The lecturer says that Prabodha will need to do an extensive literature review since he is planning on doing a *pure research* and not an *applied research*.

   a.   Name the key *purpose* of a *pure research* and an *applied research*. (Two bullet points are sufficient.)

(04 marks)

   b.   Name the uses of a *literature review* in a *pure research* and the uses of a *literature survey* in an *applied research*. (Two or three bullet points are sufficient.)

(06 marks)

   c.   Briefly explain why *literature* plays a *bigger role* in a *pure research* than in an *applied research* using your answers to (a) and (b) above to support your argument.

(05 marks)

ii.   Name *two* features of the results produced by a *Google Scholar* search that would have helped Prabodha to find literature related to his project. (Give only the names of the two links.)

(04 marks)

iii. Briefly explain how *reference lists* of papers Prabodha read would have helped him *to increase the collection of literature* related to his project.

(05 marks)

iv.   When undertaking the literature review Prabodha develops a *synthesis matrix*. Explain how a *synthesis matrix* helps to *synthesise* the literature one reads.

(06 marks)

v.   Answer the following questions in relation to Prabodha's conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

   a.   Identify the *independent* variable/variables and *dependent* variable/variables of Prabodha's research.   (02 marks)

   b.   Is H_1 showing a direct, mediating, or moderating relationship?   (01 marks)

   c.   Is H_4 showing a direct, mediating, or moderating relationship?   (01 marks)

   d.   Write H_1 in words.   (03 marks)

   e.   Write H_4 in words.   (03 marks)

(Total 40 Marks)

2. i. Briefly explain why we need to decide on the *research philosophy* before we do a research.

(04 marks)

ii. Describe in simple words (using one sentence each) the meanings of the terms *ontology* and *epistemology*.

(02 marks)

iii. Briefly describe using simple words (in one sentence each) your *ontological* assumption of the social world if you have (a) an *objective* ontology and (b) a *subjective* ontology.

(02 marks)

iv. What would be your *epistemology* if you have (a) an *objective* ontology and (b) *subjective* ontology? (Give only the two names.)

(01 mark)

v. What would be *your role as the researcher* if you adopt the *epistemology* you identified in *iv(a)* above? (Answer in one sentence.) *Justify* your answer in relation to the assumption of the *objective* ontology you identified in *iii(a)*.

(05 marks)

vi. If you were a *pragmatic* researcher, what would be your position in relation to the (a) *ontology* and (b) *epistemology* of a research project?

(06 marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

3. The most common method used for data collection in *positivistic quantitative* research is the *questionnaire*.

i. Identify *three* key things you have to *pay attention to* when designing a questionnaire.

(03 marks)

ii. Briefly differentiate between *open-ended* and *close-ended* questions. (Two sentences sufficient.)

(05 marks)

iii. Thumindu is a pure researcher examining *the research problem* 'Does *YouTube advertising clutter* have an impact on consumers' *attitude towards the YouTube channels*?'

Following are two of his research *objectives*:

Objective 1:   To identify whether *advertising clutter* has an impact on the *attitude towards the YouTube channel* due to *irritation* with the YouTube channel.

Objective 2:   To identify whether *advertising clutter* has an impact on *attitude towards the YouTube channel* due to *higher mobile data costs* incurred by clutter.

Following are two of his *hypotheses*:

H_1:   *Advertising clutter* leads to viewer *irritation* about the YouTube channel.

H_2:   *Irritation* about the YouTube channel leads to a negative *attitude towards the YouTube channel*.

(Note: All objectives and hypotheses of the research project are not given above.)

Thumindu has *operationalized* the *variables* of his hypotheses and developed a *questionnaire*.

"Thumindu's *questionnaire* should be closely linked to the *operationalization of variables*, which, in turn, should be closely linked to the *hypotheses*, which are, in turn, linked to the *research objectives* and finally the *research problem*."

Explain the above statement using the information about Thumindu's research to support your answer.

(Hint: Start your answer with the research problem and explain the links: Problem → Objectives → Hypotheses → Operationalization → Questionnaire.)

(12 marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

4. In *positivistic quantitative* research, using a *probability sampling technique* to select the sample helps to increase its representativeness of the population.

   i.   List the steps in the process of selecting a *probability sample*.

(05 marks)

   ii.   The management of *Frangipani Holiday Resort* wants you to conduct a research on the food preferences of guests of the hotel. The managers believe that the food preferences differ depending on whether the guests come from Europe, South Asian countries, or East Asian countries. They also believe that within these groups the food preferences differ according to gender. You plan to select a sample of guests from those who are currently staying the hotel and the hotel has provided with the register of all the current guests. According to the register there are 1500 guests currently staying in the hotel and their composition is as follows: European – 300, South Asian – 600, and East Asian – 600. The gender division is Male – 50% and Female – 50%. For your study you plan to select a sample of 150 guests, with *proportionate representation* of each consumer category, using the *stratified random sampling method*.

   a. What is the *unit of analysis* of this research?   (01 mark)
   b. What is the *sampling frame* you will be using?   (02 marks)
   c. Briefly (in a few numbered sentences) explain the steps you would follow in selecting the sample using the *stratified random sampling method*. (In one of the steps you are required to show calculation of the number of consumers representing each category in the sample.)

(12 marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

5. Methods of ensuring *the quality* of the project and *ethical conduct* are two key considerations when designing a research.

    i.   *Validity* and *reliability* are two key concepts associated with ensuring the quality of a *positivistic* research.

        a. Briefly explain (using one sentence each) what is meant by *validity* and *reliability* of *measurements*.

(04 marks)

        b. Briefly explain why *reliability* is not an applicable quality criterion in *interpretive* research.

(03 marks)

    ii.   Although ethics in research is not limited to considerations related to the participants/respondents (i.e. those who provide data), a high level of attention is paid to the rights of *participants/respondents* when deciding how to ensure *ethical conduct in research*.

        a. Define (in one sentence) *ethical conduct in research* in your own words.

(02 marks)

        b. Briefly describe the *participant information sheet* and *consent form,* which are two documents that help in ensuring ethical conduct in a research project.

(06 marks)

        c. Shiromi is a pure researcher who is studying *practices of the hotel industry* that maybe *harmful the community* living in areas surrounding the hotels. In this research she plans to *interview* some *employees of a few hotels*.

Explain a few practices Shiromi could adopt to *ensure the rights of these participants/respondents*.

(05 marks)

(Total 20 Marks)

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