

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

**Bachelor of Business Administration (Level II – Semester VI) Examination -
December, 2017**

HLM 2309 / MKT 2309 – Research Methods

Three (03) Hours

Answer Four (04) Questions in all, including Question No. 1 and any other Three (03)

1. Read the case and answer questions (a) to (h)

Nuwan is a student reading for a BBA degree. He is interested in researching about the effectiveness of using humour (e.g. funny pictures) in print advertisements. The research problem he has developed is “Does humour have an impact on the effectiveness of print advertisements?”

Based on a literature review, Nuwan has developed his *conceptual framework*. Accordingly he wants to test whether using *humour* in a print advertisement will have *a positive effect* on consumers’ *attitude towards the advertisement*. In other words, he wants to test whether consumers’ positive attitudes towards the advertisement will increase when there is humour in the advertisement compared to when there is no humour in the advertisement. Therefore there are two variables in his study as *humour* and *attitude towards the advertisement*.

Nuwan has also completed *operationalization*. Based on previous research he has identified that there are no *sub-variables* in the variable *attitude towards the advertisement*, and previous studies have used three *indicators* to measure this variable: whether consumers consider an advertisement as *pleasant vs. unpleasant*, *informative vs. uninformative*, and *effective vs. ineffective*. Nuwan intends to use *semantic differential* scales to *measure* these indicators.

Now Nuwan is in the *research design* stage of his research project. He plans to use an *experiment* as his research strategy. He plans to develop two identical press

advertisements similar in every way, but with one difference. One will have a humorous picture and the other will have a picture that is not funny. The advertisement will be for a soft drink that does not currently exist in the market. Nuwan will use a batch of university undergraduates to collect data. He plans to divide the class into two groups. One group (Group A) will be given the advertisement with the humorous picture and the other (Group B) will get the advertisement with the picture without humour. He will use a questionnaire to collect data about the participants' *attitude towards the advertisement* they see.

- a. *Identify the independent and dependent variables of Nuwan's research.*
(4 marks)
- b. *Identify two key components of the conceptual framework of a positivistic, quantitative study.*
(2 marks)
- c. *Draw a table to show how Nuwan plans to operationalise the variable 'attitude towards the advertisement'.*
(8 marks)
- d. *Identify four key components that are generally found in a research design.*
(4 marks)
- e. *Briefly explain how data is collected in relation to the independent and dependent variables when a researcher uses experiment as the research strategy. Use Nuwan's study as an example to illustrate your points.*
(8 marks)
- f. *Identify the experimental group and the control group of Nuwan's research.*
(4 marks)
- g. *Develop two semantic differential scales with seven points in order to measure the indicators 'Pleasant vs. Unpleasant' and 'Effective vs. Ineffective'.*
(4 marks)
- h. *If Nuwan uses the two scales you developed to collect data, what are the descriptive statistics he will be able to use in order to summarise the data? (Identify at least two.) Briefly justify your answer referring to the level of primary scales to which the semantic differential scale belongs.*
(6 marks)

(Total 40 marks)

2. Usually, in the problem definition process of a basic research, a researcher starts by identifying a *gap in the knowledge*.
- i. Briefly explain what is meant by a *gap in the knowledge* in the above statement and how a researcher can identify a knowledge gap.
(6 marks)
 - ii. In the problem definition process a researcher needs to present *two kinds of evidence* to justify the knowledge gap.
 - a. What are these *two kinds of evidence*?
(2 marks)
 - b. Describe the different ways in which these *two kinds of evidence* could be obtained.
(8 marks)
 - iii. Briefly describe (in one or two sentences) the purpose of dividing a broad research problem into a few *research objectives*.
(4 marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**

3. i. Differentiate between *primary* and *secondary* data (in one or two sentences).
(2 marks)
- ii. “Literature reviewed in a research project is not *secondary data*”. Briefly explain this statement.
(5 marks)
 - iii. In conducting *semi-structured interviews* researchers usually use an *interview guide* that has a list of *themes* to be covered rather than asking fixed questions from all participants. In order to obtain better data, researchers also use the *probing* technique in these interviews. Both these characteristics of *semi-structured interviews* help in achieving the aim of *interpretive* research.
 - a. Briefly explain what is meant by *probing*.
(4 marks)
 - b. Explain how using a list of *themes* instead of asking fixed questions from all participants, and using the *probing* technique could help in achieving the aim of *interpretive research*.
(9 marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**

4. i. *Identify two probability sampling techniques and two non-probability sampling techniques.*
- (4 marks)
- ii. “Using a *large sample* is not important in *interpretive* qualitative research. What is more important is including *information rich* cases in the sample”. *Explain* this statement with reference to the *aim* of *interpretive* research.
- (8 marks)
- iii. You are planning a research on how *Sri Lankan tourists visiting other countries* obtain information from travel advice websites such as TripAdvisor. You have decided to conduct some interviews for this research and plan to use the *snowball sampling* technique to select *some tourists who use such websites* in obtaining information.
- a. What is the *unit of analysis* in this research?
- (2 marks)
- b. In what kind of situations do researchers usually use the *snowball sampling* technique?
- (2 marks)
- c. *Describe* how you would use the *snowball sampling* technique to select the sample for the above project.
- (4 marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**

5. i. *Explain* the purpose of a research proposal.
- (6 marks)
- ii. *Significance, scope and limitations* of the research are three important sections in the first chapter of both the research proposal and the dissertation. *Briefly describe* what is included in each of these three sections.
- (9 marks)
- iii. *Briefly describe* two ethical issues that researchers need to pay attention to, when conducting research.
- (5 marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**
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