

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/ PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION
FINAL EXAMINATION - 2025
AFPA498/MSPA498 – RESEARCH METHORDS
DURATION - 03 HOURS



Date: 16.02.2025

Time : 1.30 p.m – 4.30 p.m

*Instructions: Answer question number one (01) in Part A and any four (04) questions in Part B.
 Start each answer from a new page
 Illegible handwriting is liable to loose marks.*

Part A

Question 01

Digital banking services are crucial for customer satisfaction as they provide convenience, speed, and accessibility, allowing customers to perform transactions anytime and anywhere. Features such as mobile banking, online fund transfers, bill payments, and real-time account monitoring enhance the user experience by reducing waiting times and eliminating the need for physical visits to branches. The leading commercial bank recently introduced a new banking app for its customers; however, the bank has observed that the newly introduced app is not being used by customers as expected. After reviewing customer feedback and survey results, the bank found that the primary reasons for dissatisfaction include slow response times, inconsistent service quality, and frequent technical issues with digital banking services. However, literature indicates that these factors influence customer trust, which in turn affects overall customer satisfaction.

Based on the above scenario answer the following questions

- (i) Formulate the research problem (02 Marks)
- (ii) Write down the specific research questions that would help you to address the research problem as stated in (i) above. (03 Marks)
- (iii) Write down the main objective and specific research objectives aligned with your research questions. (04 Marks)
- (iv) Identify the relevant variables in the above scenario. (03 Marks)
- (v) Classify the above variables from the viewpoint of causal relationships and provide reasons for classifying them as such variables. (05 Marks)
- (vi) Develop a conceptual framework for the study. (03 Marks)
- (vii) Develop suitable hypotheses based on the conceptual framework. (04 Marks)
- (viii) Select one of the constructs from the above scenario and explain the main steps for the operationalization of that construct. (04 Marks)

Part B

Question 02

- (i) What constitutes "research," and how does it differ from other forms of inquiry or information gathering? Explain with suitable examples. (08 Marks)
- (ii) What are the essential steps involved in the management research process, and why is it important to follow a structured approach to research in a management context? (10 Marks)

Question 03

- (i) What are the key strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and how do these factors influence their suitability for addressing different types of research questions in the social sciences? (10 Marks)
- (ii) What are the ethical considerations surrounding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in human resource management (HRM) researchers? (08 Marks)

Question 04

- (i) (a) Define a research hypothesis and explain its roles in scientific research. (06 Marks)
(b) Differentiate between a **directional hypothesis** and a **non-directional hypothesis** with appropriate examples (04 Marks)
- (ii) Briefly explain four scales of measurements with appropriate examples. (08 Marks)

Question 05

- (i) What is simple random sampling? Briefly explain how simple random sampling differs from stratified random sampling. (08 Marks)
- (ii) Marawila Investment Solutions, a financial advisory firm based in Marawila, is planning to expand its services to include online investment consultations. The managing director is interested in understanding the financial behaviors and preferences of potential clients in the digital space. To facilitate this expansion, the management of Marawila Investment Solutions expects to conduct a research study aimed at identifying factors influencing customer engagement with online investment services. This study will focus on understanding how various financial factors such as perceived value of services, trust in digital platforms, pricing models, and investment risk perceptions affect customers' decisions to engage with online financial advisory services.

You are required to select suitable methods for the following elements of the above research. Provide your justification.

- a) Strategy of inquiry (i.e. methodology)
- b) Data collection
- c) Sampling (10 Marks)

Question 06

- (i) Distinguish between the inductive and deductive approaches to research. (09 Marks)
- (ii) What is 'conflict of interest' in research? What strategies can be employed to mitigate or eliminate potential conflicts of interest? Briefly explain. (09 Marks)