



The Open University of Sri Lanka

Commonwealth Executive Master of Business/ Public Administration Degree

Final Examination- 2008

MCP2698 - Research Methodology

Duration: Three (03) Hours

**Date:** 21-09-2008

**Time:** 9.30 a.m.- 12.30 p.m.

**Instructions:**

Answer all questions appearing in part 1, and three (03) other questions from part 2. Illegible hand writing may cause loss of marks.

**Part 1**

**The HR Manager's Dilemma**

The HR managers of service sector organizations such as banks have been facing pressure from the top management to develop a methodology for improving and sustaining performance among the non-executive employees who are assigned repetitive jobs. Some of the employees in this category performed front office jobs involving customer relations while others performed routine tasks that came under back office operations. Having experienced a fairly high rate of staff turnover among non-executive employees during the past few years, the HR managers are of the view that recruiting employees to perform routine tasks and retaining such employees after a period of training were both difficult and expensive.

The records maintained by the HR departments of commercial banks, insurance and finance companies and some of the leasing companies indicated that about 30 per cent of the young school leavers recruited during the past two years for jobs involving repetitive tasks have left their employers within the first year itself. The HR managers are therefore considering various options to cut down the high turnover rate and motivate the employees to increase performance.

Outsourcing of routine tasks such as data entry and payroll work was becoming increasingly popular. Hence, the management took a decision to stop recruitment of staff to perform routine jobs and outsource such jobs to recognized private companies that handle outsourced business operations. Accordingly, several commercial banks and similar service organizations began to outsource back office work of routine nature to outside parties. This decision brought in a group of young men and women who are recent school leavers in to back office departments of banks and other companies engaged in finance, insurance etc. The HR managers found that the employers of these

young men and women have not issued them letters of appointment clearly stating the terms and conditions of employment. Nor have they been given an undertaking of permanent employment in the future. As per the service contract between the outsource services providing company and their client organizations such as banks, the party that employed the youth is expected to give the required training as well as other facilities to the employees who are assigned outsourced jobs. The HR managers ensured that this condition of the contract is duly fulfilled.

The youth recruited to perform routine back office work that has been outsourced are much similar to the young permanent employees performing the front office operations in banks and other service sector companies. These two groups of employees are similar in outlook, work habits as well as in attitudes. It has been observed that the young men and women performing outsourced jobs mixed well with the rest and they were keen to finish days work early as per the targets. However, after a few months the line managers noticed that attendance of some of the young employees performing outsourced jobs was becoming irregular. There were complaints from the supervisors that their work is being affected due to disturbances such as frequent mobile phone calls. The situation became worse when several employees performing outsourced jobs started to leave their place of work with little or no prior notice. The HR managers, having been informed what is going on, felt some what helpless as they did not have authority to intervene directly and correct if there are anomalies in salary and other payments made to these youth compared with their permanent counterparts performing front office jobs. The HR managers thought it is necessary to investigate the problem in detail before taking any corrective action.

1. Based on the information given in the above case define the research problem and state one or more research questions. (10 marks)
2. Conceptualize the research problem using appropriate theory or concepts in the area of Organization Behavior. (15 marks)
3. State two hypotheses which can be derived from conceptualization of the problem, and operationally define the variables that are included in your hypotheses. (15 marks)

## Part 2

4. Clarify what is meant by inductive and deductive inquiry paradigms and explain how the two research paradigms differ from each other in terms of approach to measurement of managerial issues. (20 marks)
5. What is a literature survey? Explain the purpose of literature survey and how it will be applied in developing your MBA research project. (20 marks)

6. Explain how the questionnaire survey method will be applied for collecting reliable and valid data covering a sample of employees. Use illustrative examples of questions to support your answer. (20 marks)
7. Under what conditions should a researcher apply the case study method? Briefly outline the multiple methods of data collection adopted by a researcher using the case study approach. (20 marks)
8. What is the meaning of empirical validity? Taking examples from your MBA research project, explain how you propose to establish empirical validity. (20 marks)

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