



**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
FINAL EXAMINATION - 2012/13  
MCP 2698 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY  
DURATION: THREE (03) HOURS**

**Date: 03.08.2013**

**Time: 9.30 am - 12.30 pm**

**Answer Question Number ONE (01) in Part A and any THREE (03)  
Questions from Part B**

**Part A**

01. "The new paradigm in social research that has arisen during the last half century, largely in reaction to the application of positivism to the social sciences, stems from the view that the **world and 'reality' are not objective and exterior, but that they are socially constructed and given meaning by people** (Husserl, 1946)".

"As Easterby-Smith, Thrope and Lowe (1991) relating this new paradigm to management research states...reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. Hence the task of the social scientist should not be to gather facts and measure how often certain patterns occur, but to appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience. One should therefore try to understand and explain why people have different experience, rather than search for external causes and fundamental laws to explain their behaviour. Human action arises from the sense that people make of different situations, rather than as a direct response from external stimuli (Easterby-Smith, Thrope and Lowe, 1991: 24)'.

**Critically analyze these statements.** Your answer should consist of: a theoretically informed discussion of the positivist and post positivist paradigms as applies to management research; the strengths and weaknesses embedded in each of these philosophical stands as argued by different theorists and a statement of where *you* stand in this theoretical debate with appropriate justification.

(40 Marks)

**Part B**

02. "The formulation of a research problem is the first and most important step of the research process. ... The research problem serves as the foundation of a research study". As Kumar (2011) states, most research problems in social sciences revolve around the concept of four Ps i.e. people, problems, programmes and phenomenon.

Do you agree with the above statements? Why or why not? Elaborate your answer citing four (04) research problems stemming from issues related to people, problems, programmes and phenomenon respectively.

(20 Marks)

03. "Reviewing literature is an integral part of the research process that plays several important functions and makes significant contributions to your research study".

Identify four (04) specific ways in which a literature review may contribute towards your research study. Explain your answer in relation to your *own* research study.

(20 Marks)

04. "A hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables'. ... The wordings of a hypothesis must have certain attributes that makes it easier to ascertain its validity".

Explain the above statement. Use examples related to management research to exemplify your answer.

(20 Marks)

05. "The choice between a questionnaire and an interview schedule is important and should be considered thoroughly as the strengths and weaknesses of the two methods can affect the validity of the findings".

Identify the criteria to be considered in selecting between an interview schedule and a questionnaire. Elaborate your answer drawing in practical examples of research designing.

(20 Marks)

06. "Flexibility, freedom and spontaneity in contents and structure underpin an interaction in all types of unstructured interviews".

Identify four (04) types of unstructured interviews commonly used in qualitative researching and briefly explain each.

(20 marks)

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