

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
FINAL EXAMINATION - 2017  
MCP 2698 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY  
DURATION: THREE (03) HOURS



Date: 26.07.2017

Time: 1.30 p.m - 4.30 p.m

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

Part A

01. Read the following case and answer the questions given at the end.

**Strategic issues in the UK Brewing Industry**

Steve was thinking about how to write his research proposal. A few weeks earlier he had been allocated a project tutor on the basis of his wanting to do something in the area of strategic management. Now his project tutor had emailed him and suggested they meet early next week to discuss Steve's ideas for the research topic. He asked Steve to bring along his research proposal. Steve started to look through his lecture notes from the Strategic Management module, and the following extract caught his eye:

As companies reach maturity in their product's life cycle a number of occurrences tend to become commonplace. Competition increases, international competitors achieve market entry, overcapacity within the industry increases, profit margins in gross profit terms generally begin to fall, and acquisitions and mergers take place. Certainly within the UK marketplace these trends have recently occurred in a number of industries: banking and brewing would be two good examples.

Steve decided that he would look at these ideas by undertaking 'in-depth' research on the UK brewing industry. Steve used the Financial Times CD-ROMs available in his university library to produce a time line of what had happened in the industry since 1989 and added a few notes regarding what he intended to do for his research project.

This was what he produced:

**Changes in the United Kingdom brewing industry: A research proposal by Steve Smith**

There have been numerous changes to the UK brewing industry since the Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report of 1989:

<b>Year</b>	<b>What Happened</b>
1989	Monopolies & Mergers Commission restricted brewers to 2000 public houses plus 50% of their original holdings. This ruling was modified in 1997; however, the commencement of dismantling of vertical integration within the industry had commenced by that date. This dramatically changed the distribution system, brewers having sold off many of their public houses.
1995	Scottish & Newcastle purchases Courage; now known as Scottish Courage it becomes the largest brewer in the UK.
1996	Allied Domecq decides to sell its 50% share of Carlsberg-Tetley to Bass; merger not allowed by Monopolies & Mergers Commission as it is considered to be anti-competitive. This decision appears to be instrumental to a change of strategy at Bass plc. It sells its brewing interests in 1999 unconditionally to Belgian brewer Interbrew. Bass plc is renamed Six Continents and refocuses its operations in the hotel business.
1999-2002	Interbrew grows further by the acquisition of Whitbread's brewing division and Becks lager. The UK Monopolies & Mergers Commission orders Interbrew to sell Bass brewing. After appeal this is reduced, allowing Interbrew to retain some of the Bass brands including Tennents Scottish Lager. However, it is ordered to reduce its monopoly in the lager market, resulting in the Carling division of Bass brewers being sold to the American brewers Coors, with completion in February 2002.

### **Notes**

The major growth trends within the industry are:

- increased sales of brewery products by supermarkets;
- growth of personal imports;
- traditional town and country style public houses closing rapidly;
- a massive growth in dining out, with town centre theme pub chains growing in popularity.

However, this is no more than a change of buying and lifestyle habits. The brewing production part of the industry currently reflects overcapacity, is experiencing low profit margins, and is in the mature part of its life cycle.

There is a wealth of material on UK brewing, particularly on the Web.

### **Approach**

I am thinking of using the Competitive Advantage model developed by M. E. Porter (Competitive Strategy, Free Press, 1980) to help explain the competitive situation.

Convinced he had a solid proposal, Steve attended the appointment with his project tutor. The project tutor was obviously interested in Steve's ideas but was concerned about Steve's lack of clear thought and the fact that he had still to develop a project proposal. The project tutor suggested that Steve's perspective of the industry appeared to be extremely vague, and asked him to define his intended project area more clearly, thinking not only in terms of the industry but also in relation to academic theories and research in the area of company

consolidation. He also said that Steve must think carefully about the research strategy and data collection techniques he was going to use, keeping in mind that it was a course requirement to collect some primary data for the project. They then spent 15 minutes discussing what Steve's research proposal should look like. At the end of the meeting Steve's project tutor asked him to produce a clearly thought proposal prior to their next tutorial, arguing that, until this was done, there was little point in their meeting again.

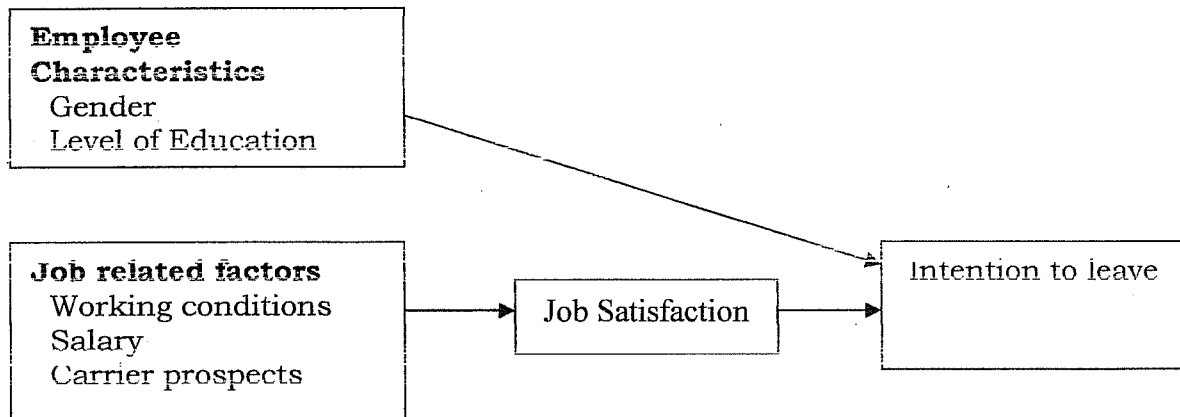
**Questions:**

1. Suggest two possible research questions based on the information collected by Steve on the brewing industry.  
(8 marks)
2. What criteria would you use to assess whether or not these research questions form the basis of a good research topic?  
(8 marks)
3. How do you think Steve should address the requirement for collecting at least some primary data?  
(8 marks)
4. Outline the structure that Steve's research proposal should take, indicating:
  - a. those areas where Steve will need to do more work;
  - b. how the content will be formulated to address the questions you have chosen in 1 above.  
(8x2 = 16 marks)

Adopted from: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill: Research Methods for Business Students, 6th edition, Additional Case Studies © Pearson Education Limited 2012

**Part B**

02. A researcher who is interested in studying employee's intention to leave their respective organizations in the Information Technology industry reviewed the relevant literature and identified some important variables that influence employee turnover in IT industry. Based on this understanding, the following conceptual model has been developed.



- i) What might be the problem statement or problem definition for the given situation? (02 Marks)
  - ii) Identify the variables in this model. (03 Marks)
  - iii) Classify the above variables from the view point of causal relationship and provide reasons for your classifications. (05 Marks)
  - iv) Develop at least three different hypotheses and propose appropriate statistical techniques to test the hypotheses and explain them briefly. (05 Marks)
  - v) Highlighting the major steps in operationalize a concept, explain how you operationalize "job satisfaction" in the given study above. (05 Marks)
03. i) What is meant by hypotheses? Explain. (05 Marks)
- ii) "What are the different types of hypotheses? (05Marks)
- iii) Explain how hypotheses will be an important guide to the researcher in finding a solution for a research study. (10 Marks)

04. i) "The formulation of research problem is the first and most important step in a research process". Do you agree? Explain using examples. (10 Marks)
- ii) Discuss the major factors to be considered in selecting a research problem. (10 Marks)
05. i) Explain why researchers use a sample rather than collecting data from the entire population. (05 Marks)
- ii) "Sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of the right elements from the population". Highlighting the major steps in sampling process, explain the above statement. (06 Marks)
- iii) The management of a local shopping complex wants to determine the monthly house hold expense on shopping in department stores. Management wants to be 95% confident of the findings and keeps the margin of error as plus or minus Rs. 600/=. A pilot study reveals the standard deviation of the population to be Rs.4500/=. What sample size should be used to determine the average monthly house hold expenditure? The associated t - value is 1.96. (04 Marks)
- iv) What is meant by "representativeness" in a sample? Explain in what sense a simple random sample is representative of the population? (05 Marks)
06. (i) "Experimental design is frequently used in quantitative research compared to qualitative research." Explain why it is so. (10 marks)
- (ii) Describe the various methods of collecting primary data and comment on their relative advantages and disadvantages. (10 marks)

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