

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**  
**MA DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND PUBLIC POLICY 2013/2014**  
**MARGA-OUSL COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME – LEVEL VIII**  
**SSP2132/SSP2106 – ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**FINAL EXAMINATION – 2013**



**DURATION: THREE (03) HOURS**

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**Date: 15.12.2013**

**Time: 09.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.**

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**Answer four (04) questions. Select at least one (01) question from each part. Each question carries 25 marks.**

**PART 1**

1. 'Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of methods in natural sciences to the study of social reality'. Discuss the pros and cons of positivistic social research in the light of this statement.
2. Hughes argues that reality does not exist within a vacuum; its composition is influenced by its context, and many constructions of reality are therefore possible. Explain the rationale behind this post-positivist thinking.
3. Clarke argues that research methods can be classified at different levels, and the most basic level is the philosophical level. Discuss.

**PART 2**

4. (a) Write down three research questions which require qualitative inquiry.  
(b) Explain the different qualitative data sources and methods used for data collection
5. Using a hypothetical example, discuss the method of data analysis and presentation of evidence in qualitative research.
6. 'Complex development issues can be studied only if disciplinary boundaries are crossed and if multidisciplinary perspectives are sought and formed'. Design a research framework for analyzing educational reforms in Sri Lanka.

**PART 3**

7. (a) Distinguish the following concepts with suitable examples.
- i. A parameter and a sample statistic
  - ii. Type 1 and type 2 errors
  - iii. The standard error and the standard deviation
- (b) "A correlation is a statistical device that measures the strength or degree of a supposed linear association between two or more variables". Explain.
8. (a) Formulate three testable hypotheses. Identify independent and dependent variables in each hypothesis and explain the nature of relationship that exists between these variables.
- (b) "The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) represents a theory that has been presented, either because it is believed to be true or because it is to be used as a basis for an argument". Clarify.
9. A regression line is plotted through data on life expectancy in years, and government expenditure on health care per head of population (in thousands of rupees) for a group of people. Life expectancy ( $Y$ ) is considered the dependent variable and expenditure ( $X$ ) the independent variable. The equation for the regression line is

$$Y = 40 + 0.7X$$

- (a) What will life expectancy be if the government spends no money on health?
- (b) What will life expectancy be if the government spends Rs. 30, 000 per head on health?
- (c) Can you say that there is a strong relationship between the two variables?

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