

30

KIBABII UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR FIRST YEAR SECOND SEMESTER

**FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT/MASTER OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT &
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH IT**

COURSE CODE: HRM 890/MBA 809/ MBT 829

COURSE TITLE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DATE: 11th MAY 2016 TIME: 2.00PM

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Answer question **ONE** (compulsory) and any other **THREE** questions
- Question **ONE** attracts **40 marks**
- Time allowed is **THREE** hours
- All other questions attract equal marks (**20 marks**)

QUESTION ONE

Read the case study below and answer questions that follow:

The case research examined in this paper was carried out for the lead author's doctoral thesis. It was predicted that the advent of electronic marketplaces would revolutionize current business practice. These predictions were supported by economic theory and academic research into the conceptual advantages of electronic marketplaces. The Electronic Market Hypothesis ('EMH', Malone *et al.*, 1987) posits that IT will produce greater market governance through increased automation and the disintermediation of the middleman. Yet, while the economic rationale for the development of an electronic marketplace is in principle sound, hard evidence for such a definite trend towards greater market governance remains elusive, and academic research carried out hitherto suggests that additional variables must be considered and further studies are needed in different settings in order to fully understand how IT may affect market structures.

The doctoral thesis looked for evidence in support of the EMH in the steel industry. The study focused on the global physical Business-to-Business ('B2B') spot steel trading market, that is to say, business which is not under (short or long-term) contract. The empirical research was a longitudinal study tracking the evolution of steel electronic commerce between December 1998, when galvanized coils first changed hands via Metal-Site, arguably the first steel electronic marketplace, and the summer 2007. Longitudinal studies are observational, and the events examined in this study were observed during the author's ten years in the trading arm of a large industry incumbent.

Between 1998 and 2000 it was predicted that the advent of steel electronic marketplaces would lead to the disintermediation of the middleman, namely, the steel trading companies (Forrester, 1998; Andersen Consulting, 1999a; 1999b; Merrill Lynch, 2000; Best and Frazer, 1999; World Steel Dynamics, 1999, and others). Many trading platforms were established during the 'dot.com bubble', but there was no mass migration to anybody's site and none attracted paying customers in any great number.

In the winter of 2000 the lead author's employer also began to investigate the opportunity for the establishment of an e-commerce venture targeted to serve the intercontinental steel trading market. The lead author was seconded to the project in April 2000, and assigned to investigate the aspects related to order fulfilment/logistics. Over a period of eighteen months a number of activities (meetings, workshops, and presentations) took place, involving representatives from the steel community and banking, insurance and logistics sectors. The lead author was a participant observer in these activities and had unlimited access to relevant information for the duration of the project. Throughout the research project and subsequently she continued to work in the industry as a trader and a manager, and witnessed the launch and demise of other B2B initiatives. The professional experience stimulated the intellectual curiosity of the lead author; her MBA dissertation investigated the impact of e-commerce on the steel industry. This

investigation raised a number of issues, which reasons of space and time constraints prevented the author from exploring. Thus, the PhD thesis builds upon the previous work by the author. In 2006 the lead author started utilising the services of electronic marketplaces to dispose off defective/reject steel lots, gaining valuable insight into the workings of online auctions.

Thus, the study represents the contribution of an industry practitioner and provides a unique insight into a real-world setting. A case method was adopted because it permitted the collection of rich qualitative data through participant observation, and allowed the author to capitalise on her experience in the field to contribute new insight and a different perspective to the subject matter. Case study research relies on multiple sources of evidence and data collection techniques.

- a) Briefly explain the rationale of this case study **(5 marks)**
- b) Formulate the research titles for the MBA and PhD dissertations; state their independent and dependent variables **(6 marks)**
- c) What are longitudinal studies? How were these studies relevant to this case study? **(4 marks)**
- d) What was the role of the lead author in the study **(4 marks)**
- e) Formulate any **four research** hypotheses in this case study **(4 marks)**
- f) Case study research relies on multiple sources of evidence and data collection techniques. Suggest and explain any three possible sources for the case study research **(6 marks)**
- g) Briefly explain how the qualitative data was collected in this case study **(6 marks)**
- h) Ethical behaviour is central to any research activity. What would be some of the ethical issues you would have advised the lead author to use in this case study? **(5 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

Tourist Management College is an educational institution based in Kakamega Sub-County. It has a workforce of 1,225 employees distributed in the various departments. In the last few years of its establishment, it has experienced an exodus of students to other institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, the institution has witnessed an acute labour turnover. These have worried the management. You have been contracted by the College to conduct a research to establish the causes of these problems. Using this hypothetical information, answer the following questions:

- a) What are the **five** steps that are necessary to carry out this research effectively? Explain these steps briefly **(10 marks)**
- b) Formulate any **four research** hypotheses that will guide the study **(4 marks)**

- c) Discuss the steps a researcher needs to follow in constructing a questionnaire for this research study **(6 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- a) Briefly describe **Four (4)** types measurement scale used in research **(12 marks)**
b) Explain any **Three (3)** types of research designs **(3 marks)**
c) Of what value is the research design in research methodology? **(5 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

Briefly explain the role of the following concepts as used in research methodology:

- a) i). Research hypotheses **(3 marks)**
ii). Primary and secondary data **(2 marks)**
c) "Reviewing literature can be time-consuming, daunting and frustrating, but is also rewarding".
Justify this statement **(5 marks)**
b). Enumerate and discuss any **Five (5)** important sample designs (sampling procedures) that could be used in Kibabii University during research **(10 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

- i). Describe the **Five (5)** steps used in the formulation of a research problem **(10 marks)**
ii). Writing a research proposal is a daunting task to master's students pursuing degrees in their various fields. Discuss the **Five (5)** challenges a master's student goes through in writing a research proposal **(10 marks)**.

QUESTION SIX

Differentiate between the following terms

- i). Internal validity and External validity **(6 marks)**
ii). Randomization and statistics **(4 marks)**
iii). Probabilistic (or Scientific) and Non-Probabilistic (Non-Scientific) **(6 marks)**
iv). Accuracy of Measurements and Precision of measurement **(4)**