# Mid-West University

## **Examinations Management Office**

Surkhet, Nepal

### Chance Examination-2079

## Master of Business Administration (MBA)

### Semester - III

Subject: Production and Operation Management	Course Code: MGT 532
Full Marks: 100 Pass Marks: 50	Time: 4: 00 Hours

# SECTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (1 × 20 = 20 MARKS)/ (TIME: 20 MINUTES)

Tick the best answers.

- 1. Which one is the best concept of Batch Production System?
  - a. A form of manufacturing in which the job passes through the functional department in lots or batches and characterized by the manufacture of limited number of products produced at regular intervals.
  - b. Arranged as per the sequence of production operations from the first operations to the finished product.
  - c. Production of discrete parts or assemblies using a continuous process is called mass production.
  - d. Manufacturing of one or few quantity of products designed and produced as per the specification of customers within preferred time and cost.
- 2. In which strategy operating decisions are centralized and headquarters coordinates the standardization?
  - a. nternational strategy.

c. Multi-domestic strategy.

R.No ......

b. Global strategy.

- d. Transnational strategy.
- 3. All of the followings are major external sources of new-product ideas, except.....
  - a. good ideas come from watching and listening to customers
  - b. surveys or focus groups to learn about consumer needs and wants
  - c. competitors as source of new-product ideas
  - d. creative approaches, including both "method and madness" in helping them to generate new product ideas
- 4. Do you know the term 'Poka-Yoke' in TQM?
  - a. It is a type of Poka-Yoke that lists the steps needed to ensure consistency and completeness in a task.
  - b. It is means of ensuring that an operation is producing at the quality level expected.
  - c. It is a foolproof device or technique that ensures production of good units every period of time.
  - d. It is an inspection that classifies items as being either good or defective.
- 5. Which one of the statements is correct for Six Sigma?
  - A. It describes a process, product and service with an extremely high capability.
  - B. It is a program designed to reduce defects to save time, improve quality and lower costs.
  - C. It is a strategy because it follows on total customer satisfaction.
  - D. It is model known as DMAIC (Define, Measures, Analysis, Improves and Controls).
  - a. Both A and B

c. Both C and D

b. Both B and C

- d. All A, B, C and D
- 6. In which location has problem solving method have an objective to determine the best pattern of shipments from several points of supply (sources) to several points of demand (destinations) so as to minimize total production and transportation costs of the business?
  - a. Center-of-gravity method

c. Transportation method

b. Cost-volume analysis method

d. Factor rating method

	made to provide better customer service and trim
Julie Newmar recognizes that her company	needs to provide better customer service and trim
distribution costs through teamwork, both this	ide the company and among all the marketing channel
organizations. Julie will begin the practice of	c. integrated logistics management
a. intermediation	-
b. customer relationship management	d. supply chain management
8. 'Buffer stock' is the level of stock:	
a. Half of the actual stock	
b. At which the ordering process should start	
<ul> <li>e. Minimum stock level below which actual st</li> </ul>	ock should not fall
d. Maximum stock in inventory -	
9. Operations management is applicable	
<ul> <li>a. to services exclusively</li> </ul>	
b. mostly to the service sector	
<ul> <li>e. mostly to the manufacturing sector</li> </ul>	
d. to all firms, whether manufacturing or servi	ce
10. "Get out production, cut the price"- Philosophy	by Henry Ford is an example of
a. production concept	c. marketing concept
b. product concept	d. selling concept
11. If demand in units is 18,000, relevant ordering	g cost for each year is Rs. 150 and an order quantity is
1500 then annual relevant ordering cost could b	be
a. Rs. 200	c. Rs. 180
b. Rs. 190	d. Rs. 160
12. "Quality is defined by the customer" relates to:	
<ul> <li>a. an unrealistic definition of quality</li> </ul>	
b. a user-based definition of quality	
<ul> <li>a product-based definition of quality</li> </ul>	
d a manufacturing-based definition of quality	,
13. Three factors critical to productivity improve	ement are dependent on productivity variables. These
variables are	
a. labor, capital and financial resources	c. labor, capital and management
b bard work brand name and capital	d. technology, labor and capital
14. A listing of products in descending order of th	neir individual dollar contribution to the firm, as well as
the total annual contribution of the product is k	nown as
a. product by value analysis.	c. cost by value analysis
b. service by value analysis	d. demand by value analysis
15. DFMA stands for	
a. design for manufacture and assembly	c. design for material assembly
b design for machine and assembly	d. design for method and assembly
16. What is the capacity a firm can expect to ac	chieve, given its product mix, methods of scheduling,
maintenance, and standards of quality?	
a. Design capacity	c. Utilization
1 DOC stine composity	d. Efficiency
17 The location of competing companies near ea	ch other, often because of critical mass of information,
talent, venture capital, or natural resources is k	nown as
a. factor-rating method.	c. proximity to customers
b. proximity to suppliers	d. clustering
	공연장에 선생님은 그 집에 나타면 그 없는 것이 하지 않는 것이 없어 그 것 같아. 그렇게 되었어 있는 것이라고 그런 말라고 있는데 그리고 있다면 나타를 하고 있다.

- , 18. ...... is concerned with determining the quantity and timing of production of the intermediate future from 3 to 18 months ahead.
  - a. Material Requirement Planning
  - b. Enterprise Resource Planning
  - c. Manufacturing Resource Planning
  - d. Aggregate Planning
  - 19. Identify method for dividing on-hand inventory into three classifications based on annual dollar volume.
    - a. XYZ analysis

c. ABC analysis

b. Alpha beta gamma analysis

- d. None of the above
- 20. The management of activities that procure material and services, transforming them into intermediate goods and final products, and delivering the products, and delivering the products through distributed system is known as......
  - a. supply chain management
  - b. customer relationship management
  - c. partner management
  - d. distribution management

Surkhet, Nepal Final Examination-2079 Master of Business Administration (MBA) Semester - III

Subject: Production and Operation Management

Full Marks: 100 Pass Marks: 50

Course Code: MGT 532

Time: 4: 00 Hours

You are required to answer in your own words as far as applicable. The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

# SECTION B: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (5X6 = 30 MARKS)

#### Answer any FIVE questions:

- 1. What roles do operations managers play in addressing the contemporary issues of service quality management in Hospitality industry of Nepal? Explain in detail. [6]
- 2. Briefly describe the strategic importance of aggregate planning on production and operations. How does aggregate planning differ from capacity planning? [3+3]
- 3. How is service designed? Is product design more complicated than service design? Explain with appropriate examples. [3+3]
- 4. How can you define the term 'Six Sigma' in manufacturing industry? Point out the strategic importance of Six Sigma. [2+4]
- 5. What are the three specific ways in which computer-aided design (CAD) benefits the design engineer?
- 6. Explain with an example how improving quality can lead to reduce costs? [6]
- 7. What are the assumptions of break-even analysis? Ram Sharma has bottle packaging business in Nepalgunj. His annual fixed cost is Rs 4.50 per package. The selling price will be Rs 12.50 per package. What is the break-even point in Rupees? What is the break-even in units? [2+2+2]

# SECTION C: LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (2X15 = 30 MARKS)

## Answer any TWO questions:

- 8. "Manufacturers locate near their resources, retailers locate near their customers". Discuss this statement, with reference to the proximity-to-markets arguments. Can you think of a counter example in each case? Support your choices.
- 9. Define process layout. What are the advantages and disadvantages of process layout? Try to remember the local restaurants you visited recently. Sketch its layout and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

  [3+6+6]

[3+0+0]

[5+5+5]

10. You are given the following details of ABC project:

Activity	Preceding	Time in
Activity	activity	days
	donvity	40
Α		70
В	-	40
C	AB	30
D	В.	
E	A	20
	C	10
F	EF	50
G	DF	60
H		30
I	GH .	40
J	<u> </u>	- 10

a. Draw the CPM diagram

#### SECTION D: CASE STUDY (20 MARKS)

11. Read a case given below and answer the following questions:

### How Starbucks Growth Destroyed Brand Value

In February 2007, a leaked internal memo written by founder Howard Schultz showed that that he recognized the problem that his own growth strategy had created: "Stores no longer have the soul of the past and reflect a chain of stores vs. the warm feeling of a neighborhood store." Starbucks tried to add value through innovation, offering wi-fi service, creating and selling its own music. More recently, Starbucks attempted to put the focus back on coffee, revitalizing the quality of its standard beverages. But none of these moves addressed the fundamental problem: Starbucks is a mass brand attempting to command a premium price for an experience that is no longer special. Either you have to cut price (or that implies a commensurate cut in the cost structure) or you have to cut distribution to restore the exclusivity of the brand. Expect the 600 store closings to be the first of a series of downsizing announcements. Sometimes, in the world of marketing, less is more.

Schultz sought, admirably, to bring good coffee and the Italian coffee house experience to the American mass market. Wall Street bought into the vision of Starbucks as the "third place" after home and work. New store openings and new product launches fueled the stock price. But sooner or later chasing quarterly earnings growth targets undermined the Starbucks brand in three ways.

First, the early adopters who valued the club-like atmosphere of relaxing over a quality cup of coffee found themselves in a minority. To grow, Starbucks increasingly appealed to grab and go customers for whom service meant speed of order delivery rather than recognition by and conversation with a barista. Starbucks introduced new store formats like Express to try to cater to this second segment without undermining the first. But many Starbucks veterans have now switched to Peets, Caribou and other more exclusive brands.

Second, Starbucks introduced many new products to broaden its appeal. These new products undercut the integrity of the Starbucks brand for coffee purists. They also challenged the baristas who had to wrestle with an ever-more-complicated menu of drinks. With over half of customers customizing their drinks, baristas hired for their social skills and passion for coffee, no longer had time to dialogue with customers. The brand experience declined as waiting times increased. Moreover, the price premium for a Starbucks coffee seemed less justifiable for grab and go customers as McDonald's and Dunkin Donuts improved their coffee offerings at much lower prices.

Third, opening new stores and launching a blizzard of new products create only superficial growth. Such strategies take top management's eye off of improving same store sales year-on-year. This is the heavy lifting of retailing, where a local store manager has to earn brand loyalty and increase purchase frequency in his neighborhood one customer at a time. That store manager's efforts are undercut when additional stores are opened nearby. Eventually, the point of saturation is reached and cannibalization of existing store sales undermines not just brand health but also manager morale.

None of this need have happened if Starbucks had stayed private and grown at a more controlled pace. To continue to be a premium-priced brand while trading as a public company is very challenging. Tiffany faces a similar problem. That's why many luxury brands like Prada remain family businesses or are controlled by private investors. They can stay small, exclusive and premium-priced by limiting their distribution to selected stores in the major international cities.

#### **Questions:**

- a. Discuss the growth strategy based problems faced by Starbucks. Do you believe that all the companies which focus on product strategy will face the same kind of fate as Starbucks faced because of growth strategy?

  [4+4]
- b. "The early adopters who valued the club-like atmosphere of relaxing over a quality cup of coffee found themselves in a minority." Explain this statement.
- c. Discuss and develop the strategic plan to overcome the challenges faced by Starbucks according to this case.

[6]

# Surkhet, Nepal

# Chance Examination-2079

# Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Semester - III

	,	•	R.No
•		orporate Law	Course Code: MGT 5.
Full N	Marks	s: 100 Pass Marks: 50	Time: 4:00 Hours
	SE	CTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (1 × 20	= 20 MARKS)/ (TIME: 20 MINUTES)
Tick t	he be	est answers.	
	1.	Minimum number of members in the case of public compa	
		a. 1	c. 5
		b. 2	d. 7
	2.	Transfer of shares in the partnership firm is:	
		a. restricted	c. prohibited
		b. freely transferable	d. nothing can be said
	3.	Generally liability in partnership firm is:	
		a. limited	c. situation does not arise
		b. unlimited	d. nothing can be said
	4.	An agreement consists of reciprocal promises between at l	least:
		a. Four parties.	c. Two parties.
		b. Three parties.	d. One party
	5.	The executive power is exercised by the	in Nepal.
		a. government	c. parliament
		b. judiciary	d. department
	6.	The process of investment of foreign investment in Nepal	is through:
		a. equity share	c. reinvestment of earning
		b. loan and loan facility	d. all of the above
	7.	The role of the arbitrator is:	
		a. facilitator	c. supervisor
		b.director	d. discussion maker
	8.	Which one of the following statements is true?	
		a. Consideration must result in a benefit to both parties.	
		b. Past consideration is no consideration in Nepal.	
		c. Consideration must be adequate.	
		d. Consideration must be something which a promisor is a	not already bound to do.
	9	The notice of annual general meeting must be given to the shareholders at least	
		a. 15 days ahead	c. 35 days ahead
		b. 21 days ahead	d. One week ahead
	10	). What are the types of liquidation?	
		a. Mandatory and voluntary	c. Regulatory and proceedings
		b. Compulsory and mandatory	d. Compulsory and voluntary

11. What does ADR stand for:	
a. Alternative Dispute Resolution	c. Alternative Disaster Record
b. Alternate Dispute Reconciliation	d. Alternative Dispute Ruling
12. Industrial rights are:	
a. copyright and patent	c. design, patent and trademark
b. copyright, patent and trademark	d. copyright
13. 100% foreign investment is allowed in Nepal.	
a. True	c. Not in all sectors
b. False	d. None of the above
14. The primary function of enacting law is:	
a. parliament	c. administrative agencies
b. election commission	d. tribunals
15. The role of the mediator is as:	
a. facilitator	c. rational
b. director	d. discussion maker
16. Decision of arbitration is known as;	
a. verdict	c. precedent
b. award	d. order
17. Patent can be renewed in years in a row.	
a. 7	c. 9
b. 5	d. 6
18. Competition Promotion and Market Protection Act pr	
a. competition	c. growth
b. production .	d. monopoly
19. Corporate personality means;	
1. distinct personality from its shareholders and direct	ors
2.personality of shareholders	
3.personality of employees	
4. personality of board of directors	
20. Repatriation refers to:	c. loan money
a. taking investment/earning back	d. selling your investment
b. additional investment	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

Surkhet, Nepal Chance Examination-2079 Master of Business Administration (MBA) Semester - III

Subject: Corporate Law

Course Code: MGT 535

Full Marks: 100 Pass Marks: 50

Time: 4:00 Hours

You are required to answer in your own words as far as applicable. The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

		SECTION B: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (5X6 = 30 MARKS)	And the second s
Ans	wer	any FIVE questions:	
	1.	What is law? Write down its sources.	[3+3]
	2.	What is foreign investment? In what areas does Nepal not allow for foreign investment?	[2+4]
		Define arbitration. Write down the roles and duties of an arbitrator.	[2+4]
	4.	Write short notes (on any Two):	[3+3]
		a. Private Company.	
		b. Void contract	
		c. Mediation	
	5.	Point out the advantages and disadvantages of alternative dispute resolutions.	[3+3]
		How can an author protect his/her copyright? Explain	[6]
Ą		What are the rules of a valid offer? Explain	[6]
5772	CONTRACTOR	The second secon	

#### SECTION C: LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (2X15 = 30 MARKS)

Answer any TWO questions:

- 8. Explain the procedures of an incorporation of a new company in Nepal under the Company Act, 2063. [15]
- 9. In how many ways can an intellectual property be protected? Explain your answers with types of intellectual property. [7+8]
- 10. If you want to choose dispute settlement process between alternative dispute settlement and regular court proceedings, which one will you choose and why? [15]

## SECTION D: CASE STUDY (20 MARKS)

11. Read the Case given below and answer the following questions:

Mero Inc. is a oil manufacturing company registered in Delaware State, the United States of America. Mero business is spread all over the world except in Nepal. Mr. Jack Brown is Executive Chairman of Mero Inc. Mr. Brown is on holiday with his family members (his wife, his 10 and 8 years old sons) in Nepal. They are all trekking in Annapurna Base Camp.

During the trek Mr. Brown meet you. You are also doing business in Nepal. You have a investment company in Nepal. Mr. Brown tells that he really liked Nepal and would be interested to doing business in Nepal by bringing foreign investment. Mr. Brown requested you to make him understand foreign investment prospective in Nepal. He wants to understand if foreigners are allowed to invest in Nepal and if they can in how many ways of foreign investment is permissible. He was also interested in understanding if foreigners are allowed to get work permit and work in Nepal. Can investment money be repatriated? If everything goes well, Mr. Brown will be producing Mero oil in Nepal in joint venture with your company.

You as a businessman in Nepal, it is a good prospect for you to work with Mr. Brown. You do not want to lose this opportunity. You want to convince Mr. Brown to invest in Nepal by not being untruthful and lying but explaining exiting process, laws and situation of Nepal. So you have to following things to be explained to Mr. Brown:

a. Restriction on foreigners to invest in Nepal

[5]

b. Ways of foreign investment in Nepal

[5]

- e. Work permit for foreign workers focusing on restriction of number of years to work in Nepal.[5]
- d. Repatriation of foreign investment

[5]

Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act, 2075 and Labor Act 2074 are to be taken into consideration while answering the above questions.

THE END

# Mid-West University

# **Examinations Management Office**

Surkhet, Nepal

# Chance Examination-2079

# Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Semester - III

	R.No
ubject: International Business Strategy	Course Code: MGT 530
full Marks: 100 Pass Marks: 50	Time: 4: 00 Hours
SECTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE Q	UESTIONS (1 × 20 = 20 MARKS)/ (TIME: 20 MINUTES)
ick the <b>best</b> answers.	
1. ASEAN stands for	···
a. Association of southeast Asian nation	ons
b. Association of southern eastern Asi	an nations
c. Association of sub eastern Arabic n	
d. None of the above	
2. An/Ais the right, but period of time.	not the obligation, to buy or sell a foreign currency within a certain
a. option	c. forward premium
b. futures	d. exchange rate
	interventions in international business is:
a. fighting unemployment	<ul> <li>c. developing an industrial base.</li> </ul>
b. protecting infant industries	d. none of the above
awareness of a product in other countr	nations in which a marketing program in one country results in the es.
a. Skimming	c. Diversification
b. Spillover	d. Concentration
5. This theory says that global efficiency	gains may still result from trade if a company specializes in those
products it can produce more efficient	y than other products.
a. Theory of natural advantage	c. Theory of acquired advantage
b. Theory of comparative advantage	d. Theory of absolute advantage
6. Government actions and policies that r	estrict or restrain international trade, often done with the intent of
protecting local businesses and jobs from	om foreign competition is known as
a. protectionism	c. socialism
b. counter trade	d. capitalism
7. Aincome countries -most trade occurs	among high,ccording to the
because they share similar market cha	racteristics
a. factor propotion theory	
b. similaruty theory—country	
c. porter diamond theory	
d. country size he theory of  8. Which one of the followings is not the	
<ol> <li>Which one of the followings is not the</li> <li>Threats to National Security</li> </ol>	
b. Growth and Environmental Stress	c. Growing Income Inequality
9. This theory believes that a country's re	d. Expanded Cross-National Cooperation
these factors.	elative endowments of land, labor, and capital will determine the relative
a. Factor proportion theory	c. Porter diamond theory
b. Country -similaruty theory	d. The theory of country size

d. The theory of country size

10. Which one of the following currencies is also called	ed hard currency because government allows both residents		
and nonresidents to purchase in unlimited amounts			
a. Fully convertible currency	<ul> <li>Non convertible currency</li> </ul>		
b. Semi convertible currency	d. International currency		
11. In technological world where changes are frequent	t, companies in various countries often exchange technology		
or intangible property rather than competing with			
a. franchising	c. turnkey operation		
b. cross licensing.	d. licensing		
	which an MNE internalizes its globally dispersed foreign		
operations through a unified governance structure	and common ownership		
a. Monopolistic	c. Product-life-cycle		
b. Internalization .	d. All of the above		
13. TRIPS Council is for:	d. All of the above		
a. Goods Council			
b. The council for trade-related aspects of Intellect	tuel Durante D'ele		
c. Services Council	tual Property Rights		
d. Both a and c			
14. Which one of the followings is international trade	n		
a. Trade between countries			
b. Trade between regions	c. Trade between provinces		
15. What was the first economic theory of international	d. Both (b) and (c)		
a. The theory of mercantilism			
b. The theory of comparative advantage	c. The theory of absolute advantage		
16. IBRD stands for:	d. The Heckscher-Ohlin theory		
a. International Board for Research and Developm	ent .		
	b. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development		
c. International Bank for Research Development	·		
d. International Barrier for Reconstruction and De-	velopment		
17. Market in which currencies are bought and sold and			
a. international capital market	c. eurocurrency market		
b. international bond market	d. foreign exchange market.		
18. What is the relationship between the stock and flow	v of FID?		
<ul> <li>a. FDI flows add to the FDI stock</li> </ul>			
b. FDI flows are generated from FDI stock			
c. Changes in FDI stock correspond to changes in	FID flows		
d. FDI stock adds to FID flows			
19. Most of the governments have reduced the restriction	ons on international movements of products and services		
because:			
a. their citizens want greater variety of goods and services at lower prices.			
<ul><li>b. competition spurs domestic producers to become more efficient.</li><li>c. they hope to include other countries to lower their barrier in turn.</li></ul>			
d. all of the above	ir barrier in turn.		
20. Nepal is a member of:			
a. APEC	c. NAFTA		
b. BMISTEC	d. ASEAN		
	그래마들이 그 그래마를 받아 내려가 되고 있는 이번을 모르겠다.		
	두 가는 사람이 되었다. 그는 이 시간 하는 사람들이 살아가 있다.		
## CONTROL CON	: 2002(1944) 1942(1945) 1942(1944) - 1942(1944) 1941(1944) 1942(1944) 1943(1944) 1943(1944) 1943(1944) 1943(19		

Surkhet, Nepal
Chance Examination-2079
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Semester - III

Subject: International Business Strategy

Course Code: MGT 536

Full Marks: 100 Pass Marks: 50

Time: 4: 00 Hours

You are required to answer in your own words as far as applicable. The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

#### SECTION B: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (5X6 = 30 MARKS)

#### Answer any FIVE questions:

- 1. Is it always beneficial for any country to have trade surplus? Elaborate your answer with examples.[6]
- 2. What would you prefer Make-or-Buy if you were a manager of multinational corporation? Please back your decision with appropriate reasons and examples. [6]
- 3. Describe "Country similarity theory" of international business. [6]
- 4. How do the different legal systems affect international business? Explain. [6]
- 5. What is the nature of today's global business environment? How does this environment facilitate international business activities? Provide examples. [3+3]
- 6. Compare and contrast between absolute advantage theory and comparative advantage theory. [3+3]
- 7. Write short notes on: SAFTA and EU. [3+3]

## SECTION C: LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (2X15=30 MARKS)

## Answer any TWO questions:

- 8. Nepal and India have pegged exchange rate from years. Do you believe that now both countries need to let market determines the exchange rate? Discuss. [15]
- 9. Elaborate the principles, functions, and challenges of WTO. Discuss the Nepal being the member of WTO can benefit or suffer. [8+7]
- 10. Do you agree to the "movement" of economic integration? What is its future? Will the number of countries adopting economic integration increase or decrease in light of globalization? [5+5+5]

#### SECTION D: CASE STUDY (20 MARKS)

#### 11. Read the Case given below and answer the following questions:

General Motors was created as a holding company for the Buick Motor Company in 1908, but it only acquired something like its present shape through, over subsequent decades, acquiring other companies, including Oldsmobile, Pontiac, and Chevrolet in Europe, Opel and Vauxhall, all of which traded under their own names as part of the group. Although it was at one point one of the most successful companies in the United States – hence the aphorism 'what's good for General Motors is good for the country', a misquotation of one of its mid-century CEOs Charles E. Wilson – it was badly hit by the various recessions of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and had a number of public relations missteps during this time. Following layoffs at its Flint, Michigan manufacturing operation in the 1990s, GM spent over a decade plagued by industrial action. Moreover, while it remained the largest automobile company in the world (with operations in 35 countries), it also faced problems due to its focus on sport utility vehicles (SUVs), which sold poorly in the face of the environmental crisis, the petrol shortages and the economic downturn. In 2009, General Motors declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

#### Labour and production

Although General Motors, in its official documents, cites the 1980s and 1990s as its period of 'globalization', it has arguably been globalizing since the 1920s and its first overseas acquisitions, and by the 1970s was the largest US-based multinational. Its globalization strategy follows its domestic expansion strategy in being largely focused on acquiring local subsidiaries, although it has also set up Greenfield operations (and, in some cases,

employed both strategies in the same country). This has allowed the company to take advantage of local tastes, knowledge and nationalism; many Germans, for instance, even if they are aware that Opel is foreign owned, treat it very much as a local brand. This can be valuable in a sector such as the automobile industry, which, as Global Shift notes, is strongly driven by cultural notions of taste and status.

However, the difficulty which it presents is that it is strongly tied to local labour systems. The company's troubles with the workers at Opel in the 2000s, and the domestic political fallout from the Flint layoffs, had to be solved by on-the-ground negotiation, and also gave the lie to GM's apparent support for local markets.

Furthermore, GM faced stiff competition from Japanese companies in the 1970s and 1980s, which, as well as having the more flexible 'lean production' system, had more globalized strategies which allowed them to take advantage of economies of scale.

### Knowledge and environment

A key advantage which globalization has brought for GM is the ability to absorb the rapid flow of information about new technologies and processes and to apply them. Following the rise of Japanization in the 1970s, for instance, GM not only adopted lean production systems, but actively competed with its foreign rivals by introducing smaller, cheaper, more fuel-efficient models. However, in more recent years GM was slow to react to the rise of the environmental lobby and the rise in oil prices, continuing to focus on the expensive, fuel-inefficient SUV lines at the expense of more fuel-efficient models, hybrids and electrical cars.

Significantly, this is because SUVs are popular in North America, meaning that the decision to focus on a single national market in one case has had repercussions for the group. GM has also been hit badly by recent increases in the prices of raw materials, particularly metals. GM can thus potentially respond to global trends in information and materials prices rapidly, but can also be hard hit by local issues.

#### Nationalism and General Motors

A key response to General Motors' recent financial difficulties was a series of loans made by the US government to it and other auto manufacturers of American origin, a move which remains controversial. However, it is understandable in light of the fact that although, as Global Shift emphasizes, the automobile industry has not been national for some time, it is still tied up with nationalist discourses (Hence GM's success with its Brownfield acquisitions strategy). However, this can cause problems: when the British car industry was nationalized during the 1970s under similar circumstances, the result was stagnation, lack of competitiveness and a failure to keep up with technological and cultural trends. To remain globally competitive, automobile companies need to be subject to failure as much as to successes; the current bankruptcy situation suggests that General Motors will, in future, be trading as a number of smaller companies.

#### Questions:

a. Was the bankruptcy/bailout option the best one for General Motors? make clarification, why or why not?

[5]
b. Which factor plays the vital role in labor, environmentalism or the 2008 recession?
c. What does the General Motors case study tell us about American business systems and MNCs?
d. 'The factors which led to GM's success are the same ones which have contributed to its downfall.'

Discuss.
[5]

#### THE END