

Answers

1) As urban populations swell, sand has become one of the most extracted materials in the world. With extensive use in construction and industrial production, existing sand deposits are being depleted. As such, some countries have closed mines and banned exports. At the same time, prices of alternative products such as wood have fallen.

Discuss the demand and supply factors and their relative importance in determining the output of sand in the global market. [25]

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Discuss' → Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = relative importance of demand and supply factors in determining output of sand → output of sand could have increased or decreased; relative importance depends on elasticity concepts and extent of shifts

Context = global sand market

Introduction

Demand and supply factors determine the output of sand, which refers to the quantity of sand produced in the global market. The demand factors include the increase in urban populations and the fall in price of wood, while the supply factors are excessive mining, closure of mines and export bans. The relative importance of these factors in determining output can be discussed in terms of elasticity concepts such as PED, XED and PES, as well as extent of shifts in demand and supply.

Body

1. Extent to which demand factors increases the output (quantity) of sand (application of XED and PES)

- **DD for sand increases due to an increase in urban populations**

There has been a significant increase in urban populations, especially in countries like China. This means that there will be a corresponding increase in demand for construction and industrial products to build and develop cities for housing and businesses. This results in an increase in derived demand for sand, as sand is an essential factor in the production of these goods. Hence with an increase in demand for sand, demand curve shifts to the right and output increases.

- **DD for sand decreases due to a fall in the price of substitutes**

Wood is a substitute for sand in the construction of buildings. As the price of wood falls, the quantity demanded of wood rises, and this decreases the demand for sand as buyers switch from sand to wood, which is relatively cheaper. As such, the demand curve for sand shifts to the left, and output of sand decreases.

- **Using XED to determine which demand factor is more important in determining the output of sand**

Cross elasticity of demand measures the degree of responsiveness of demand for good A to a change in price of good B, ceteris paribus. Wood and sand are not close substitutes. While wood can replace sand in some types of construction, sand is still needed industrially to make glass, electronics, and to extract oil in the fracking industry. Hence the XED value is positive and less than 1. This means that the fall in the price of wood would lead to a less than proportionate fall in demand for sand.

Thus, it is likely that demand for sand still increases as **the first demand factor (rise in urban populations) is more important than the second demand factor (fall in price of wood)**. Overall, the net effect of the above changes in demand factors means that there is a smaller rightward shift of the demand curve, D_0 to D_1 , instead of D_0 to D_2 , which results in a smaller increase in price and quantity. Price and quantity increases from P_0 to P_1 and Q_0 to Q_1 respectively.

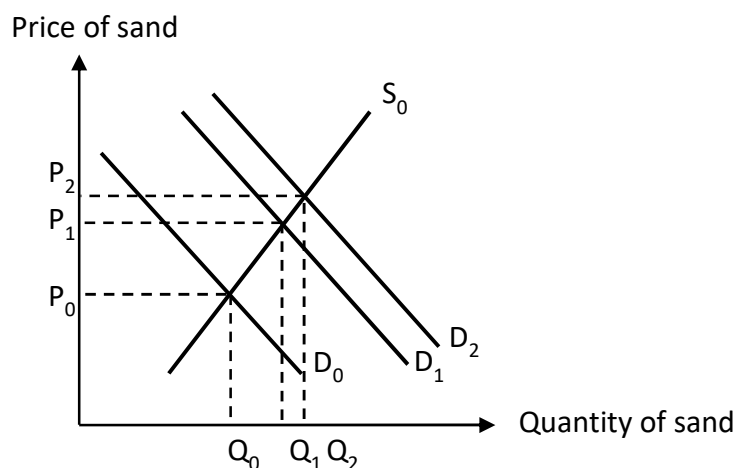


Figure 1: Increase in demand for sand

- **Using PES to assess impact on output of sand**

Price elasticity of supply measures the degree of responsiveness of quantity supplied of a good to a change in its price, *ceteris paribus*. As existing sand deposits are being depleted, stocks are low and firms are unable to respond quickly to a change in price. In addition, government regulations such as the closure of mines also reduce factor mobility and limit the ability of firms to increase quantity supplied in response to an increase in price. Hence supply of sand is price inelastic.

Given the increase in demand explained earlier, there will be a corresponding increase in price. As PES is less than one, an increase in price from P_0 to P_1 leads to a less than proportionate increase in quantity supplied from Q_0 to Q_1 . Hence, demand factors do not seem to be very important in explaining the increase in output of sand.

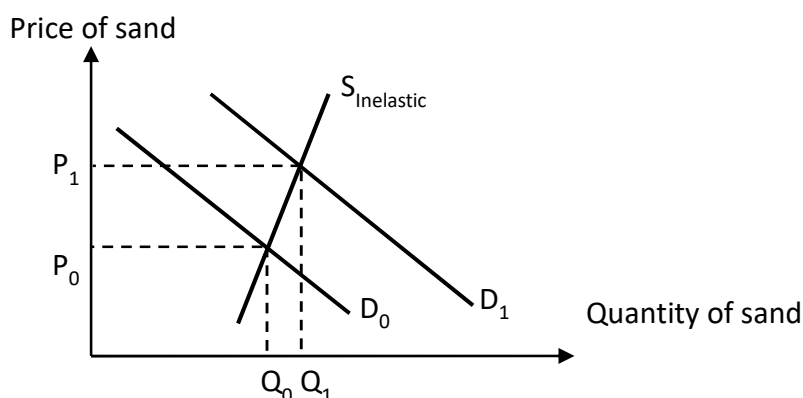


Figure 2: Increase in demand for sand given price inelastic supply

2. Extent to which supply factor increases the output (quantity) of sand (application of PED)
 - **SS of sand decreases due to excessive mining, closure of mines and export bans**

According to the preamble, sand deposits are being depleted as a result of excessive mining. Furthermore, the environment damage incurred has prompted some governments to close mines and impose export bans. As a result, supply of sand in the global market decreases. Supply curve shifts to the left and output of sand falls.

- **Using PED to assess impact on output of sand**

Price elasticity of demand measures the degree of responsiveness of quantity demanded of a good to a change in its price, *ceteris paribus*. In the short run, there are very few substitutes for sand that are available. Also, time is required to search for or develop substitutes. Given a change in the price of sand, buyers are unable to switch to substitutes easily. Hence demand for sand is price inelastic in the short run.

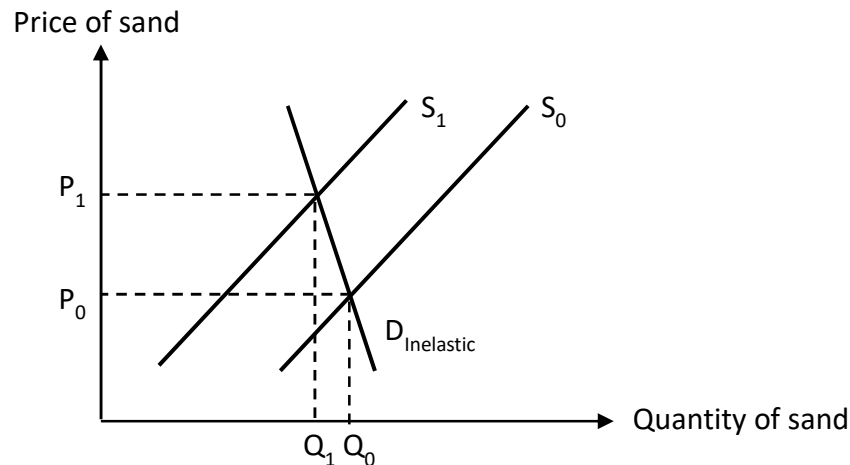


Figure 3: Decrease in supply of sand given price inelastic demand

Given the decrease in supply explained earlier, price of sand would increase. As PED is less than one, an increase in price from P_0 to P_1 leads to a less than proportionate decrease in quantity demanded from Q_0 to Q_1 .

3. Relative importance of demand and supply factors using extent of shifts

Given the simultaneous rise in demand and fall in supply of sand, the overall effect on output would depend on the extent of shifts in demand and supply. It can be assumed that the rise in demand exceeds the fall in supply due to the substantial growth in urban development worldwide with only a fall in supply of sand from a few countries at present. This means that the **demand factor is more important** and its shift outweighs the shift in supply.

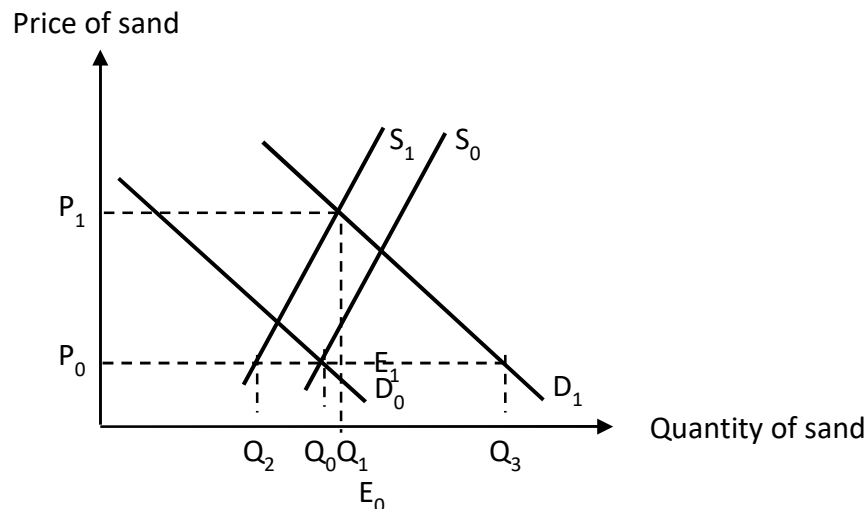


Figure 4: Simultaneous shifts in demand and supply

At the original price P_0 , quantity demanded Q_3 exceeds quantity supplied Q_2 , leading to a shortage of Q_2Q_3 , which puts upward pressure on prices. As prices rise, quantity demanded falls along D_1 while quantity supplied increases along S_1 . This happens until the new equilibrium is reached at E_1 , where there is no tendency for further change. Overall, equilibrium price increases from P_0 to P_1 and equilibrium quantity rises from Q_0 to Q_1 .

If the assumption above does not hold, and the supply shift outweighs the demand shift, equilibrium price would rise and equilibrium quantity would fall instead.

Demand and supply factors that are not included in the preamble can be accepted. Reasonable analyses based on different elasticity values and extent of shifts accurately justified will be accepted.

Conclusion and evaluation

In conclusion, demand factors are likely to be more important than supply factors in determining the output of sand in the global market, leading to an overall increase in output. Among the demand factors, the increase in urban populations seems to be permanent and larger in magnitude compared to the change in price of wood. However, the above analyses only hold if the assumptions about the various elasticity values and extent of shifts in demand and supply are true. In the long run, such assumptions may not hold and output of sand could eventually fall. With a longer time period, suitable substitutes for sand can be discovered or developed. As such, buyers of sand can switch to other substitutes more easily, and demand will be more price elastic. In addition, the availability of close substitutes would also mean that cross elasticity of demand could become elastic. This implies that output of sand may fall in the long term.

Level	Descriptor	Marks
3	<p>High L3 (20-21m): Answer discusses the relative importance of demand and supply factors using <u>all three</u> elasticity concepts accurately and rigorously.</p> <p>Low L3 (17-19m): Answer discusses the relative importance of demand and supply factors using <u>all three</u> elasticity concepts with very minor gaps or errors in explanations.</p>	17-21
2	<p>High L2 (14-16m): Answer discusses the relative importance of demand and supply factors using <u>at least two</u> elasticity concepts accurately and rigorously.</p> <p>Low L2 (10-13m): Answer discusses the relative importance of demand and supply factors using <u>at least one</u> elasticity concept accurately and rigorously.</p>	10-16
1	<p>High L1 (6-9m): Explanations of demand <u>and</u> supply factors with some mention of extent of shifts <u>and/or</u> elasticity concepts with insufficient rigour.</p> <p>OR</p>	1-9

	<p>Answer is <u>1-sided</u> and discusses only demand <u>or</u> supply factors. Use of elasticity concepts in the explanations is accurate.</p> <p>Low L1 (1-5m): Explanations of demand and supply factors <u>only</u>. Answer is descriptive and/or contains significant errors in analysis.</p>	
E2	Provides reasoned conclusions on the relative importance of demand and supply factors and hence the net effect on output. Reasoning is sound and insightful.	3-4
E1	Provides reasoned conclusions on the relative importance of demand and supply factors and hence the net effect on output. Reasoning is sound but not sufficiently insightful.	1-2

2 a) Explain the determinants of firms' decision on whether to merge. [10]

Introduction

Firms are assumed to be profit-maximisers who aim to maximise revenue and minimise costs. In making the decision whether to merge, firms would consider the benefits and costs of doing so. The benefits of a merger include gaining more market power and reaping internal economies of scale (EOS), which would increase revenue and decrease costs. On the other hand, diseconomies of scale (DOS) could set in with a merger and firms might face higher costs.

A merger is the combination of two companies to form a larger company, which enables firms to grow in size. Different types of mergers include:

- horizontal mergers, where firms in the same industry and stage of production merge (e.g. Scoot and Tigerair merged in 2017);
- vertical mergers, where two firms in the same industry but at different stages of production merge (e.g. a car manufacturer merging with a steel manufacturer); or
- conglomerate mergers, where firms in different industries merge to form one company (e.g. Keppel Corporation consists of businesses associated with the marine, property and infrastructure sectors).

Body

1. Benefits of merger

- **Monopoly motive**

When firms merge, their market share increases and demand for their products rise, allowing them to earn higher revenue. This is especially true for horizontal mergers between companies in the same industry and stage of production. For instance, the merger between Scoot and Tigerair in 2017 enables the airline to have a wider travel network of 65 destinations across 18 countries. This includes new destinations such as long-haul flights to Hawaii in the US, which is likely to increase demand for its flights.

The increase in market share also tends to reduce competition and the number of substitutes available, causing demand for the firm's products to become less price elastic. If demand becomes price inelastic, firms could raise its price to increase total revenue, as quantity demanded for its good would decrease less than proportionately to the rise in price. This leads to higher profits as firms gain greater market power and control a larger proportion of total market supply.

At the same time, reduced competition would decrease the need for advertising to compete against rivals and attract customers. This also decreases costs for firms.

- **Reap greater internal economies of scale**

Besides revenue benefits, firms could also reap cost benefits from mergers by exploiting internal EOS. Internal economies of scale (IEOS) are the cost savings a firm experiences as it increases its scale of production. As the scale of production increases, the long run average cost will fall.

There are different types of IEOS that firms can enjoy when they expand their scale of operation. *Students are only required to explain one type of IEOS in detail.*

- Firms can reap technical EOS. With specialisation and division of labour, the efficiency of labour can increase, thus resulting in a lower unit cost of production. Costs also do not necessarily increase in direct proportion to the increase in output. In the case of Scoot and Tigerair, the two firms are able to reduce average costs by

merging flight scheduling and connections, as well as sharing a common website, contact centre and check-in counters.

- Firms can reap managerial EOS by practising functional specialisation as their customer service, sales, training and finance departments oversee a larger scale of operations, thereby reducing the unit cost of their output.
- Firms can reap marketing EOS by purchasing in bulk and spreading the costs of advertising their products over a larger output.
- Firms can reap financial EOS. Firms may have to obtain funds from financial institutions to carry out their operations and research projects. With more collateral and higher credit worthiness as a borrower, large firms are likely to have a smaller risk of default. Hence they are able to secure a lower interest rate on loans, which helps to lower the average cost of the firms.
- Vertical mergers also reduce costs by allowing firms to carry out their production with less disruption and uncertainty through better control of the supply of raw materials. For instance, a vertical merger of a car manufacturer with a steel manufacturer would reduce the costs of renewing contracts with steel suppliers.

This cost benefit is particularly large for firms where the minimum efficient scale sets in at a large output. As the firm's output expands from Q_0 to Q_1 , the average cost of output falls from C_0 to C_1 .

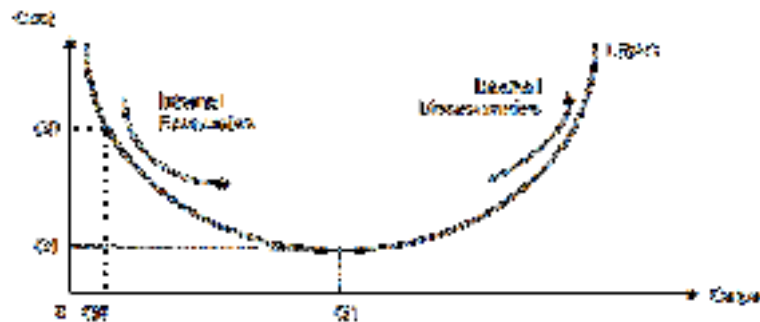


Figure 1: Reaping IEOS as output expands

2. Costs of merger

• **Diseconomies of scale**

However, a merged firm might become so big that internal DOS starts to set in. Internal diseconomies of scale (IDOS) are increases in cost a firm experiences as it increases its scale of production. *Students are only required to explain one type of IDOS in detail.*

- Firms may experience internal managerial DOS due to the difficulty of coordinating between larger departments, or managing complex operations and distribution channels. These problems are likely to occur in conglomerate mergers where each firm runs a different business in a different market, which makes it difficult to manage.
- As firms expand, ownership and management becomes more divorced, which may result in the principal-agent problem. Incentives for managers to reduce costs to increase profits may diminish. Depending on how they are paid, individual managers (the agent) may have different incentives from the shareholders/CEO (the principal) who want to maximise profits. For example, the sales manager might want to maximise sales rather than profit, and may do so at the expense of costs.

With reference to figure 1, firms that merge and experience internal DOS would incur higher average costs as they expand production beyond Q_1 .

In addition, firms may not be able to reap cost benefits from mergers if they experience internal DOS fairly early in their growth. If the LRAC of the firm rises very fast, i.e. its MES occurs at relatively small output levels, the firm may not be able to expand without

experiencing higher unit costs. In this case, the firm may choose not to merge as a small firm will be more cost efficient than a large one.

Other possible determinants include diversification, access to international markets, personalised services, ability to adapt and respond, banding, etc.

Conclusion

Overall, the decision of whether to merge depends on the relative costs and benefits of such a move. Where the benefits outweigh the costs, and the nature of the industry as well as the state of the firms are such that firms are able to reap extensive internal EOS, firms would likely proceed with the decision to merge.

Level	Descriptor	Marks
3	Well-developed explanation of how considerations of revenue <u>and</u> costs affect firms' decision on merger. <u>For full marks</u> , there should be use of <u>real world examples</u> .	8-10
2	Under-developed explanation of how considerations of revenue <u>and</u> costs affect firms' decision on merger. OR 1-sided but well-developed explanation of how considerations of revenue <u>or</u> costs affect firms' decision on merger. <u>Max 5m</u> for revenue arguments only.	5-7
1	Answer is descriptive and/or contains significant errors in analysis.	1-4

2 b) Assess the extent to which government intervention is needed when a firm dominates the market. [15]

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Assess' → Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = extent to which government intervention is needed

Context = market dominance (form of market failure)

Introduction

When a firm dominates the market, it is possible that goals of efficiency or equity could be compromised. Market failure arises and government intervention is needed. However, there are some circumstances where market dominance does not necessitate government intervention, as there are advantages associated with large-scale production by a dominant firm, which society could stand to benefit from. For the purpose of this essay, market dominance will be discussed in relation to the monopoly market structure, which has the highest level of dominance.

Thesis – Government intervention is needed when a firm dominates the market

Market failure occurs when an unregulated market fails to allocate resources efficiently and equitably, resulting in social welfare not being maximised. Market dominance results in

market failure as firms with market power are able to restrict output to increase profits, which leads to **allocative inefficiency** due to underproduction of goods and services.

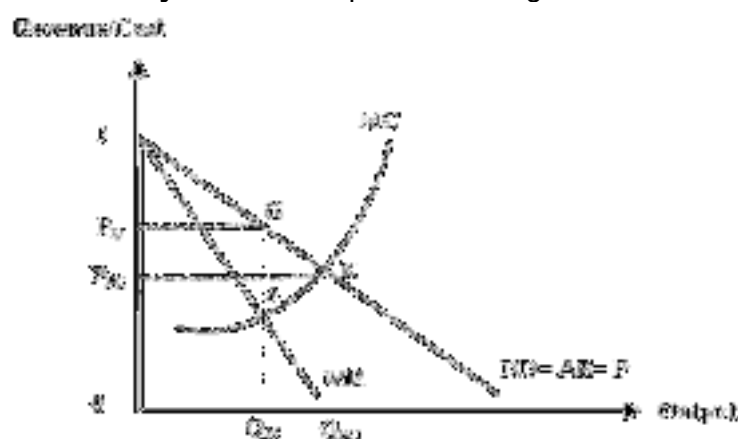


Figure 1: Allocative inefficiency with market dominance

The profit maximising monopolist will produce output up to Q_m , where the MC intersects MR at A, and charge price P_m . At Q_m , price is higher than MC, resulting in allocative inefficiency. At this level of output, the marginal benefit that consumers derive from the consumption of an additional unit of the good is higher than the cost to society from producing that additional unit. Hence the good is under-produced and social welfare will increase if more resources are allocated to produce the good. In comparison, a perfectly competitive firm will produce where MC intersects $MR(=AR)$ at Q_{pc} , and charge price P_{pc} . Allocative efficiency is achieved since $P_{pc} = MC$ at Q_{pc} . The underproduction of goods under a monopoly results in a deadweight loss to society as represented by the area GAK. To resolve allocative inefficiency, the government has to intervene to ensure output is produced at the socially efficient level. This can be achieved through policies such as MC pricing or nationalisation.

Monopolies are also **X-inefficient** due to the lack of competitive pressure on profit margins and lax cost controls. X-inefficiency refers to inefficient production due to higher costs incurred by the producer. For instance, overstaffing and excessive spending on unnecessary equipment and expensive buildings and less incentive to invest in R&D of new products would cause the AC and MC curves to be higher than it would otherwise have been, which translates into higher prices for the consumer. As such, the government can intervene to increase competition in the market in order to compel the firm to be more productive efficient.

In addition, a firm that dominates the market could lead to **inequity** where there will be an unequal distribution of income. This is because the monopolist can earn supernormal profits in the long run due to high barriers to entry. These profits would be concentrated in the hands of shareholders who may be mainly upper income earners. At the same time, monopoly power could be exploited to benefit the firm at the expense of consumers who have to face higher prices. This may worsen income distribution in the economy and exclude lower income groups from consuming certain goods that are essential. To alleviate inequity, the government would have to intervene to limit the firm's market power and ensure accessibility and affordability of essential goods to all.

Antithesis – Government intervention is not needed when a firm dominates the market

However, a dominant firm might not lead to significant market failure due to various reasons provided below. This suggests that government intervention is not always needed, and may even lead to more adverse outcomes.

In industries where MES is high and there are **large economies of scale** (EOS) to be exploited (e.g. natural gas distribution), a single monopolist may be **more cost efficient** than many smaller firms. The monopolist can operate on a lower marginal cost, which may lead to lower prices ($P_m < P_{pc}$) and higher output ($Q_m > Q_{pc}$) compared to the perfectly competitive (PC) industry. Despite the monopolist selling its product at a price above its marginal cost, the prices charged are still lower than it would have been in the PC industry. Consumer surplus will be higher for consumers in the monopoly market, hence reducing **inequity**.

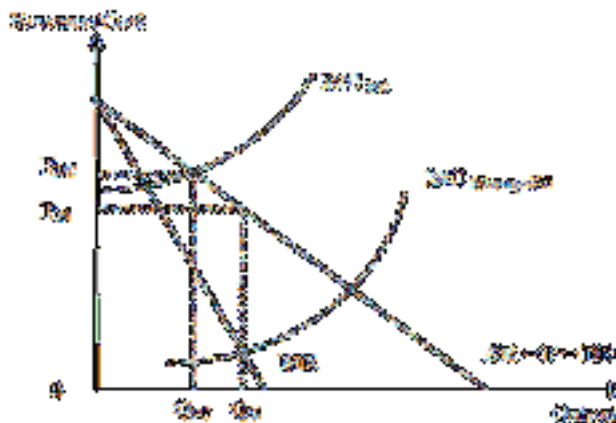


Figure 2: Monopolist with substantial EOS

In addition, market dominance enables the firm to practise **price discrimination**, which is the practice of charging different groups of people different prices for the same product for reasons not associated with differences in costs of production. Under some instances, price discrimination could be beneficial to society.

Firstly, in the case where a **good would not be produced at a single price due to subnormal profit**, first degree price discrimination may allow for this good to be produced. With reference to figure 3, the profit maximising monopolist would produce where $MC=MR$ at output OQ and charge a single price of OP . However, the firm would be making subnormal profit equal to $PFHG$. In the long run, the monopolist would not produce the good at all since total revenue cannot cover total cost. However, if the monopolist practises first degree price discrimination, where consumers are charged the maximum price they are willing to pay for each unit, the total revenue would equal $OJKQ_1$. With perfect price discrimination, the additional revenue the firm gains (MR) is the same as the price charged for that unit of the good (P), and so the profit maximising firm would produce until OQ_1 units of output. At this point, the monopolist could cover total cost $OPAQ_1$ and make profits. **Allocative efficiency** is achieved as $P=MC$ at OQ_1 .

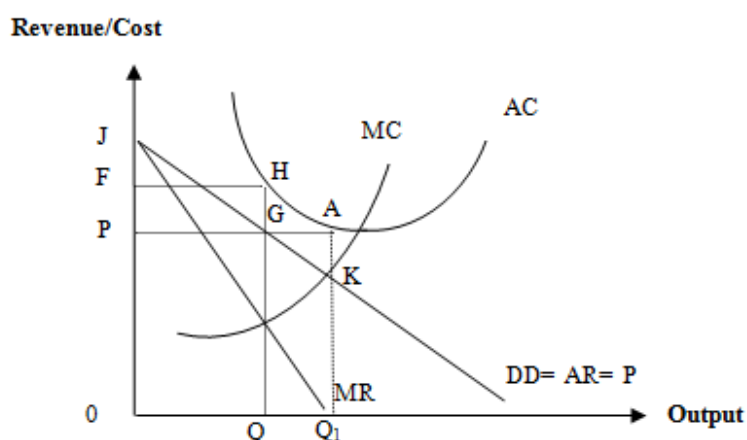


Figure 3: Monopolist with first degree price discrimination

Secondly, a dominant firm could practise **third degree price discrimination to achieve equity**. In the case of discounted medical fees for the poor, concession bus fares for pensioners and other senior citizens discounts, price discrimination sometimes allows lower-income people to buy a product that they would be unable to afford if it were sold at the single price that maximised the producer's profits. With third degree price discrimination, consumers with a more price inelastic demand are charged a higher price than those with a more price elastic demand. Those charged a lower price may thus be able to obtain a good or service they previously could not afford without price discrimination. Thus, a dominant firm that practises third degree price discrimination is likely to increase output and make the good or service cheaper and available to more consumers.

Furthermore, a dominant firm may be able to **earn supernormal profits in the long run**. This allows it to accumulate profits that may be channelled to the funding of research and development of new products. The incentive to do so comes from its desire to maintain its monopoly status which might be challenged when firms outside the industry launch new substitute products. This could lead to **dynamic efficiency** where consumers benefit from better quality goods and services, and possibly cheaper products.

Conclusion and evaluation

The above analyses are based on the assumption that firms are profit maximisers. However, in the real world, firms may have alternative objectives such as sales maximisation or profit satisficing. This might mean that firms could produce at a lower price and higher output compared to the profit-maximising case. As such, there may not be significant market failure and government intervention may not be needed to such a large extent.

In addition, the theory of contestable markets could mean that a dominant firm may not behave as the above analysis predicts. In order to retain customers and deter potential firms from entering the market, a monopoly firm may not set significantly high prices. This could also reduce the extent of market failure arising from allocative inefficiency and inequity.

In conclusion, government intervention is needed to some extent to deal with market dominance. While measures should be taken to deal with market failure from inefficiency and inequity, the government should first assess whether conditions of the market are such that a dominant firm might achieve better societal outcomes, for instance in the case of a natural monopoly, before deciding whether to intervene and if so, the forms of intervention to undertake.

Level	Descriptor	Marks
3	Balanced and well-developed answer that analyses the need for government intervention based on efficiency <u>and</u> equity with sufficient scope. Relevant examples are used.	9-11
2	Balanced and under-developed answer that analyses the need for government intervention based on market failure. OR Max 6m for 1-sided but well-developed answer that <u>either</u> explains the need for government intervention based on market failure <u>or</u> explains why market dominance does not require intervention.	6-8
1	Answer is descriptive and/or contains significant errors in analysis.	1-5
E2	Makes a substantiated conclusion about the need for government	3-4

	intervention in the case of market dominance.	
E1	Makes an insufficiently substantiated conclusion about the need for government intervention in the case of market dominance.	1-2

3 a) Using examples, explain why the market fails in the case of demerit goods. [10]

Introduction

Market failure refers to the situation in which the market, when left on its own, fails to allocate resources efficiently (i.e. attain social optimal output level where marginal social benefit (MSB) is equal to marginal social cost (MSC)) and/or achieve social goals like equity.

Body

Demerit goods are goods deemed to be socially undesirable by the government. Some examples of demerit goods include cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, harmful drugs and gambling. Market failure arises from the overconsumption of such goods due to negative externalities and imperfect information where the consumer is believed by the authorities to underestimate its costs. If demerit goods are provided through the free market, there would be overconsumption and hence overproduction of the goods. Hence the price mechanism over-allocates resources for the demerit goods.

Negative externalities are external costs incurred by a third party that is not directly involved in the production or consumption of a good, for which no compensation occurs. The price mechanism only takes into account private costs and benefits, which are the costs and benefits to the consumer or producer involved in the economic activity. Hence the free market equilibrium would be where MPB intersects MPC at Q_e . Assuming there are no external benefits incurred, $MSB = MPB$.

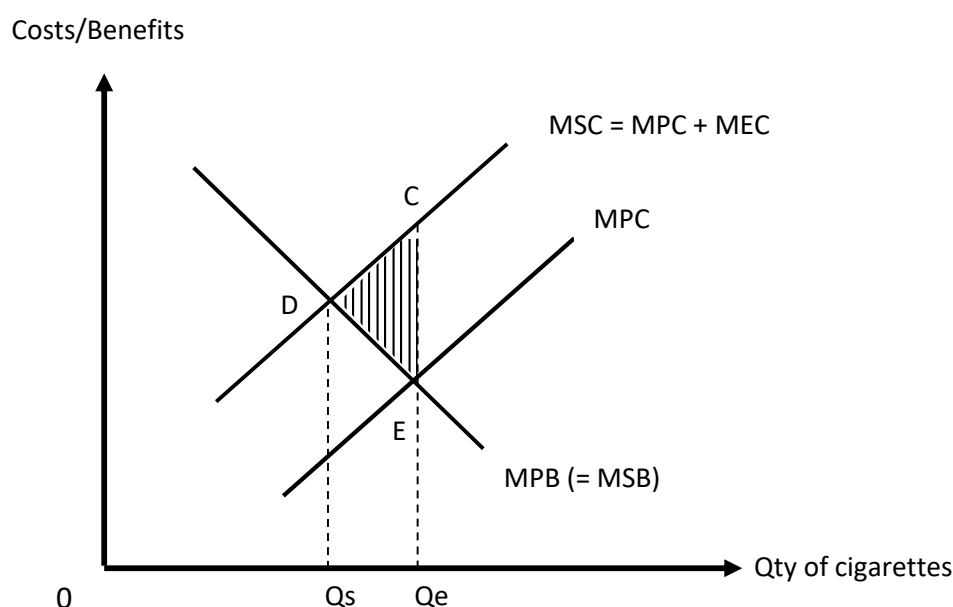


Figure 1: Market failure from negative externalities

However, external costs cause the MSC to diverge from the MPC. In the market for cigarettes, negative externalities are incurred as passive smokers suffer negative health effects such as lung problems from second-hand smoke. In addition, higher health subsidies given by the government to treat smoking-related illnesses have to be borne by taxpayers. Hence, at market equilibrium output, Q_e , $MSC > MSB$, which means that society values an extra unit of cigarettes less than what it would cost society to produce it. Social welfare can be increased by having fewer units of cigarettes consumed. This is true until the socially optimal level of output Q_s is reached when $MSB = MSC$. Since Q_e is more than Q_s , there is an overconsumption of cigarettes and this creates a deadweight loss of area CDE since

MSC exceeds MSB for the units of cigarettes from Q_s to Q_e . Thus, the price mechanism has allocated more than the desired amount of resources to cigarettes and allocative efficiency is not achieved.

In addition, consumers tend to overconsume demerit goods due to **imperfect information**. Imperfect information can lead to market failure when people have inaccurate, incomplete, uncertain or misunderstood data and so make potentially 'wrong' choices. For example, consumers may be unaware of the long-term health consequences of consuming alcoholic drinks and hence underestimate the private costs of consuming demerit goods such as alcohol. Hence imperfect information leads to a divergence between actual MPC and perceived MPC, where actual MPC exceeds perceived MPC.

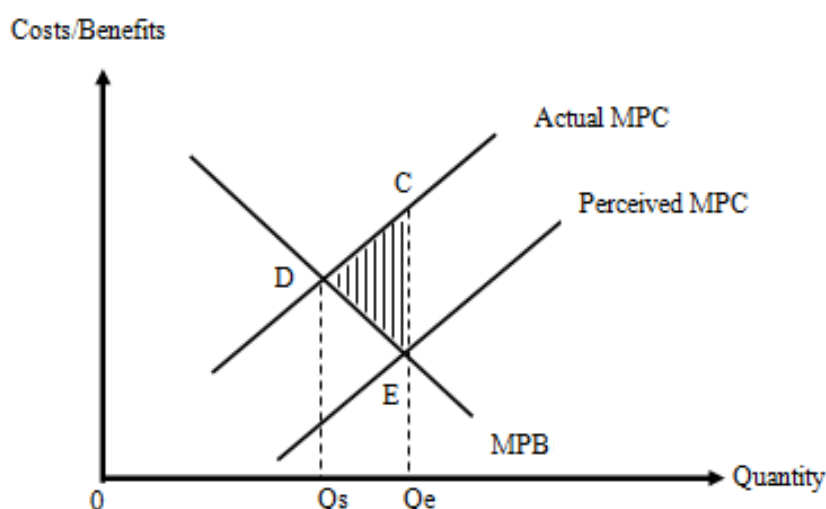


Figure 2: Market failure from imperfect information

Since consumers base their decisions on perceived costs and benefits, they consume until the point Q_e where $MPB = \text{perceived MPC}$. If consumers acted with perfect knowledge, they would have consumed at Q_s where $MPB = \text{actual MPC}$. Since $Q_e > Q_s$, there is an overconsumption of alcohol. This results in a deadweight loss of area CDE. Thus, there is a misallocation of resources to produce alcoholic drinks and market failure arises.

Conclusion

Thus, demerit goods are overconsumed and the market fails to allocate resources efficiently, leading to market failure.

Level	Descriptor	Marks
3	Well-developed answer that explains market failure from demerit goods (including negative externalities <u>and</u> imperfect information) using appropriate examples. Explanations are accurate and rigorous.	8-10
2	Under-developed answer that explains market failure from demerit goods (including negative externalities <u>and</u> imperfect information) using appropriate examples. Explanations are not sufficiently rigorous or contain some errors. OR <u>Max 6m</u> for a well-developed answer that explains market failure from demerit goods (including <u>either</u> negative externalities <u>or</u> imperfect information) using appropriate examples. OR <u>Max 6m</u> for a well-developed answer that <u>does not</u> use examples.	5-7

1	Answer is descriptive and/or contains many errors.	1-4

3 b) Discuss whether the current policies adopted by the Singapore government to deal with demerit goods are sufficient given the changing demographics. [15]

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Discuss' → Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = current policies that deal with demerit goods

Context = changing demographics in Singapore

Introduction

Explain some possible changing demographics in Singapore:

- Falling birth rates/declining total fertility rate
- Rapidly ageing population and longer life expectancy
- Increase in literacy rates and highest qualification attained in education
- Increase in population with more immigrants/non-residents/foreign workers
- Rise in income inequality

Examples of demerit goods include cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, harmful drugs and gambling.

Thesis – current policies are sufficient to deal with demerit goods given the changing demographics

Suggested structure for each thesis point:

- *Explain how the policy works and solves market failure arising from demerit goods*
- *Provide examples of current policies adopted by the Singapore government*
- *Explain why the current policy is sufficient given the changing demographics*

- **Taxes**

To solve the market failure arising from demerit goods, the government imposes a tax that is equal to the external cost to compel consumers to internalise the negative externality from such goods.

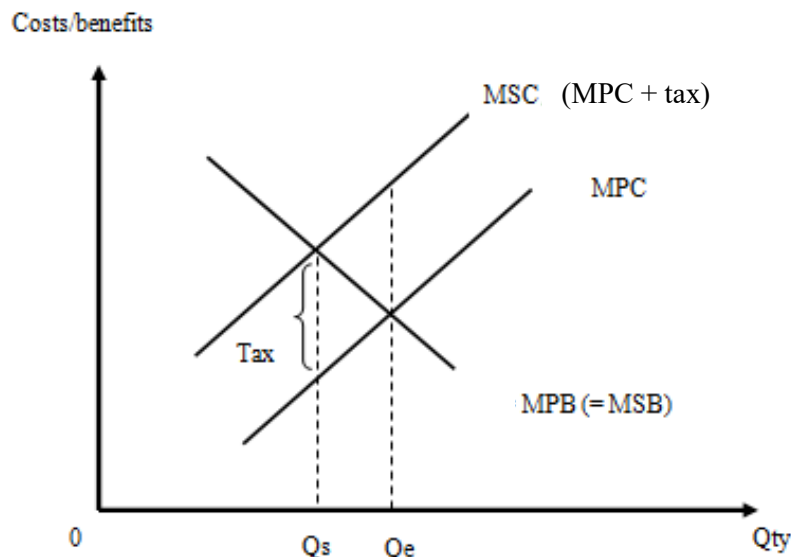


Figure 1: Using taxes to reduce overconsumption of demerit goods

This shifts the consumer's MPC up (i.e. price of demerit good rises) to $(MPC + tax)$ to coincide with the MSC. Hence consumers are induced to consume less and move towards the socially optimal output level at Q_s , at which $MSB = MSC$. The over-allocation of resources is corrected as there will no longer be overconsumption. This eliminates the deadweight loss prior to the imposition of the tax, and allocative efficiency is achieved. For instance, the Singapore government imposes taxes on cigarettes and alcohol to reduce overconsumption of these demerit goods. With a **rapidly ageing population and longer life expectancy** for Singaporeans, it is likely that the proportion of income spent on such goods rises as older adults' incomes fall with retirement, or they are less addicted to demerit goods like cigarettes to maintain better health. This means that their demand for cigarettes is price elastic. The imposition of a tax that increases price of cigarettes will lead to a more than proportionate fall in quantity demanded. As such, the current policy of taxing demerit goods is likely to be sufficient given changing demographics.

- **Education and campaigns**

Education and campaigns could help to resolve market failure from imperfect information about the true costs of consuming demerit goods. When more accurate information is provided, the gap between actual MPC and perceived MPC reduces. This lowers the private equilibrium output to the socially optimal output, and reduces overconsumption of demerit goods. Some examples of such policies include anti-smoking/gambling/drink-driving campaigns and health warnings on cigarette packets to inform smokers of the adverse health effects of excessive cigarette smoking. With the **increase in literacy rates and education qualifications attained** amongst Singaporeans, as well as an **ageing population and longer life expectancy**, it is likely that Singaporeans would be more concerned about maintaining good health, and education and campaigns would tend to be effective in reducing their consumption of demerit goods.

- **Legislation**

In the case of negative externalities from demerit goods, laws can be used to prohibit or regulate behaviour that imposes external costs. For example, smoking is prohibited in many public places to protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. Drinking of alcohol is also banned in all public places from 10.30pm to 7am to minimise public disorder.

To deal with imperfect information from demerit goods, legislation could be used to force producers to provide more information or prohibit false or misleading advertising of goods such as alcohol or cigarettes so that consumers are able to make more informed choices. Age restrictions of purchase and consumption of such goods could also target children and teenagers who are perceived to be less able to understand the full private costs of demerit goods.

These measures are able to solve market failure from demerit goods as overconsumption is curbed, and the private equilibrium output is reduced to the socially optimal output. In view of **Singapore's rising population size with greater numbers of immigrants and foreign workers** who may have different practices and consumption habits, legislation is likely to be effective in reducing overconsumption of demerit goods, which deters inappropriate behaviour and reduces the associated negative externalities.

Antithesis – current policies are insufficient to deal with demerit goods given the changing demographics

- **Taxes**

However, the effectiveness of taxes in dealing with overconsumption of demerit goods depends on the value of price elasticity of demand (PED). With the **rapidly ageing population and falling birth rate**, this might suggest that the proportion of chain smokers with entrenched addiction habits rises. This means that demand for demerit goods such as cigarettes is price inelastic. As such, a tax that raises the price of cigarettes will reduce the quantity demanded by a less than proportionate amount. Therefore, the reduction in externalities generated will not be very significant and market failure still arises. In order to achieve the desired reduction in quantity consumed to the socially optimal level, this implies that a high amount of tax will have to be imposed. However, smoking is more prevalent amongst lower income groups. As such, a tax on cigarettes has a regressive effect, which might present another problem given the **rise in income inequality** in Singapore as well.

- **Education and campaigns**

Education and campaigns are not enforceable by law as they serve mainly to encourage consumers to reduce consumption of demerit goods. However, consumers who are addicted to demerit goods such as gambling, drugs and alcohol may not heed the advice due to stubbornness and ingrained habits that are hard to change. With the **ageing population**, some of them might have developed habitual consumption of demerit goods and thus find it hard to reduce consumption of these goods. Also, education and campaigns may have lesser reach to them due to difficulty in conveying such messages to them. In addition, the **rising number of foreigners** suggests that campaigns may be ineffective if these people have different consumption habits that are difficult to change. Thus, education and campaigns may be insufficient in reducing overconsumption of demerit goods.

- **Legislation**

Legislation could also be limited in some ways. With the **falling birth rate and ageing population**, age restrictions of purchase and consumption of demerit goods such as cigarettes may not be enough in reducing overall consumption in society. More has to be done to curb overconsumption by the older adults, who form a higher proportion of those contributing to the negative externalities from demerit goods.

Another possible approach for the antithesis would be providing arguments for new policies that are better than current policies, as the latter are insufficient.

Conclusion and evaluation

In conclusion, current policies adopted by the Singapore government to deal with demerit goods are largely sufficient given the changing demographics. This is because the government employs a wide range of policies to deal with various demerit goods in different contexts, and constantly revises its policies. For instance, the Liquor Control Act was passed in 2015, and stricter rules were imposed in Geylang and Little India, which are designated as Liquor Control Zones, as these areas face a higher risk of public disorder associated with excessive drinking. Also, the legal smoking age has recently been proposed to be raised to age 21.

As changing demographics suggest that the effectiveness of policies may differ between different groups of people, the government should continue to monitor the consumption of demerit goods and adjust its policies to ensure they remain appropriate and effective in targeting the right groups of people and addressing the root causes of the problems.

Level	Descriptor	Marks
3	Balanced and well-developed answer that discusses <u>at least two</u> policies that deal with demerit goods in Singapore. Answer addresses this in relation to changing demographics.	9-11
2	<p>Balanced and under-developed answer that discusses <u>at least two</u> policies that deal with demerit goods in Singapore. Answer addresses this in relation to changing demographics.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Max 7m</u> for a balanced answer that only discusses <u>one policy</u>. <u>Max 6m</u> for an answer that <u>only</u> explains policies and makes <u>no mention of changing demographics</u>. <u>Max 6m</u> for answer that does not address context of Singapore.</p>	6-8
1	Answer is descriptive and/or contains significant errors in analysis.	1-5
E2	Makes a substantiated conclusion about the sufficiency of current policies given changing demographics.	3-4
E1	Makes an insufficiently substantiated conclusion about the sufficiency of current policies given changing demographics.	1-2

4) The rising cost of foreign package holidays and imported computer games helped to push the UK inflation rate up to 2.9% last month from 2.7% in April. The latest inflation rate is the highest since June 2013, and above the Bank of England's 2% target. The pick-up in inflation is likely to continue the squeeze on consumers.

The Guardian, 13 June 2017

(a) Explain how firms and households are affected by inflation. [10]

Introduction:

- Definition of inflation
- While low and stable inflation has positive effects on the economy, high inflation has destabilising effects on the economy.
- High inflation will cause firms and households to change their consumption and production behaviour because of the respective effects on the real value of households' income and savings and the firms' profitability

Body:

Effects of high inflation on Households

- When there is high inflation, the increase in general price level has caused the value of money to fall. Thus for the households, even though the nominal income has risen, if it is less than the inflation rate, real income will fall. Thus there is a fall in their purchasing power
- Household consumption might fall. Households will rush to purchase goods and services in advance for fear or with the expectation of even higher future prices and they cannot buy the same amount of goods and services.
- In addition, the real value of their savings and the real interest accrued in the bank may also fall. This will encourage more consumption of goods and services, or in the purchase of gold, properties and financial assets with higher returns than the interest earned in the savings. Will affect the funds available for investment in the future.
- On the other hand, households who had borrowed money from the bank to purchase big ticket items, eg car or houses, will gain as their real value of the loans/mortgages (for houses) and interest/mortgage charges will have fallen.
- Cost of living would have risen. SOL may have worsened if the increase in their nominal income has not kept up with the inflation rate. But if their nominal income is higher than inflation, then their SOL may not have fallen.
- Low income households are more negatively affected by high inflation compared to high income households. This is because they spend a larger proportion of their income on consumption of goods and services and so when prices of goods and services increase, they would be more severely affected compared to high income households which spend a smaller proportion of income on consumption.
- Households with fixed income earners would also face a greater drop in real income compared to those who earned income tied to profit level because the amount they receive in nominal terms remain constant but their real income is reduced. For those whose income depends on profit level, they would see an increase in nominal income but their real income would remain unchanged.
- With high inflation, assuming that it is relatively higher than the country's trading partner, households may switch their expenditure on domestic to imports of goods and services

Effects of high inflation on firms – centred around cost of production and real returns

- When inflation rate is high, firms may be able to increase prices to earn higher revenue, hence increasing profits in the SR. When COP (e.g wages due to workers demanding for higher wages) rises to meet the rising cost of living, the profits will fall back to its original profits in the LR.
- Unexpected inflation pushed down the real value of i/r , I rises
- Furthermore if the relative inflation rate is higher in the economy compared to other economies, firms that are dependent on the export market, may become less price competitive causing a fall in their export revenues (assuming $PED_x > 1$).

Conclusion:

- Due to the negative effects of high inflation rates, governments around the world implement policies to attain low and stable inflation.

Level	Knowledge, Application, Understanding and Analysis
L3 (7 – 10)	Answer provides clear explanation of the effects of high inflation on firms and households. Must consider the effect on the real value of money. Points should show sufficient scope.
L2 (5 – 6)	Answer provides underdeveloped explanation of the effects of high inflation on firms and households. Such answers would lack adequate links between statements. Max 5 if candidates only addressed effects of high inflation on one economic agent
L1 (1 – 4)	Answer provides some knowledge of the effects of high inflation and relate to why governments want to achieve low and stable inflation.

(b) Discuss the alternative policies that the UK government might adopt to alleviate the inflationary pressures. [15]

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Discuss' → Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = How 3 different types of policies will alleviate the inflationary pressures and their limitations

Context = UK

Introduction:

- Governments aim to attain low and stable inflation
- They have a range of policy tools at their disposal to tackle high inflation.
- Whether DD-management policies are appropriate to tackle high inflation, the main criterion is the source of inflation/root cause of inflation, namely demand-pull or cost-push. Other criteria are: nature of economy (eg open, import dependent on raw materials), trade-off (in relation to the state the economy, ie are they developing, with high unN).

Body:

Thesis:

Monetary Policy

- Where inflation is due to demand-pull inflation, governments can introduce demand-management policies such as monetary policy.
- UK can adopt a contractionary MP (fall in money supply, rise in interest rate) to increase the cost of borrowing for households and firms. The increase in interest rates made it more expensive to borrow as households and firms would have to return more interest with the loan that they took.
- As such, this helped to reduce the amount of borrowing and thus reduced consumption and investment. This caused a fall in AD and thus a fall in GPL.
- Thus MP helped to tackle the demand-pull inflation.

Fiscal Policy

- Similarly, government can make use of fiscal policy to cause a fall in AD using fiscal tools, government expenditure (G) and/or tax revenue (T).
- In this case, a decrease in G and/or an increase in T. The after-tax profits for firms will fall and it will lead to a fall in investment. The after-tax disposable income will fall and will cause the purchasing power to decrease → reducing consumption.
- C, I will fall → fall in AD → fall in GPL
- Thus FP helped to tackle the demand-pull inflation.

Supply side policies

- Where the source of inflation is cost-push inflation, training/courses can be put in place to increase the productivity of workers. An increase in productivity will allow the workers to produce more units of output per unit time and thus lowers the AC of each unit produced. This will help to alleviate the inflationary pressures due to wage increases with the assumption that wage increase is not matched with increase in labour productivity.
- SRAS and LRAS increase → reducing the GPL

Exchange rate policy

- Economies that experience imported inflation, in the case of UK – rising cost of foreign package holiday and imported games, can implement the ERP where the government will appreciate the currency. This will make imports cheaper in terms of the domestic currency and thus lower the COP for firms. This will increase SRAS, lower the general price level
- This policy is also appropriate to address high inflation due to demand-pull inflation as the appreciation of the currency makes exports more expensive in foreign currency and imports relatively cheaper in domestic currency. Q_x falls and Q_m rises → fall in net exports assuming Marshall-Lerner condition holds and thus could lower AD → reduce GPL

Anti-Thesis:

Monetary policy

- MP has its limitations. One limitation is that if inflationary expectations have set in, households and firms would rather bring forward their consumption and investment and the rise in interest rates would not deter consumption or investment significantly.
- If inflation was cost-push in nature, demand-management policy would deepen the fall in NY.

Fiscal Policy

- Limitations that would affect effectiveness of FP policy– the possible small value multiplier K multiplier due to high tax rate in UK will affect MPT and the extent of the fall in GPL.
- If inflation was cost-push in nature, demand-management policy would deepen the fall in NY.

Exchange Rate Policy (ERP)

- However Marshall-Lerner condition may not hold in the SR due to contractual agreements in trade and thus may not be appropriate to tackle high inflation
- If inflation was cost-push in nature, demand-management policy would deepen the fall in NY (ERP also works to reduce GPL through reducing AD).

Supply side Policy

- Increase in productivity through training takes a long time to attain and it is not guaranteed as the success of the training depends on the attitudes and mindset of the workers undergoing training.
- Hence, supply-side policies must be implemented in tandem to cope with the increase in AD to bring stability to the general price level

Conclusion:

- Whether demand-management policies are appropriate depends on the source of inflation that the economy is facing.
- Often there are multiple sources of inflation and thus governments should employ a mix of policies that are appropriate to the respective sources of inflation. In the case of UK, the preamble does not provide sufficient information on the relative importance of the different sources of inflation.
- Governments would also have to be mindful of the effect of the policies on the other macroeconomic goals as lowering inflation by lowering AD could lead to a slowdown in growth and may result in higher unemployment should firms find it unprofitable to continue producing in the economy. In addition, there is a need to adopt supply-side policies to reduce inflation.

Level	Knowledge, Application, Understanding and Analysis
L3 (9 – 11)	Answer provides clear discussion of at least 3 policies that a government can employ to tackle inflation with an emphasis on the appropriateness in tackling certain sources of inflation
L2 (6 – 8)	Answer provides an underdeveloped discussion of at least 2 policies to tackle inflation Explanation of policies without looking at its limitations will be given max 6m
L1 (1 – 5)	Answer shows some knowledge of the policies to tackle inflation but lacks analysis.

E2 (3 – 4)	Judgement based on analysis.
E1 (1 – 2)	Mainly unexplained judgement.

5) Discuss how far the conflicts in government macroeconomic objectives depend on the openness of the economy. [25]

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Discuss' → Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = the extent to which the conflicts in government macroeconomic objectives depend on the openness of the economy (Thesis: conflict depends on openness. Antithesis: conflict does not depend on openness.)

Context = any economy

Suggested answer:

- Government usually has the following macroeconomic policy objectives:
 - Low inflation (price stability)
 - Full or high employment
 - High and sustainable rate of economic growth
 - Balance of payments equilibrium
- Define open economy: free movement of exports, imports, and capital flows (e.g. Singapore)

Thesis: Tradeoff between inflation and economic growth/employment rates when government uses contractionary MP is affected by the extent to which economy is open

Contractionary monetary policy (achieve low inflation).

Tradeoff: Economic growth may slow

- Decrease in money supply will increase interest rates → increased cost of borrowing → decreases C and I → AD decreases, price level decreases → low inflation
- however, as AD decreases, rate of economic growth falls

Effect of open economy:

- Contractionary monetary policy may cause larger tradeoffs in an open economy
- Increased interest rates in an open economy → increased capital inflow (hot money) → exchange rate appreciates
- As exchange rate appreciates, exports become less competitive and imports increase → more unemployment in export sector, BOP worsens, AD decreases even further → further fall in NY
- Greater extent of conflict in aims

Note: accept the converse where the trade-off is explained in terms of foregoing low inflation to pursue growth

Thesis: Tradeoff between inflation and economic growth/employment rates when government uses depreciation is affected by the extent to which economy is open

Small and open economy may choose to adopt exchange rate policy to stimulate growth.

Tradeoff: between economic growth and cost-push inflation

- Depreciation → prices of exports in foreign currency will fall while prices of imports in domestic currency will rise. Q_x rises and Q_m falls. Assuming M-L condition, net exports rise.
- Rise to AD which leads to actual growth and falls in unemployment.
- However, the depreciation of the currency results in imported inflation, which is cost-push inflation

Effect of open economy

- Exchange rate policy will cause larger trade-off in an open economy which may import significant imported raw materials for the production → cost-push inflation → GPL rises → affect the export competitiveness.
- Greater extent of conflict in aims

Thesis: Tradeoff between growth and unemployment when government uses ss-side policy is affected by the extent to which economy is open

Supply side policies to increase economic growth by increasing AS

- Tradeoff: Structural Unemployment may increase
- May loosen labor migration/capital flow to increase productivity (i.e., market oriented ss-side policy) → increase AS → increase long run rate of economic growth
- However, may lead to higher structural unemployment if restructuring occurs too quickly (unskilled workers are laid off)

Effect of open economy

- The greater the openness of the economy, the structural unemployment might be more serious as the free-er flow of labour and capital would replace domestic labour at a faster rate
- Greater extent of conflict in aims

Anti-thesis: Explain at least two factors other than degree of openness that affect the trade-offs.

The extent of the trade-off between economic growth and inflation also depends on other factors other than the openness → **state of the economy, type of government spending, government budget**

- Trade-off may be lower if the economy is in the midst of a severe recession and AD is currently low.
- Lots of spare capacity → can accommodate expansionary FP without adding to inflationary pressures.
- May also be temporarily if the government employs fiscal policies with supply-side effects such as infrastructure.
- Government budget – if there is budget deficit, the government may need to cut down on spending, leading to fall in AD and NY. However, the spending may have been on infrastructure, so potential growth is traded off. Conflict of low inflation and sustained economic growth.

Conclusion:

While the degree of openness definitely affects the extent of the trade-off in macroeconomic objectives, the extent to which it does so is dependent on the context of the country in question. For example, if the context is a developing that has abundant spare capacity such that it is not plausible for it to reach full employment, the state of the economy would be insignificant as an alternative factor since the economy would not reach full employment any time soon any way. In that case, the extent of conflicts in macroeconomic objectives would be largely dependent on the openness of the economy.

Level	Knowledge, Application, Understanding and Analysis
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L3 (17-25)	Complete and well-elaborated explanation of how policies work to achieve certain macroeconomic goals, the conflict that arises, and how the extent of the conflicts depends on the openness of the economy. This is done for at least 2 policies. Well-developed explanation of how other factors other than the openness will lead to conflicts of the macroeconomic goals.
L2 (10-16)	<p>Underdeveloped explanation of how policies work to achieve certain macroeconomic goals, the conflict that arises, and how the extent of the conflicts depends on the openness of the economy. Underdeveloped explanation of how other factors other than the openness will lead to conflicts of the macroeconomic goals.</p> <p>Complete and well-elaborated explanation of how policies work to achieve certain macroeconomic goals, the conflict that arises, and how the extent of the conflicts depends on the openness of the economy. This is done for at least 2 policies. No mention of other factors that affect extent of the conflict. Maximum – 16</p> <p>Well elaborated answer that shows how conflicts in aims can happen and how the extent of the conflict depends on other factors (e.g., state of economy) – max 12m</p>
L1 (1-9)	<p>Descriptive answer that is poor or lack economic analysis.</p> <p>Answer is largely out of point or has serious conceptual errors.</p>
E2 (3 – 4)	Judgement based on analysis.
E1 (1 – 2)	Mainly unexplained judgement.

6a) Explain the consequences of a current account deficit and a government budget deficit.

Introduction

The current account records receipts and payments for export and import of goods and services, incomes to and from abroad and unilateral transfers. It will be in deficit when the outflow of money exceeds the inflow of money. The Government budget is an annual financial statement that represents the government's proposed revenue and spending for that financial year. It is in deficit when the revenue is less than its deficit.

Consequences of current account deficit

- Indication of living beyond a country's means → If a country runs a current account deficit, presumably it is running a balance of trade deficit since the balance of trade is the main component of the current account. This means that M exceeds X . Since M is a form of consumption (imports are consumed) while X is a form of production (exports are produced to be sold abroad), M exceeding X means that the country is actually consuming more than it is producing. When this happens, we say that the country is living beyond its means. It must be financing this deficit through some form of borrowing.
- Trading off of future welfare (under a floating exchange rate) → When M exceeds X , domestic consumers are able to obtain more foreign currency from the forex market to purchase the imports than the foreigners' supply of the foreign currency when they purchase X . This difference must come from the foreigners' supply of foreign currency on the forex when they purchase assets (e.g. FDI or short-term capital flows into the domestic economy). If foreigners are purchasing domestic assets (KA inflows), then future income from these assets will flow to foreigners instead of locals (e.g. if Americans purchase shares of a local company, the profits made by the local company would go to the American shareholders in the future). This reduces future welfare.
- Trading off of future welfare (under a fixed exchange rate) → When M exceeds X , domestic consumers are able to obtain more foreign currency from the forex market to purchase the imports than the foreigners' supply of the foreign currency when they purchase X . This difference must either come from the foreigners' supply of foreign currency on the forex when they purchase assets (e.g. FDI or short-term capital flows into the domestic economy) or from the domestic central bank selling the foreign currency from the foreign reserves on the forex market. In the latter case (the former case is similar to the previous point), the central bank is drawing down foreign reserves to sell on the forex market. There would be accumulation of foreign debt, which would lead to lower future welfare.

Consequences of government budget deficit

- If the government budget deficit is due to excessive spending on transfers like unemployment benefits, such welfare benefits will reduce the incentive to work, leading to productive inefficiency.
- A government budget deficit means that governments need to borrow money. As the government borrows to finance government spending, it will crowd out private investment since the increased government borrowing to finance a budget deficit will increase i/r and crowd out private spending. With i/r increasing, the expected rate of returns fall \rightarrow fall in investment \rightarrow fall in AD and LRAS \rightarrow undermine the productive capacity of the economy \rightarrow sustained economic growth can't be achieved.
- A large budget deficit may cause a loss of business confidence as firms worry about whether the government would need to increase taxes soon to correct the deficit or if the government would need to cut back on essential services (e.g. maintenance of roads). This would cause a fall in $I \rightarrow$ fall in AD as well as LRAS \rightarrow fall in NY

Note that a CA deficit is not the same as a fall in $(X-M)$ and a budget deficit is not the same as a rise in G /fall in T .

Level	Knowledge, Application, Understanding and Analysis
L3 (7 – 10)	Answer provides clear explanation of the consequences of both current account deficit and government budget deficit .
L2 (5 – 6)	<p>Answer provides undeveloped explanation of the consequences of both current account and government budget deficits.</p> <p>Max 5: Either clear explanation on current account deficit or government budget deficit</p> <p>Max 5: AD-AS analysis based on interpreting CA deficit as a fall in $(X-M)$ and a budget deficit as a rise in G/fall in T.</p>
L1 (1 – 4)	Answer provides some knowledge of current account deficit or government budget deficit.

6b) Assess whether such deficits are more likely to be caused by external or internal factors.

Applying the 3Cs:

Command = 'Discuss' \rightarrow Need 2-sided answer and an evaluative conclusion

Content = the extent to which the current account deficit and government budget deficit are caused by external or internal factors.

Context = any economy

Thesis: The deficits are caused by internal factors

Current account deficit

A high economic growth rate indicates that real national income of a country has risen relative to other countries → Residents have higher purchasing power → increased consumption of both domestically produced goods as well as imported goods → import expenditure rises → current account deficit

Ambitious industrialization programme: This leads to an increased demand for imported technology as large-scale imports of factors of production, e.g. machinery, equipment, raw materials and technology are required for industrialization to take place. This will lead to a drastic increase in payments for imports. This will cause the current account of the country to worsen.

Government budget deficit

Structural factors → composition of the population → ageing population and shrinking workforce due to falling fertility. Most developed economies faced these problems of ageing population and falling fertility. Size of people who are working shrank → fall in AS → fall in NY → reduced tax revenue collected. On top of that, government may need to spend more on healthcare such as rise in number of hospitals; nursing homes etc → rise in G and fall in tax revenue → government budget deficit

Govt policy → the budget deficit could be due to the government's spending on public investment (e.g building of roads and developing new technologies) to boost potential growth in the long run. In addition, if there is under provision of merit goods such as education or public transport, the government will increase spending on these areas. In the SR, this spending may cause a deficit.

Anti-Thesis: The deficits are caused by external factors

Current account deficit

Over time, patterns of trade are likely to change as costs of production change. If other countries have been able to gain comparative advantage in the production of a good which used to be exported by the domestic country, this will mean that the similar product produced by foreign countries is now cheaper than that produced by the domestic country. The domestic country will experience a fall in export demand and a rise in import demand. A loss in comparative advantage will thus cause the current account of a country to worsen.

Government budget deficit

Recession in foreign country → fall in NY(foreign) → fall in X from domestic country → fall in AD → fall in NY → fall in tax revenue → budget deficit

Conclusion – The extent to which the deficits are caused by external or internal factors depend on the context of the country. For government budget, it depends on the state of the economy as well as how open the economy is. The state of the economy, be it developed or developing, may affect the level and type of expenditure and hence affect the budget status. The more open the economy is, the more the economy is affected by external factors. Hence, there could be more intervention by the government and will affect the budget position.

Level	Knowledge, Application, Understanding and Analysis
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L3 (9 – 11)	Answer demonstrates both scope and depth of the external and internal factors for both current account and government budget deficits.
L2 (6 – 8)	Undeveloped answer that attempts to analyse both thesis and anti-thesis. One-sided argument that displays rigour of economic analysis.
L1 (1 – 5)	Answer is mainly descriptive or has major conceptual errors.
E2 (3 – 4)	Judgement based on analysis.
E1 (1 – 2)	Mainly unexplained judgement.