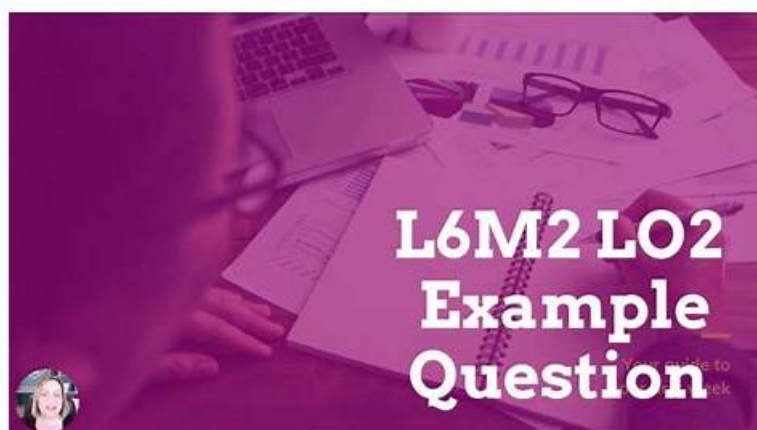


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CIPS L6M2 Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand and apply the concept of commercial global strategy in organizations: This section measures the skills of Global Strategy Analysts and focuses on evaluating the characteristics of strategic decisions in organizations. It includes understanding strategic versus operational management, strategic choices, and the vocabulary of strategy. A key skill measured is effectively differentiating between strategic and operational management.
Topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand strategy formulation and implementation: This section evaluates the skills of Strategic Planners in understanding how corporate and business strategies impact supply chains. It covers strategic directions, diversification, portfolio matrices, and methods for pursuing strategies like mergers or alliances. It also examines aligning supply chains with organizational structures and managing resources like people, technology, and finance. A key skill measured is implementing strategies under uncertain conditions.

Topic 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand financial aspects that affect procurement and supply: This section measures the skills of Financial Analysts in assessing how costs, funding, and economic objectives impact supply chains. It includes managing currency volatility through exchange rate instruments like forwards or derivatives and addressing commodity price fluctuations using futures or hedging. A critical skill assessed is managing financial risks in global supply chains effectively.
Topic 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and apply tools and techniques to address the challenges of global supply chains: This section targets Supply Chain Analysts and covers methods for analyzing global supply chains, such as STEEPLD analysis, benchmarking, and performance metrics. It also evaluates regulatory influences, including import export controls, tariffs, and employment regulations like equality, health, and safety. A critical skill assessed is applying STEEPLD analysis to supply chain challenges.

CIPS Global Commercial Strategy Sample Questions (Q36-Q41):

NEW QUESTION # 36

SIMULATION

Discuss the role and influence of industry regulators and international bodies in the business environment.

Answer:

Explanation:

The Role and Influence of Industry Regulators and International Bodies in the Business Environment Introduction Industry regulators and international bodies play a critical role in shaping the business environment by enforcing regulations, setting industry standards, and ensuring fair competition. These organizations influence how businesses operate, impacting areas such as trade, finance, environmental sustainability, labor practices, and consumer protection.

Companies must comply with regulations set by both domestic industry regulators and global institutions to maintain legal and ethical business operations.

1. Role of Industry Regulators

Industry regulators are government-appointed or independent organizations that oversee specific sectors to ensure compliance with laws and standards. Their key functions include:

- ☐ Enforcing Compliance - Ensuring companies adhere to legal requirements (e.g., financial reporting, safety regulations).
- ☐ Promoting Fair Competition - Preventing monopolies and anti-competitive practices.
- ☐ Consumer Protection - Safeguarding consumer rights and ensuring product/service quality.
- ☐ Regulating Market Entry and Operations - Setting standards for licensing, pricing, and ethical conduct.

Example of Industry Regulators

Industry	Regulator	Role
Finance	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA - UK) Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply	Regulates financial markets and protects consumers.
Telecommunications	Ofcom (UK)	Oversees telecom and broadcasting regulations.
Energy	Ofgem (UK)	Regulates electricity and gas markets.
Pharmaceuticals	Food and Drug Administration (FDA - US)	Ensures drug and food safety.
Procurement & Competition	Competition and Markets Authority (CMA - UK)	Investigates anti-competitive practices.

Case Example: The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) blocked Microsoft's acquisition of Activision Blizzard due to concerns over market dominance in cloud gaming.

2. Role of International Bodies

International bodies set global regulations, trade policies, and ethical standards that influence businesses operating across borders.

International Body	Role in Business Environment	Example of Influence
World Trade Organization (WTO)	Regulates international trade rules and resolves disputes.	WTO mediates disputes between nations on tariffs and trade barriers.
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Provides financial support and policy advice to stabilize economies.	IMF loans help countries facing economic crises, influencing business confidence.
United Nations (UN)	Promotes sustainability, human rights, and global stability.	The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) influence CSR policies.
World Bank	Funds infrastructure and economic development projects.	Funds large-scale transport and energy projects in developing nations.
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Sets global labor standards and worker rights protections.	ILO conventions shape employment laws on fair wages and working conditions.
ISO (International Organization for Standardization)	Develops global quality and safety standards.	ISO 9001 certification is widely used for quality management.

Case Example: The WTO's intervention in Brexit trade negotiations affected tariffs and supply chain costs for UK-based companies.

3. Influence of Industry Regulators and International Bodies on Business Strategy Businesses must align their strategies with regulatory and international frameworks to ensure compliance and avoid financial or reputational risks.

Area of Influence	Impact on Business
Trade and Market Access	International bodies like WTO determine trade agreements and tariffs, impacting global supply chains.
Legal and Compliance Costs	Businesses must allocate resources to comply with financial, labor, and environmental regulations.
Ethical Business Practices	Regulatory bodies enforce fair labor laws and anti-corruption policies, shaping corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies.
Innovation and Standards	ISO and sector-specific regulations push companies to meet quality, safety, and environmental benchmarks.

Example: The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) forced global companies to enhance data protection policies or face heavy fines.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Regulatory and International Influence

□ Advantages

Promotes Stability & Fair Competition - Reduces market manipulation and corruption.

Protects Consumers & Employees - Ensures safety, fair wages, and ethical standards.

Encourages Innovation & Sustainability - Businesses invest in R&D to meet regulatory requirements.

Facilitates Global Trade - International trade agreements create business opportunities.

□ Disadvantages

Regulatory Burdens & Compliance Costs - Strict laws increase operational costs.

Trade Barriers & Bureaucracy - Lengthy regulatory approval processes slow down market entry.

Risk of Overregulation - Too many rules can stifle competition and innovation.

Example: The EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) requires manufacturers to pay for carbon emissions, increasing operational costs.

Conclusion

Industry regulators and international bodies shape the business environment by enforcing laws, ensuring ethical practices, and facilitating global trade. Companies must proactively monitor regulatory changes, integrate compliance into strategic planning, and adapt to international standards to maintain market competitiveness and sustainability.

NEW QUESTION # 37

SIMULATION

Evaluate the role of strategic human management in creating competitive advantage for an organisation

Answer:

Explanation:

Evaluation of the Role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in Creating Competitive Advantage Introduction

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the proactive alignment of HR policies with business strategy to achieve long-term success. It focuses on developing talent, leadership, culture, and employee engagement to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness.

By implementing effective SHRM practices, companies can create a sustainable competitive advantage through a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

1. The Role of SHRM in Creating Competitive Advantage

1.1 Talent Acquisition and Workforce Planning

☐ Why it matters?

Recruiting and retaining highly skilled employees is essential for innovation and efficiency.

Workforce planning ensures the right people are in the right roles at the right time.

Example: Google's strategic hiring approach focuses on attracting top AI and engineering talent, driving innovation in tech.

☐ Competitive Advantage Created:

✓ Builds an expert workforce that competitors cannot easily replicate.

✓ Reduces turnover costs by ensuring long-term retention.

1.2 Employee Development and Training

☐ Why it matters?

Continuous learning and skills development enhance employee productivity and innovation.

Upskilling employees keeps companies ahead in fast-changing industries.

Example: Amazon's Career Choice Program invests in employee training to develop future leaders and improve workforce capabilities.

☐ Competitive Advantage Created:

✓ Enhances organizational agility by equipping employees with emerging skills.

✓ Creates a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

1.3 Performance Management and Employee Engagement

☐ Why it matters?

Effective performance management systems ensure employees align with business goals.

Engaged employees are more productive, motivated, and committed to company success.

Example: Salesforce's focus on employee engagement through leadership development and internal career growth has resulted in high retention and innovation.

☐ Competitive Advantage Created:

✓ Drives high workforce productivity and efficiency.

✓ Reduces costs related to poor performance and disengagement.

1.4 HR Technology and Data-Driven Decision-Making

☐ Why it matters?

Digital HR tools (e.g., AI-driven recruitment, performance analytics, HR automation) optimize talent management.

Data-driven HR strategies help predict workforce trends and talent gaps.

Example: Unilever uses AI-driven HR analytics to identify high-potential employees and enhance leadership succession planning.

☐ Competitive Advantage Created:

✓ Enables data-driven workforce planning for future growth.

✓ Increases efficiency and reduces hiring biases.

1.5 Employee Well-being and Diversity & Inclusion

☐ Why it matters?

Work-life balance policies, mental health support, and DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) programs improve workplace culture.

Diverse teams enhance creativity, problem-solving, and innovation.

Example: Microsoft's Diversity & Inclusion programs have strengthened its brand and innovation by fostering a more inclusive workforce.

☐ Competitive Advantage Created:

✓ Attracts top global talent who seek inclusive workplaces.

✓ Strengthens brand reputation and employee loyalty.

2. Advantages of Strategic HRM in Competitive Positioning

☐ Develops Unique Talent & Expertise - Hard for competitors to replicate.

☐ Enhances Productivity & Efficiency - Skilled, engaged employees drive better results.

☐ Supports Business Agility & Innovation - Workforce is adaptable to market changes.

- Builds Strong Employer Brand - Attracts and retains high-quality talent.

Key Takeaway: SHRM transforms HR from an administrative function to a strategic asset that creates long-term value.

3. Challenges & Risks of SHRM

- Implementation Costs - Advanced HR technology and training require investment.
- Resistance to Change - Employees may resist new HR policies.
- Measuring ROI Can Be Complex - Talent development impacts long-term but is hard to quantify.
- Legal & Compliance Risks - Global HR policies must align with labor laws across different countries.

Solution: Businesses must integrate HR analytics, leadership buy-in, and cultural change strategies to overcome these challenges.

4. Conclusion

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is a key driver of sustainable competitive advantage by:

- Attracting and retaining top talent.
- Developing a highly skilled, engaged, and innovative workforce.
- Leveraging HR technology and data-driven insights.
- Promoting employee well-being, diversity, and inclusion.

Companies that prioritize SHRM create a dynamic, future-ready workforce, ensuring long-term success in competitive markets.

NEW QUESTION # 38

SIMULATION

Provide a definition of a commodity product. What role does speculation and hedging play in the commodities market?

Answer:

Explanation:

Commodity Products and the Role of Speculation & Hedging in the Commodities Market

1. Definition of a Commodity Product

A commodity product is a raw material or primary agricultural product that is uniform in quality and interchangeable with other products of the same type, regardless of the producer.

□ Key Characteristics:

Standardized and homogeneous - Little differentiation between producers.

Traded on global markets - Bought and sold on commodity exchanges.

Price determined by supply & demand - Subject to market fluctuations.

Examples of Commodity Products:

Agricultural Commodities - Wheat, corn, coffee, cotton.

Energy Commodities - Crude oil, natural gas, coal.

Metals & Minerals - Gold, silver, copper, aluminum.

Key Takeaway: Commodities are essential goods used in global trade, where price is the primary competitive factor.

2. The Role of Speculation in the Commodities Market

Definition

Speculation involves buying and selling commodities for profit rather than for actual use, based on price predictions.

□ How Speculation Works:

Traders and investors buy commodities expecting price increases (long positions).

They sell commodities expecting price declines (short positions).

No physical exchange of goods-transactions are purely financial.

Example:

A trader buys crude oil futures at \$70 per barrel, expecting prices to rise. If oil reaches \$80 per barrel, the trader sells for profit.

Advantages of Speculation

- ✓ Increases market liquidity - More buyers and sellers improve trading efficiency.
- ✓ Enhances price discovery - Helps determine fair market value.
- ✓ Absorbs market risk - Speculators take risks that producers or consumers avoid.

Disadvantages of Speculation

- Creates excessive volatility - Large speculative trades can cause price spikes or crashes.
 - Detaches prices from real supply and demand - Can inflate bubbles or cause artificial declines.
 - Market manipulation risks - Speculators with large holdings can distort prices.
- Key Takeaway: Speculation adds liquidity and helps price discovery, but can lead to extreme volatility if unchecked.

3. The Role of Hedging in the Commodities Market

Definition

Hedging is a risk management strategy used by commodity producers and consumers to protect against price fluctuations.

□ How Hedging Works:

Producers (e.g., farmers, oil companies) use futures contracts to lock in a price for future sales, reducing the risk of price drops.

Consumers (e.g., airlines, food manufacturers) hedge to secure stable input costs, avoiding sudden price surges.

Example:

An airline hedges against rising fuel costs by buying fuel futures at a fixed price for the next 12 months. If fuel prices rise, the airline is protected from increased expenses.

Advantages of Hedging

- ✓ Stabilizes revenue and costs - Helps businesses plan with certainty.
- ✓ Protects against price swings - Reduces exposure to unpredictable market conditions.
- ✓ Encourages long-term investment - Producers and buyers operate with confidence.

Disadvantages of Hedging

- Reduces potential profits - If prices move favorably, hedgers miss out on gains.
- Contract obligations - Hedgers must honor contract terms, even if market prices improve.
- Hedging costs - Fees and contract costs can be high.

Key Takeaway: Hedging protects businesses from commodity price risk, ensuring stable revenue and cost control.

4. Speculation vs. Hedging: Key Differences

Factor	Speculation 🎲	Hedging 🛡️
Purpose	Profit from price movements	Reduce financial risk
Participants	Traders, hedge funds, investment firms	Farmers, airlines, manufacturers
Risk Level	High risk, high reward	Low risk, stability-focused
Market Impact	Increases liquidity, but adds volatility	Reduces price uncertainty for businesses
Example	A trader buys oil futures expecting prices to rise	A food company locks in wheat prices to avoid cost spikes

Key Takeaway: Speculation seeks profit from price changes, while hedging minimizes risk from price fluctuations.

5. Conclusion

- Commodity products are standardized raw materials traded globally, with prices driven by supply and demand dynamics.
- Speculation brings liquidity and price discovery but can increase volatility.
- Hedging helps businesses stabilize costs and revenues, ensuring financial predictability.
- Both strategies play essential roles in ensuring a balanced, functional commodities market.

NEW QUESTION # 39

SIMULATION

Currency Options and Currency Swaps are instruments used in foreign exchange. Explain the advantages of using these derivatives compared to the use of spot transactions

Answer:

Explanation:

Comparison of Currency Options, Currency Swaps, and Spot Transactions in Foreign Exchange Introduction In international trade and finance, companies dealing with foreign currencies use various financial instruments to manage exchange rate risks. The three main instruments are:

Currency Options - Provide the right (but not obligation) to exchange currency at a fixed rate in the future.

Currency Swaps - A contract to exchange currency flows over a set period.

Spot Transactions - A simple immediate currency exchange based on the current market rate.

While spot transactions offer simplicity, currency options and swaps provide better risk management and flexibility.

1. Currency Options (Flexible Risk Management Tool)

Definition

A currency option gives the holder the right, but not the obligation, to exchange a currency at a predetermined rate on or before a specific date.

□ Types of Options:

Call Option - Right to buy a currency at a fixed rate.

Put Option - Right to sell a currency at a fixed rate.

Example: A UK importer buying goods from the US purchases a GBP/USD call option to protect against an increase in the exchange rate.

Advantages of Currency Options Over Spot Transactions

- ✓ Risk Protection - Protects against adverse currency movements while maintaining upside potential.
- ✓ Flexibility - No obligation to execute the transaction if the exchange rate is favorable.
- ✓ Ideal for Hedging Future Payments - Useful for businesses with uncertain future cash flows in foreign currencies.

□ Disadvantages

✗ Premium Costs - Buying options requires upfront payment.

✗ Complexity - More sophisticated than spot transactions.

Best for: Businesses managing currency risk with unpredictable payment schedules.

2. Currency Swaps (Long-Term Hedging Solution)

Definition

A currency swap is a contract between two parties to exchange currency flows over a set period at a predetermined rate.

□ How It Works:

Companies exchange principal and interest payments in different currencies.

Used to secure long-term financing in foreign markets.

Example: A UK company with a loan in USD enters a GBP/USD swap with a US firm to exchange interest payments, reducing exchange rate risk.

Advantages of Currency Swaps Over Spot Transactions

✓ Long-Term Stability - Protects businesses from long-term exchange rate fluctuations.

✓ Cost Efficiency - Often cheaper than converting currency via spot transactions repeatedly.

✓ Reduces Interest Rate Risk - Useful for companies with foreign currency debt obligations.

□ Disadvantages

✗ Less Flexible Than Options - The swap contract must be followed as agreed.

✗ Counterparty Risk - Dependent on the financial stability of the other party.

Best for: Companies with long-term foreign currency liabilities (e.g., loans, international contracts).

3. Spot Transactions (Immediate Currency Exchange, No Hedging)

Definition

A spot transaction is a straightforward exchange of currency at the current market rate for immediate settlement (usually within two days).

Example: A European exporter receiving USD payment converts it immediately into EUR using a spot transaction.

Limitations Compared to Derivatives (Options & Swaps)

□ No Risk Protection - Subject to daily exchange rate volatility.

□ Not Suitable for Future Obligations - Cannot hedge against expected payments or receipts.

□ Higher Costs for Frequent Transactions - Repeated spot trades incur forex fees and spread costs.

Best for: Small businesses or one-time transactions with no currency risk concerns.

4. Comparison Table: Currency Options, Swaps, and Spot Transactions

Feature	Currency Options 🎯	Currency Swaps 🔄	Spot Transactions 📍
Purpose	Hedging future exchange rate risks	Long-term currency exchange risk management	Immediate currency exchange
Obligation to Execute	No (buyer has a choice)	Yes (contractually binding)	Yes (immediate settlement)
Risk Protection	High	Medium (for long-term contracts)	None
Flexibility	High (optional execution)	Low (fixed agreement)	High (instant exchange)
Best for	Businesses with uncertain future cash flows in foreign currency	Companies with long-term foreign currency liabilities	Immediate, one-time payments
Main Disadvantage	Costly premiums	Counterparty risk	High exposure to currency volatility

Key Takeaway:

Currency options offer flexibility and protection but come at a cost.

Currency swaps provide long-term stability for large corporations.

Spot transactions are simple but expose businesses to market fluctuations.

5. Conclusion & Best Recommendation

For businesses engaged in international trade, investments, or loans, using currency options and swaps is superior to spot transactions, as they provide:

- ☐ Protection from exchange rate volatility.
- ☐ Cost efficiency for large or recurring transactions.
- ☐ Better financial planning and risk management.

Best Choice Based on Business Needs:

For short-term flexibility → Currency Options

For long-term contracts or loans → Currency Swaps

For one-time currency exchange → Spot Transactions

By selecting the right derivative instrument, businesses can reduce foreign exchange risk and improve financial stability.

NEW QUESTION # 40

SIMULATION

Discuss supply and demand factors in foreign exchange

Answer:

Explanation:

Supply and Demand Factors in Foreign Exchange

Introduction

The foreign exchange (Forex) market operates on the fundamental principle of supply and demand, which determines currency values. When demand for a currency rises, its value appreciates, while an oversupply causes depreciation.

Several factors influence the supply and demand of foreign currencies, including interest rates, inflation, trade balances, investor sentiment, and geopolitical events.

This answer explores the key supply and demand factors in Forex markets and how they impact exchange rates.

1. Demand Factors in Foreign Exchange (What Increases Demand for a Currency?)

1.1 Interest Rate Differentials (Higher Interest Rates Attract Capital Inflows)

- ☐ Why It Affects Demand?

Investors seek higher returns on savings and investments.

Higher interest rates increase demand for the country's currency.

Example:

When the US Federal Reserve raises interest rates, the US dollar (USD) strengthens as global investors buy USD-denominated assets.

Key Takeaway: Countries with higher interest rates attract more investors, increasing currency demand.

1.2 Inflation Rates (Low Inflation Strengthens Currency Demand)

- ☐ Why It Affects Demand?

Lower inflation preserves purchasing power, making the currency more attractive.

High inflation erodes currency value, reducing demand.

Example:

The Swiss Franc (CHF) remains strong due to Switzerland's low inflation and economic stability.

In contrast, Turkey's Lira (TRY) depreciated due to high inflation, reducing investor confidence.

Key Takeaway: Stable inflation rates encourage demand for a currency, while high inflation weakens it.

1.3 Trade Balance & Current Account Surplus (Export-Led Demand for a Currency)

- ☐ Why It Affects Demand?

A trade surplus (exports > imports) increases demand for a country's currency.

Foreign buyers need the country's currency to pay for goods and services.

Example:

China's trade surplus increases demand for the Chinese Yuan (CNY) as global buyers purchase Chinese goods.

Germany's strong exports strengthen the Euro (EUR) due to high international trade.

Key Takeaway: Exporting nations experience higher currency demand, boosting value.

1.4 Investor Confidence & Speculation (Market Sentiment Drives Demand)

- ☐ Why It Affects Demand?

If investors expect a currency to appreciate, they buy more of it.

Safe-haven currencies see increased demand during global uncertainty.

Example:

Gold and the US Dollar (USD) strengthen during economic crises, as investors seek stability.

Brexit uncertainty weakened the British Pound (GBP) as investors speculated on UK economic instability.

Key Takeaway: Market psychology and speculation can drive short-term demand for a currency.

2. Supply Factors in Foreign Exchange (What Increases the Supply of a Currency?)

2.1 Central Bank Monetary Policy (Money Supply & Interest Rate Adjustments)

□ Why It Affects Supply?

Central banks control currency supply through interest rates and money printing.

Loose monetary policy (low rates, quantitative easing) increases money supply, depreciating currency.

Example:

The European Central Bank (ECB) lowered interest rates and introduced stimulus packages, increasing the supply of Euros (EUR).

The Bank of Japan's low-interest rates increased the supply of Japanese Yen (JPY), making it weaker.

Key Takeaway: More money supply weakens a currency, while tight monetary policy strengthens it.

2.2 Government Debt & Fiscal Policy (Higher Debt Increases Currency Supply)

□ Why It Affects Supply?

Countries with high national debt may increase money supply to cover obligations.

High debt reduces investor confidence, increasing supply as investors sell off the currency.

Example:

The US dollar saw increased supply during the 2008 financial crisis due to stimulus packages.

Argentina's peso weakened as government debt rose, increasing peso supply in markets.

Key Takeaway: High government debt can lead to more currency supply and depreciation.

2.3 Foreign Exchange Reserves & Currency Intervention (Central Banks Selling Currency to Manage Value)

□ Why It Affects Supply?

Central banks buy/sell their currency to stabilize exchange rates.

Selling reserves increases currency supply, reducing its value.

Example:

China's central bank occasionally sells Yuan (CNY) to keep it competitive in global markets.

Switzerland's central bank has intervened to weaken the Swiss Franc (CHF) to support exports.

Key Takeaway: Governments manipulate currency supply to stabilize economic conditions.

2.4 Import Demand & Trade Deficits (More Imports Increase Currency Supply)

□ Why It Affects Supply?

A trade deficit (imports > exports) increases supply of local currency in global markets.

Importers exchange local currency for foreign currency, increasing supply.

Example:

The US has a persistent trade deficit, increasing the supply of US dollars in foreign exchange markets.

The UK's reliance on imports has contributed to GBP fluctuations.

Key Takeaway: Countries with trade deficits see higher currency supply, leading to depreciation.

3. Interaction of Supply & Demand in Foreign Exchange Markets

Scenario	Impact on Demand	Impact on Supply	Effect on Currency Value
Higher Interest Rates (US Federal Reserve)	Increases	Unchanged	USD appreciates
Trade Deficit (UK imports more than exports)	Unchanged	Increases	GBP depreciates
Economic Crisis (Investors buy USD as a safe-haven currency)	Increases	Unchanged	USD strengthens
Government prints more money (Hyperinflation in Venezuela)	Unchanged	Increases	Venezuelan Bolivar depreciates

Key Takeaway: Exchange rates fluctuate based on the balance between supply and demand.

4. Conclusion

The foreign exchange market operates based on supply and demand dynamics, influenced by:

□ Demand Factors:

Interest Rates & Inflation - Higher rates strengthen demand.

Trade Balances - Export-driven economies see strong demand.

Investor Sentiment - Economic stability attracts investors.

□ Supply Factors:

Central Bank Policies - Money printing increases supply.

Government Debt - High debt increases supply, lowering value.

Trade Deficits - Import-heavy economies see currency depreciation.

Understanding these factors helps businesses and policymakers manage foreign exchange risks and optimize international trade strategies.

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