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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of this essay is to reflect upon the research process on the learning gained from the research topic “Investigating the use of social media for HRM in SME retails sector”. Reflective practice a major role in the research work as it assists the researchers to reflect upon the approaches and methods he/she has used in his/her work and issues and challenges faced by him/her during the work.

The aim of this essay is to describe the reflection of my own experience in different stages of whole research.

This reflective essay presents the challenges, experiences and problems I faced from research topic development to approach, methodology, survey, questionnaires, analysis, pitch video for stakeholders, feedback, conference posters, etc.

In order to reflect upon the practices, Gibbs model of reflection has been which consist of six different stages of reflection such as description, feeling, analysis, evaluation. conclusion and action plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Reflective practice can be defined as the ability of an individual to reflect on his or her actions for the purpose of continuous learning (Myers, 2022). It is mainly related to the concept to learning from doing and also assist learners to decide what they do in future if same situation arise again. According to Farrell (2022) - reflective practice plays a vital role in research work as it allows the researchers to explore issues that he/she faces during the research work and to make assumptions in more integral and explicit manner. Efu (2023) believes that - reflective practice is a type of thinking process and evaluation technique through which the individual himself/herself understands the actual status of his/her work and subsequently prepares himself/herself well for the work by correcting the identified defects. Learning the practice of reflection is very important because it allow the researcher to engage into a meaningful relationship with the real world situation. The given essay is based on the reflection which is done on the research work. The reflection will be provided with the help of Gibbs (1988) model of reflection in order to reflect upon the issues and challenges faced during the research work and lesson learned from the work.

MAIN FINDINGS

Reflection is one of the most important activities because it allows the researcher to reflect upon his own practices and by using this practice in research work a person will be able to analyze different situations and experiences which he faced during the work and taking action if any skill gap has been identified by him (Brown, 2019).

I am also using reflective practice to share my experience of working on the research topic which is “an investigation of the use of social media for HRM in SME retail sector”. I am conducting this reflective practice to share the approaches and methods which I used in research work.

Gibbs’s Reflective Cycle

Gibbs reflective cycle is one of the most famous reflective model which leads person to go through six stages of the model for reflecting upon the experience (Adeani, Febriani and

Syafryadin, 2020). This tool helps an individual to think in a systematic and clear manner. The six stages of this model are explained below.



Figure: Gibbs Reflective Model (1988)

Description

The first stage of this model is description stage where I will clearly describe the situation or experience I gained from the research work (Sekarwinahyu *et.al*, 2019). The topic I have chosen for the research is “an investigation of the use of social media for HRM in SME retail sector”. I chose this topic because I wanted to understand the importance which social media holds in SME retail industry. Another reason for choosing this topic is I wanted to examine the use of social media by the HRM department in SME retail sector along with Identifying the ways to improve the presence of social media (Hosain, 2023). Before starting the research work, I decided the research methods which I will use. The research approach I have used here is deductive approach because this approach has assisted me to use data to understand the social world in a more objective manner and I also used quantitative research approach for getting validity and reliability of the research work (Ahmed, Opoku and Aziz, 2016). I have also used

data collection method such as surveys for collecting the primary data. By using the survey method, I was able to collect quantitative data in large amount and other method I used was questionnaire to collect responses from the selected population and I used close ended questions in the questionnaire (Elsden, 2022). For conducting the research, I have used different techniques of primary and secondary research. The outcome of this situation was able to gain insight knowledge and understanding of relationship between social media and HRM and it has also improved my research skills (Dossena, Mizzau and Mochi, 2019).

Feelings

Before taking this research work, I was feeling very nervous at first because I did not conduct any research before and this was the first time I was doing any work. The methods and approaches were new for me which, according to Rinzy (2020) means that - any research approach is new to a researcher whose experience makes him/her both enthusiastic about the work and also a little nervous. When I started my research work, I faced many difficulties such as unable to find source for the purpose of data collection. The questionnaire I prepared was also not very effective and this really made me sad. But my module teacher and colleagues were very supportive who helped me a lot during the whole research work. After sometime, I also started enjoying the work. The research methods and approaches I used was also very effective which helped me in completing my research work with positive outcomes and I was very happy with the positive results and feedback I got from the research work (Jeske and Shultz, 2022). When I was preparing the video pitch slides for the stakeholders, I had some trouble organizing the speaker notes, then I saw several stakeholder pitch videos on social media which helped me a lot in preparing my pitch for this project. At the end it was a great feeling and pleasure when I got great feedback and appreciation for the video pitch from my classmates and stakeholders. It felt like I got a fair return for my hard work which, according to Akhter (2018) means that - success comes when a researcher gets proper recognition for his/her hard work.

Evaluation

The idea which was developed by me was quite holistic as it allowed me to conduct primary research in order to identify various keen insights in the field of retail SME's and their relative use of social media in the field of human resource management (Olanrewaju *et.al.*, 2020). The

research questions which I was able to develop were also quite diverse and allowed to undertake statistical analysis to identify the ways in which retail SME's use social media which range from recruitment all the way to employee engagement (Cartwright, Liu and Raddats, 2021). The choice of utilizing deductive and primary research methods went well for me as I was able to ascertain various uses related to social media in the field of human resource management. My research process development also helped me gather various sources of authentic data in order to support the hypothesis and main aim of the report which was to investigate the use of social media for human resource management within the SME retail sector ; in this regard, Naeem (2020) suggested that - collecting data from authentic sources is very important for conducting research work which gives success to the results of the research work. However, my secondary research analysis was quite brief and I did not manage to explore the entire spectrum of the usage of social media by the HR departments of UK based retail SME's. I also faced some problems related to the effective analysis of research data which caused some time delays in the research project. My overall learning derived from this research project was quite holistic as I managed to polish various transferable skills such as my presentation and academic writing proficiency.

Analysis

The research which I undertook in order to identify the various ways in which social media is used by retail SME's in the UK was quite extensive and I utilized various method and techniques of both deductive and primary research in order to not only identify the uses of social media but also highlight ways in which social media platform usage can be optimized by such SME's in order to attract the best possible workforce and improve their organizational productivity (Khanal, Akhtaruzzaman and Kularatne, 2021). During the course of this research, I developed a comprehensive research process which helped me investigate the main aim and hypothesis of this research in detail which involved formulation of research questions, development of close ended questionnaires along with developing justified conclusions from the data insights obtained. Some of the things which went well for me in context to this research project involves the use of deductive reasoning to reach the desired conclusion as I inferred the use of social media platforms in the process of recruitment to reach the conclusion that optimized ; In this regard Kumar, Nanda and Tawangar (2022) suggested that- social media usage can be a major factor in retail SME's hiring a productive workforce. The primary data collection was also quite helpful for me as I developed close ended questionnaires with holistic

questions related to the formulated research questions. At the same time, I faced several challenges in undertaking and executing this research project, because the sample size and respondents in my research process were 12 people which had some serious drawbacks for using probability sampling with a relatively small sample size. In this regard, Aithal and Aithal (2020) said that - if the research sample size and respondents are small, then it becomes very complicated for the researcher to reach its results and conclusions. For that reason, I was also not able to undertake a detailed secondary research analysis as I suffered from time constraints throughout the research process.

Conclusion

My overall experience resulting from this research project undertaking regarding use of social media by UK based SME's in their human resource management initiatives has been quite positive as I have managed to successfully complete the aims, objectives along with the research questions which were formed as the basis of conducting this research. I managed to justify the selection of the research topic and I developed the idea throughout the course of the research process using various methodologies such as deductive research and primary data collection using probability sampling. I learned various skills through this project which mainly consist of my communication and academic writing skills which, according to Berndt (2020) - by working on a research project, a researcher can develop a variety of skills, including effective communication and academic writing skills. I also enhanced my presentation skills as this research project also involved the development of a research pitch and a presentation which are alternative methods of presenting research information. However, my entire experience working on this research project was not positive as I faced difficulty in data analysis and got short on time due to poor time management which are areas of urgent personal development. According to Elfil and Negida (2017), having a positive experience from a research project depends on proper time management and personal development that is conducive to future project development.

Action plan

The difficulties which I faced during this research mainly revolved around my poor time management and lack of quality data analysis skills which are important aspects to improve upon as they will hinder my progress in research projects repeatedly if not corrected (Leighton

et.al., 2021). In order to improve my time management skills, I will work on dividing my research process into several stages and prioritize the tasks accordingly to save time. I will also work on improving my data analysis skills by taking digital courses and personalized learning sessions to learn both qualitative and quantitative research analysis in detail. During the course of my future research undertakings, I will include a larger extent of secondary research along with using a much larger sample size for my primary data collection in order to derive better statistical insights (Muduli, Trivedi and Pingle, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The above completed reflective essay went into detail regarding the application of reflective practice on the development and undertaking of a research project and the various processes which are involved in a comprehensive research undertaking. The essay described various prominent models used for the purpose of undertaking reflective analysis and measures on the connected research project with prominence given to Gibb's cyclic model of reflection. The essay justified the choice of idea selection that goes into researches along with the methodology and frameworks which included both primary data collection and deductive reasoning . According to Casula, Rangarajan and Shields (2021) - the selection of ideas for the essay requires the incorporation of primary data collection and deductive reasoning along with research methods and frameworks. The use of reflective model application and practice was also used in the essay in order to highlight the perspective strength, weaknesses along with the areas of personal development and its impact on one's future career and learning. It was concluded from this reflective essay that undertaking research projects which are broad in scope helps develop various competencies such as academic writing skills and data analysis which are important factors that improves one's employability.

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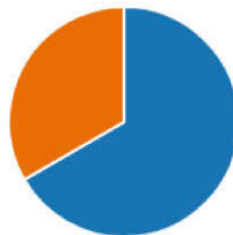
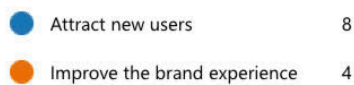
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APPENDIX

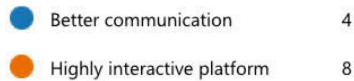
Before writing this reflective report, the screenshots of some of the significant investigations that have been maintained throughout the research project are given below in the form of an appendix:

- **Primary Research (Questionnaire and Feedback):**

1. What is the main use of social media you think in the area of SMEs ?



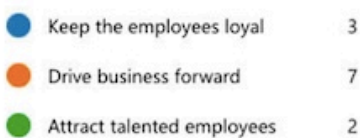
2. In your opinion, what is the main importance of social media in the growth of SMEs ?



3. As per your viewpoint, does the future of the SME is reliant on a committed workforce who are trained and motivated ?



4. What is the major role of HRM team in relation to employees ?



5. How does social media boost the efforts in recruitment and market the SME in the market ?

Employee Engagement	6
Training and development	3
Latest trends	3



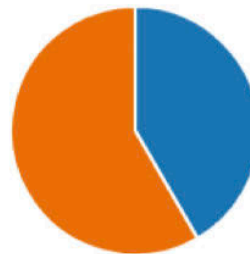
6. As per your opinion, by utilising social media by the HR professionals will meet the goals while also improving the company culture ?

Yes	9
No	0
Can't say	3



7. What are the ways to improve social media presence ?

Attention towards customers	5
Analyse the current trends	7



8. What are the best ways to attract the best workforce in SMEs ?

Improving the reputation	5
Use Social Media to Highlight O...	7



- **Pitch Video Presentation (Feedback):**

 You 7 Jun, 20:34 ...
Mst Shalma Pervin (2019669)
 Thanks for your appreciation into my approach.

 **Corina Cernat (2019920)** 7 Jun, 23:09 @ ...
Shikder, I find your presentation pretty clear on the subject that you are researching. As you mentioned you followed a deductive approach, is your hypothesis going to be formulated around the paragraph cited in the Area of Research?

 You 7 Jun, 23:32 ...
Corina Cernat (2019920)
 Thank you for you comments.
 As you can see my cited paragraph is just a definition through which I have shown the link between social media, HRM and SME to attract the attention of the stakeholders. No, it will not

 **Corina Cernat (2019920)** 7 Jun, 23:41 ...
 I understand, and it is a very good citation and I thought some relevant hypothesis can be drawn from it. I was being curious 😊

 You 7 Jun, 23:55 ...
Corina Cernat (2019920)
 Thanks once again for your interest into my research.

 **Mohammed Ahmed (2112126)** 11 Jun, 03:14 ✎ ...
 I like the structure and the smooth flow , but i have one think stuck to my mind, why did you use deductive methodology while the purpose of your research is to find out how use of social media benefit the HR? that seems to me you are going to find something does not exist and approached with tool that explaining existent theory. (its just a though i may be wrong in point of my view).

 You Yesterday, 00:15 ...
Mohammed Ahmed (2112126)
 First of all, Thank you so much for your first sentence in my presentation feedback.
 Then, I do apology, because of my late reply. Actually, I didn't see your feedback earlier, just now have seen it.
 However, I used deductive approach because it allow me to understand the social world in objective way. The main reason for using this research approach is it help me to explain the causal relationship between social media and human resource management within the SME retail sector. The deductive approach allow me to reason from generic to specific. Hope its help you
 Thanks once again brother



Mohammed Ahmed (2112126) Yesterday, 00:18 ...

Nice explanation 👉 all the best



Alina Mucenic (2108840) Yesterday, 00:18 ...

Hello

I wanted to provide you with feedback on your recent presentation on the use of social media for HRM in the SME retail sector. Overall, I thought your presentation was very good. You effectively highlighted the potential benefits of using social media in HRM and provided practical strategies for its implementation.



You Yesterday, 00:24 ...

Alina Mucenic (2108840)

It's my pleasure to have such a lovely and inspiring feedback from you. I do appreciate. It will help me further to do the reflection essay.

Thanks a lot dear



Andrei Stafi (2114799) Yesterday, 09:41 ...

Dear Sujan,

Your presentation was delightful. I took everything from what you have delivered (I will be more careful in the future about what I am going to post on the social media platforms 😊) Anyway, a well-structured work! You give such a clarity to your research question, and for your chosen research approach, I hope that they provide you with



Andrei Stafi (2114799) Yesterday, 09:41 ...

Dear Sujan,

Your presentation was delightful. I took everything from what you have delivered (I will be more careful in the future about what I am going to post on the social media platforms 😊) Anyway, a well-structured work! You give such a clarity to your research question, and for your chosen research approach, I hope that they provide you with good results/information about your topic.

PS: Be ready for the dissertation. We are going to need those research methods 😊



You Yesterday, 09:57 ...

Andrei Stafi (2114799)

Thanks for your advice and also for your aspiring words regarding my presentation. It will help in upcoming days to do better. I hope we will gonna use those methods together in our writing 🙌

