



Prifysgol Cymru
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Using a Research Approach in HR Session 3

Julie Thomas: September
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Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Session Overview

The main aim of session is to help you to draw meaningful conclusions from your research and make justified recommendations for improvements in practice.

The session will cover:

1

Research Methodology

2

Drawing conclusions and making recommendations

3

Structuring your report

Approaches to Research Methodology

The term '**methodology**' refers to the theory and philosophy of how research should be undertaken.

- Scientific/Interpretive research traditions
- The **positivist** research tradition emphasises the importance of a 'scientific' approach to gathering facts and analysing them to formulate generalisable conclusions.
- The **interpretivist** research tradition emphasises the subjective nature of human interactions and focus on the meanings and understandings of those involved in organisational processes (Anderson, 2013)

Methodological Choice

- Quantitative – surveys (face-to-face/on-line, telephone, emailed, posted)
- Qualitative – interviews, focus groups
- Observations
- Mixed methods
- Reliability – extent to which similar results would be obtained in similar occasions
- Validity – are the methods appropriate for your research question and implemented properly?
- For qualitative data – is it credible and trustworthy?
- Limitations

Primary Research

- Use literature review to formulate questions for interviews/focus groups/questionnaire
- Carefully consider the design
- Pilot the questions/questionnaire
- Questionnaires – On-line (Google Forms/Survey Monkey) or paper-based
- Analyse thematically

Primary Research - Sampling methods (Anderson, 2013, page 274 onwards)

- Simple random sampling
- Systematic sampling
- Stratified sampling
- Cluster sampling

Consider your sample size.

Ethics and Professionalism

- CIPD Code of Conduct
- University Guides
- Factors to consider – permission to conduct research, consent and confidentiality/privacy of participants, risk to participants, risk to reputation, conflicts of interest with sponsors/stakeholders.

Drawing Conclusions

- Conclusions are logical deductions based on the data in the literature review and your primary research
- Includes a comprehensive summary of your research findings
- Ends with a statement leading to the recommendations section

Making Recommendations

Recommendations should be:

- Logical – should flow logically from the conclusions
- Relevant – must meet the purpose and scope outlined
- Feasible – must be practical and workable

Making Recommendations

How to write recommendations:

- Brief – write concisely
- Clear – do not be ambiguous as to how the suggestion should be implemented. Ask who, what, when, where and how much?
- Precise – vague recommendations usually result from insufficient research/analysis
- Include a cost/benefit and resource analysis. What is the cost of doing nothing?
- Critical success factors – how you will evaluate effectiveness of change

Report structure

- Title page (report title and their name, submission date)
- Executive summary (overview, methods of analysis, findings, recommendations)
- Table of contents (list of numbered sections)
- Introduction (terms of reference)
- Literature Review (headings and sub-headings).
- Methodology – Justification of the sources used
- Findings/Discussion - Candidates should use a mix of narrative and diagrammatic formats where appropriate to present their findings.
- Conclusion (including major inferences)
- Recommendations
- Reference list/Bibliography
- Appendix if used i.e. information supporting their analysis but not essential to its explanation.

**Included
in Word
count**

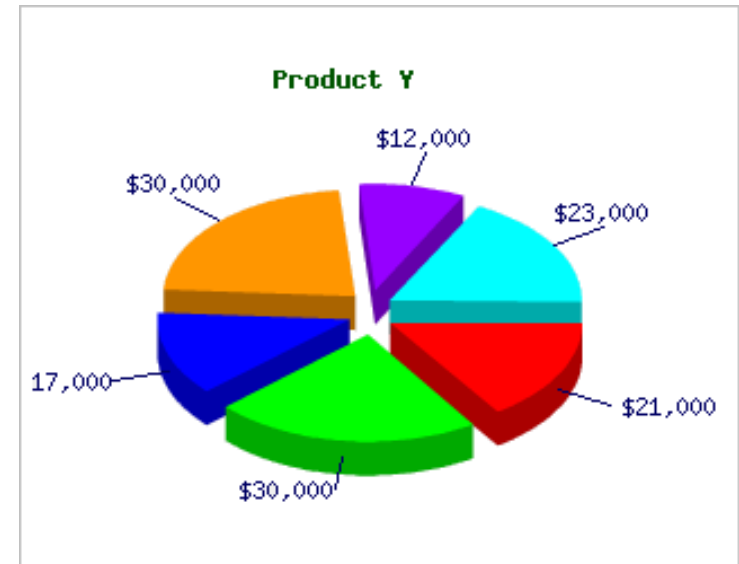
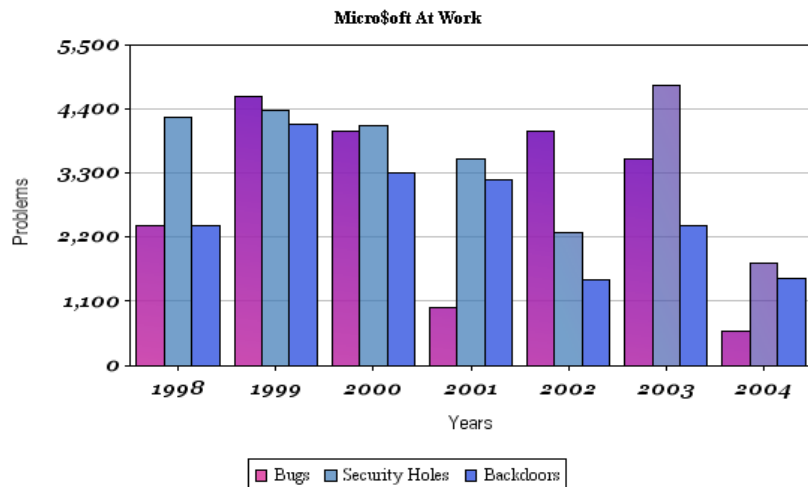
The title page, executive summary, reference list and any appendices are excluded from the word count. You should relate academic concepts, theories and professional practice to the way organisations operate, in a critical and informed way, and with reference to key texts, articles and other publications and by using organisational examples for illustration. All reference sources should be acknowledged correctly and a bibliography provided where appropriate (these should be excluded from the word count).

Charts and Diagrams

Charts and diagrams - summarise and provide powerful visual impact

Used for different purposes:

- ✓ Gantt chart - project plan
- ✓ Bar chart compare turnover over time
- ✓ Pie chart to categorise reasons for
- ✓ leaving



Pie chart- useful to show breakdown of a whole into key categories.

Editing and Proof-reading

Editing and proof-reading are fundamental aspects of good academic practice.

Editing is the process of continually revising and improving your written work. It is often an activity that forms a major part of the writing process.

Proofreading is the final check before printing and submission. It is a process that helps remove errors and improve presentation.

Learning from models

- Look at samples of good reports in your field
- Read reviews in prestigious journals in your field

Final Checks

Is it in a report format with

- An executive summary
- A clear contents page
- Use of Harvard Referencing throughout?
- Numbered sub-headings
- A list of alphabetically ordered references at the end?
- Page numbers in place?
- Your name in header/footer?
- Some use of diagrams/figures?