

MSc in Project Management

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| Session: | 2020-2021 | Semester: | SEM1 |
| Module number: | 7500BEQR | | |
| Module title: | Research Methods | | |
| Type of coursework Activity | Research Article Submitted on CANVAS | | |
| Module Leader: | Dr. Hind A. Al-Khayat | | |

ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

You are to choose six research articles, based around the same topic area, published in peer-reviewed journals. This can be any topic area, which is of interest to you, including any topic relevant to your final MSc dissertation. Your choice will include **2 research articles** that have mainly used **qualitative methodology**, **2 research articles** that have mainly used **quantitative methodology** and **2 research articles** that have used **mixed methodology** (a balanced proportion of qualitative and quantitative methodologies) to research the topic area and analyse the data. (You will find examples of journal articles on the LJMU online databases and Google Scholar and a tutorial for accessing LJMU resources can be found <https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/bcaa6af4-5e9d-4988-b9af-6750132f7d79>).

Once you have found the research articles you need to read them carefully several times so that you fully understand how the researchers have conducted the research and analysed the data. It may be helpful to make notes regarding the methodology used in each paper, so that it will be easier for you to compare the 6 research articles after you have read them. Consider how suitable you think the methodology chosen to analyse the subject matter was and whether it produced the required results.

You will then write a **2500 word (+/- 10%)** report (Table 1) on research methodology based around the reading done from your chosen articles and other sources (i.e. statistics/research methods textbooks) in order to illustrate the points you make. (The word count excludes acknowledgements, executive summary, list of contents, figures and tables, references and appendices).

Your report must demonstrate an understanding of appropriate research knowledge and techniques to support the reasoned arguments you have made about your chosen articles. You are expected to **critically appraise the literature covered in each article**, considering whether you would have used the same methodological approach. Then you will critically evaluate the way in which data was analysed and whether the conclusions the authors have made are valid based on their chosen methodology and results.

There are also some marks available for the general presentation of your report and effective use of referencing, see Table 2 for full marking criteria, and Table 3 for full grade descriptors.

Table 1. Assessment details. Research Article. The submission date for each cohort is exactly 70 days (10 weeks) after their last tutorial session.

| Cohort | Submission date | Words | Weighting | Learning outcomes |
|----------|---|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Cohort 2 | Thursday 10 th December 2020 | 2500 (+/-10%) | 100% | 1-3 |
| Cohort 3 | Wednesday 9 th December 2020 | 2500 (+/-10%) | 100% | 1-3 |

Marking Criteria

The marking criteria for this module are solely based around the 3 Learning Outcomes detailed in the Module Proforma and Module Handbook. **This module is concerned with research methods and practice, and the actual topic of your chosen research articles will not form any part of the mark.** Please carefully consider the structure of your report to make sure you address all of the below marking criteria while not exceeding the allocated wordcount.

Table 2. Assignment objectives and marking criteria.

| Assignment objectives and marking criteria | | Mark % |
|--|--|--------|
| Introduction | A clear introduction to the report (the aim of the report) and identification and a brief overview of the selected research articles. | 10% |
| Critical Review of the Literature and Methodology | A critical appraisal of the literature contained in the six research articles. | 20% |
| | A clear identification and critical evaluation of the research methods that have been used in the six research articles. | 20% |
| | A critical evaluation of the data collection and analysis (results) drawn from the research; critically assessing the way in which this has been explained in the articles. | 20% |
| Conclusions | A final evaluation of the methodological choices made by the authors of the research articles based on the evidence from the critical review sections. | 20% |
| Referencing | Accurate use of Harvard System. (See https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/library/skills-ljmu/referencing-and-endnote) Bibliography is alphabetically arranged without bullet points or numbers. | 5% |
| Presentation | A fluently written: concise and accurate report. Demonstrating that attention has been paid to grammar and spelling; No unnecessary use of quotations; Graphical material being well presented and where possible created for the research. Word count. | 5% |

I) STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

All reports should contain:

Title page: giving the following information:

- **7500BEQR Research Methods Report**
- Your OUC student ID number
- **MSc in Project Management**
- **2019-2020 SUM**
- The word count (excluding acknowledgements, executive summary, list of contents, figures and tables, references and appendices)

Confidentiality statement: If there are genuine reasons why your work could be considered confidential then you should discuss this matter with your Module Leader. **(Optional)**

Executive summary: a brief summary of the aim, methodology, contents, and conclusions of the team project.

Acknowledgements: a list of people who provided help to the author during the research and writing of the project. **(Optional)**

List of contents: showing the breakdown of the project into its constituent parts and locating them by page number. It is good practice to also include a list of figures, tables and appendices.

Introduction: presenting and justifying the research and/or consultancy problem/issue and introducing the approach taken to investigating and presenting the problem.

Glossary: a list of abbreviations and technical terms used and their definitions. **(Optional)**

Body of the report: should be arranged in a way appropriate to the topic, presenting a review of relevant literature, results and discussions and a synthesis of findings, critical analysis of facts and/or ideas, using chapter headings, with paragraphs and spacing for ease of reading and cross-references.

Conclusions: an assessment of the findings along with any recommendations; this section should, explicitly or implicitly, establish the validity of the work in relation to its field.

References: should be Harvard format (APA 6th edition) for all in-text citations and end list of references.

Appendices: optional; useful for relevant but **supplementary** information; should not be used for key material that should be placed in the main body of the report.

II) Report Presentation Format

- *The report itself should demonstrate analytical and evaluation skills in discussion of the topic and a clear understanding of strategic project management issues. Please do not merely submit a list of bullet points to address the criterion identified – this will ensure a fail.*

All references should be clearly cited within the text and summarised in the end Reference list.

The work should be submitted electronically through the link under Assignments on the module within Canvas. The work should be submitted anonymously and should just contain your student ID number.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the practice of presenting thoughts, writings or other output of another or others as original, without acknowledgement of their source(s). All material used to support a piece of work, whether a printed publication or from electronic media, should be appropriately identified and referenced and should not normally be copied directly unless as an acknowledged quote. Text translated into the words of the individual student should in all cases acknowledge the source.

Before submitting the work, you should check through it to ensure that:

- All material that has been identified as originally from a previously published source has been properly attributed by the inclusion of an appropriate in-text citation.
- Direct quotations are marked as such (using “double quotation marks” at the beginning and end of the selected text).
- Each citation has been included in the list of references.

COLLUSION

This report is an individual assessment and not group work. If you decide to study with another student, you must ensure that the final submission from each student is totally unique. If the work shows significant signs of similarity it will be picked up in Turnitin and you may be cited for plagiarism.

NOTE

Academic regulations for Post Graduate programmes PG.C2.3 state:

“Coursework, which is submitted late (except where there is an agreed extension) will be recorded as a non-submission. There is also a penalty for deviating substantially from the word length. If you, for genuine reasons, are unable to meet the hand-in date, please complete an extension request form, seek verification from your Personal Tutor and inform the Module Leader.”

Table 3. Grade descriptors for Level 7 written work.

| Grade descriptors for Level 7 written work | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Mark range | Characteristic | Criteria |
| 90-100 | Exceptional Pass | <p>Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates an outstanding synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base</p> <p>The material covered is accurate and relevant</p> <p>The argument is highly sophisticated</p> <p>The standard of writing is refined</p> <p>No errors in the use of the specified referencing system</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 80-89 | Outstanding Pass | <p>Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard</p> <p>Demonstrates a comprehensive synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base</p> <p>The material covered is accurate and relevant</p> <p>The argument is generally very astute</p> <p>The standard of writing is refined</p> <p>No errors in the use of the specified referencing system</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 70-79 | Excellent Pass | <p>Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates a thorough synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Strong emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Thorough use the literature and evidence-base</p> <p>The material covered is accurate and relevant</p> <p>The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements</p> <p>The standard of writing is refined</p> <p>No errors in the use of the specified referencing system</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 60-69 | Good Pass | <p>Good attainment of all learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates detailed synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> |

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| | | <p>Good emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings</p> <p>The material covered is accurate and relevant</p> <p>The argument is persuasive</p> <p>The standard of writing is refined</p> <p>No errors in the use of the specified referencing system</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 50-59 | Pass | <p>Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates a limited, but sufficient, synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings</p> <p>The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant</p> <p>The argument is straightforward and relatively clear</p> <p>The standard of writing is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing</p> <p>No errors in the use of the specified referencing system</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 40-49 | Needs Some Improvement | <p>Meets most, but not all learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates limited synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Less than expected emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings</p> <p>Some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials that suggest confusion and misunderstanding</p> <p>The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand</p> <p>The standard of writing is well clear and readable, but overly simplistic</p> <p>Minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles</p> <p>Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.</p> |
| 30-39 | Needs Improvement | <p>Approximately half the learning outcomes are met</p> <p>Demonstrates very little synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Little emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, with inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that</p> |

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| | | <p>Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts</p> <p>The argument is poorly defined and defended</p> <p>The standard of writing is mostly clear and readable</p> <p>Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles</p> <p>Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation</p> |
| 20-29 | Needs Significant Revision | <p>Most learning outcomes are not met</p> <p>Demonstrates no synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>Little or no emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base</p> <p>There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant material</p> <p>The argument is very weak</p> <p>The standard of writing is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar</p> <p>Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors</p> <p>Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.</p> |
| 0-19 | Needs Substantial work | <p>Does not meet any learning outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrates misunderstanding of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area</p> <p>No emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline</p> <p>No engagement with the literature and evidence-base</p> <p>The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant</p> <p>The argument is incoherent</p> <p>Standard of writing is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar</p> <p>Attempts to use the specified referencing system, but there are significant errors</p> <p>Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.</p> |