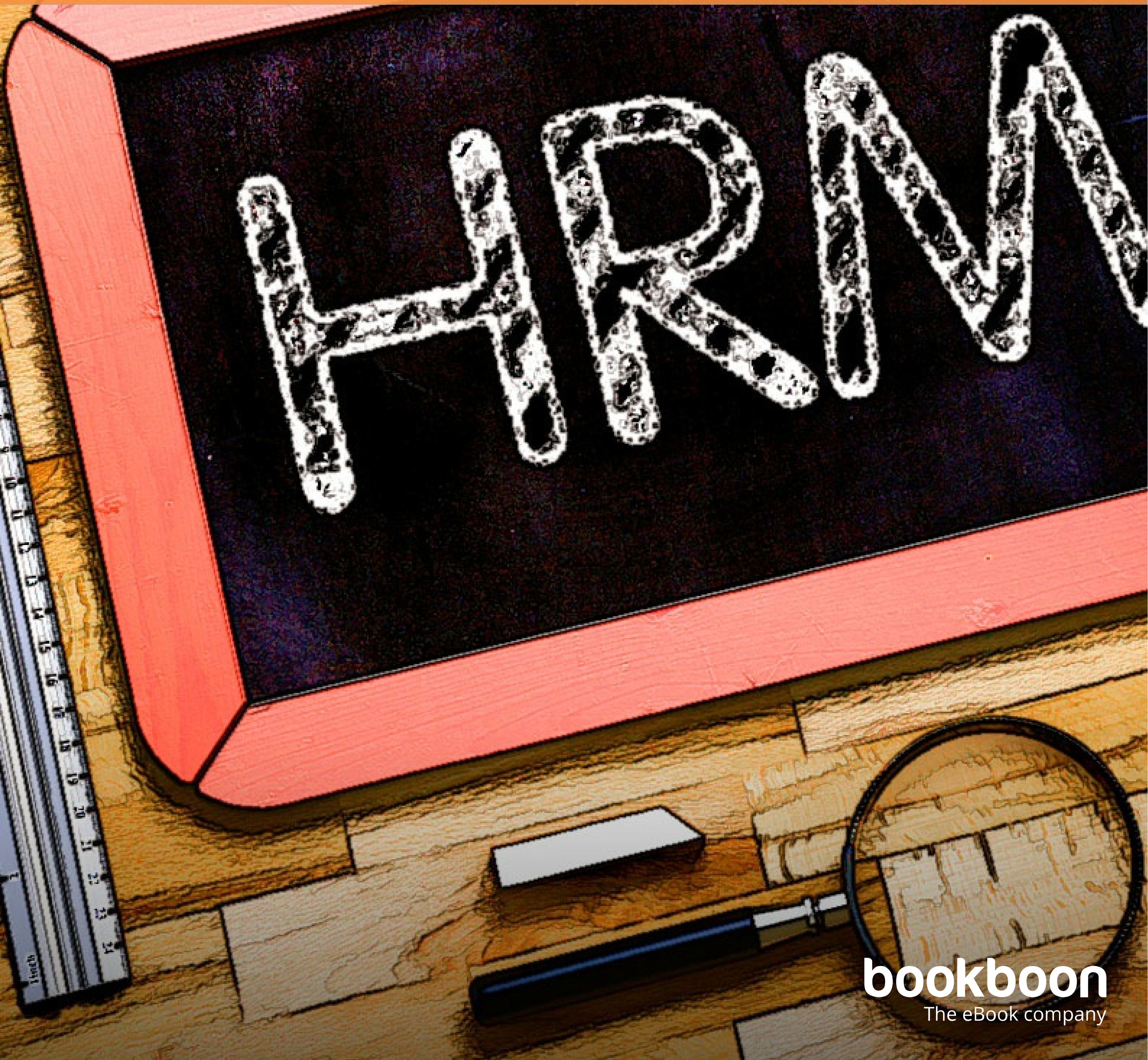
Nirmal Kumar Betchoo

Applied Research in HRM

A Qualitative Approach



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APPLIED RESEARCH IN HRM – A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Applied Research in HRM: A Qualitative Approach
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Peer review by Cyrus Jones

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PREFACE

A challenging part of the researcher's work is undertaking a research project. Very often, the researcher or the university student is keen on coming forward with a topic that he/she will discuss with his supervisor for research. Broadly, there are many titles that come close together and some are already being discussed and published in journals. For the researcher, his effort of bringing forward a title for research consequently becomes difficult. Too often several students end up with a boring project that has already been developed but the only difference could be that it is adapted to a new organisation.

Definitely, bringing a new topic is tough but it is advisable for any prospective researcher to go through existing literature and find out what has already been dealt with. There must also be the opportunity for the researcher to find out what new developments have been suggested by a previous researcher and how these could help the actual one develop new research material.

Research is subsequently an interesting but daunting area. Firstly, the researcher needs to come up with a novel idea that has not gained echo yet but which is likely to impact the organisation and the panel members hearing from the author in an assessment committee. Some ideas could be common but there is still room for development like 'big data', 'commuting', etc. Others could be new like e-HRM, customer-related HR services, etc. but there might not be enough documentation to develop the ideas into concrete work. It is for this reason that researchers are called to spend enough time doing fieldwork or literature review prior to embarking on a project.

The other issue is reporting the information obtained. The findings constitute the main primary data earned by the researcher but these must be reported and analysed correctly. Evidently, a research assistant versed in statistics and data interpretation does help in a tremendous way but this cannot be the onus of a third party. This is why this publication develops the essential and conventional steps that lead to effective research but also fosters the learning and understanding of useful qualitative concepts that students and researchers need to know and master. One of the final chapters of this book describes how such data needs to be presented in the most imaginative and attractive way to make the reader draw easy conclusions without having the difficulty to constantly refer to or read data.

this book 'Qualitative HRM Research' encourages students to become confident in using qualitative techniques with more confidence and also explore the benefits of such techniques which are more and more demanded in higher studies. With exercises that have been tested for the student through personal experimentation by the author, this book is worth its importance in the shelves of the prospective HR student.

Each chapter comprises ten multiple-choice questions and these sum up to some 100 such questions that the student can tackle and check independently. There are also 2 research articles in the final chapter of this book.

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

This publication 'Applied Research in HRM' is the third collaboration of the author with Ventus Publishing after the successful spell of 'Managing Workplace Diversity' and 'Public Sector Management: A Millennial Insight'. All these publications have been carefully and painstakingly written for tertiary level students with the intention of introducing the concepts in a simple and straightforward manner without much frills. They look more like an instructor's resource material offered in a university compared with a recommended textbook.

This book titled 'Applied research in HRM' is offered free online and aligns with the author's aim to share knowledge in a free world. It is heart fulfilling to learn that the past two books have been archived in some official US websites, used in various places like India, Myanmar, Eastern Europe and the West Indies with lecturers and professors from Croatia, Latvia, Kazakhstan or Poland reading the materials through the portal Reserachgate. It is hoped that this endeavour will also accompany this book given that it is targeted to international social sciences students who are all too easily upset by research analysis. This is what the author, with long experience in teaching research techniques, has sought to do and, with the collaboration of the publishing director, Mrs Karin Jakobsen, hopes that a learning facility is offered freely worldwide in a bold and constantly evolving educational environment.

Nirmal Kumar Betchoo
August 2017

NOTES FROM THE REVIEWER

Reviewing '*Qualitative HRM Research*' is a privilege. George Orwell, William Strunk, and Elwyn Brooks White, among others, inspired grammatical and stylistic changes. Such changes make sentences active, positive, and shorter. Words are plainer by letter or syllable to increase clarity and boldness. Simple verbs replace phrases, vivid verbs adverbs.

Hope readers find trustworthy views for understanding human resource management with depth and breadth. May my colleague and associate's book help think, speak, and act about this topic with reliability, proficiency, honesty, and integrity.

Cyrus Jones, Graduate, Johns Hopkins University
July 2017

1 UNDERSTANDING HRM FOCUSED RESEARCH

This text gives human resource management students understanding of human resource management analysis and decisions. Although the text begins with basic HRM research methods, this is more oriented to learning techniques for report writing, dissertations, and creating analytical research methods. This text divides in two sections addressing the qualitative and quantitative part of research. Bearing in mind HRM is focuses on social sciences with an inclination of theoretical learning, there is reason to develop analytical research techniques. There is consensus qualitative research applies to human resources (HR). We should note practitioners warn of mathematical illiteracy in students.

This work addresses this problem by ensuring undergraduate students learn the basic qualitative and quantitative techniques for HR and are able to research in meaningful ways. Synthesising information in a structured, understandable format helps read, evaluate, and use with clarity.

This text uses a practical approach to teaching research methods and HR analysis and decision techniques for ensure students grasps each with ease. This book teaches the basics in a simple, systematic way by moderating excess theoretical information. At the end of each chapter, questions help students test the understanding of topics.

The importance of reports in HRM

Writing routine and strategic reports are human resource skills, fostering efficient use of resources in small and large firms. HR reports are potent communication tools making a significant contribution to the highest decision-making processes. Producing good technical writing for project reports is as much a part of the project as doing the experimental work. Communicating investigation results in plain, useful ways is vital to science and justifies much effort going to this end.

Most routine HR reports include statistical information for a specific period such as hires, promotions, resignations, or wages. More in-depth reports about staffing activities over a year may require more detail about local labour market, salary budget, and skill requirements, depending on what we use reports for.

An eight-step approach to trustworthy HR report writing

This section explains steps trustworthy HR report writing. These steps are conventional ones in each ensures the students understands how proficient research happens. Report writing should be a fascinating, fruitful activity enthusing students to write stylish, compelling, fluent prose free from grammatical and typographical errors.

Step 1: Research information

Ensure researchers know what information is needed, purpose, and for whom he or she is writing. This determines content, depth, breadth, and format of report.

Step 2: Gathering data

Gather information from many sources.
What type of research to occur?
Feasible in the local context?
How useful could the research be?

Step 3: Identifying patterns and trends

Identify statistical patterns.
For instance, are absences more prevalent on certain days, or has there been a sudden high turnover of staff recently?
Analyse meaning of patterns; for example, high absence rates or people resigning in one department might indicate management problems needing investigation which should be noted in the report.
The researcher might notice a person taking regular absences on specific days, indicating personal problems.

Step 4: Drafting the report

Draft the report in the firm's corporate style or use a typical report template including an introduction, main body with headings, summary, and suggestions.
For more formal reports, start with an executive summary and include a cover page.

Step 5: State the targets

Explain how targets from the previous period were achieved or missed, and how to improve.
Establish targets for the next period such as recruitment and retention and reduction in absences, and explain how to meet them.
Relate HR targets and activities to organisational goals, such as hiring production staff to meet increased sales activities.

Step 6: Identify factors affecting research

Find external factors which may affect the firm and HR operations in the future. Researchers might wish to undertake Political, Environmental, Social, Technical (PEST) analysis and explain how the HR functions can offset effects and make proposals for action in his or her report.
Do staff need further training, or is there a need for layoffs if there is less demand?

Step 7: Use clear and unambiguous language

Use plain language if other department colleagues or stakeholders will read report.

Step 8: Format the report

Number paragraphs and sub-paragraphs for clarity.
Report title should include date, purpose, and for whom we write this.

Step 9: Presenting the report

Keep the report concise and focused using bullet points, charts, and graphs.
Readers may be in a rush and just want facts.
Language should be simple but no simpler.

Skills needed in report writing

Four skills underpin proficient research projects: intellectual; personal; organisational; and communication skills.

Intellectual skills

Understanding a topic enough matters. Other skills must enable researchers' projects to succeed. When one undertakes research he or she must act as independent learners and this involves him or her questioning, probing into issues, and justifying thoughts.

Personal efficiency skills

HR professionals are aware of the importance of good interpersonal efficiency in people management; skills researchers developed empower research project, particularly the skills of time and stress management.

Organisational skills

Research projects are like other work-based efforts: this must be project-managed. Understanding how to break down parts of large work; estimating time requirements for different task; undertaking many tasks at once; and tracking progress – each are key skills for researchers to use and develop.

Communication skills

Much of a useful research project involves researchers working alone, but high-level communication skills are vital. He or she may need to articulate ideas to colleagues and tutors, listen for advice, share findings in the organisation through presentations, and produce well-written reports.

Points to ponder: The essence of research

According to Blaxter and Jankowicz (2005), research is:

- proving what you already know.
- best left to academics or experts.
- justifying the CEO's wishes.
- too hard.
- too time-consuming.
- abstract.
- impotent.
- too scientific and statistical.

- boring.

Personal qualities needed in research

There are personal qualities such as self-motivation, self-confidence, and self-centredness will help researchers succeed (Biggam, 2011).

Self-motivation

Researchers must maintain interest and enthusiasm for a long time. He or she will need to choose a topic that he or she is interested in and tackle different stages in the process with positivity and curiosity.

Self-confidence is a need for researchers in the research process, so remember one's ideas are as valuable as those of an experts or chief executives.

Self-centredness

The need to undertake research over a sustained period means, from time to time, researchers may have to deny requests from family and friends. Wise judgement is needed. We should clarify to all from the start that this project is a priority and we will appreciate understanding and patience for the duration.

Research in Human Resource Management

Research is a key function of higher education and informs much of what happens in organisations. So universities and professional bodies are needing research-based or enquiry-based learning at all levels of study.

HRM involves applying up-to-date understanding in 'real world' organisations. Reliable understanding built on accurate information is needed. To undertake competent HRM, good-quality information must underpin decisions and inform actions of those in employment relationships, such as trade unions, individual employees, outsourced service providers, and professional organisations.

HR research means the systematic enquiry into issues for increase understanding and strengthening proficient action. The table below outlines pure and applied research. Note key differences.

Pure research	Applied research
Problem solving	Creating understanding
Predicting effects	Establishing causes
Concern for action	Establish relationship with variables
Time/Cost constraints	As long as required
Customer oriented	Academic orientation

Robson 2015, Easterby-Smith et al 2003, Saunders et al 2012

Insider/outsider concept of research

This section deals with two concepts about researchers. These are the insider and the outsider perspective. Researchers should be able to find where he or she resides and what are the goals.

Insider

The Insider is a person undertaking research into his or her own organisation. A topic could be: An evaluation of talent management at XYZ Ltd.

The Insider is a person who wants to understand what is inside the people he or she is researching; implications and considerations. An example topic might be: An assessment of perceptions and attitudes towards a talent management programme at XYZ Ltd.

Outsiders

The Outsider is someone who researches a different part of his or her own organisation. For instance: Investigating the implementation of talent management in the Information Systems division.

The Outsider research situations and/or organisations where he or she has little or no connection. Topics could include: Researching the application of talent management programmes; Researching the impact of talent management on organisational competence. He or she must have a clear idea about the research problem; for instance: Talent management programmes favour younger over older employees.

Other concepts of the researcher

There might be other types of researchers:

Detective

Detectives gather information to get clues for solving problems, then arranges evidence to prove the solution is correct.

- Proper planning leads to efficiency.
- Good leadership inspires employees to work better.
- Sound management policies reduce corruption.
- Inefficiencies at work come from poor managerial systems.

Doctor

Doctors recognise the need to work from the symptoms to diagnose causes of circumstances before prescribing any treatment.

Doctors look for reasons behind the research issue, for instance:

- Which factors lead employees to be negative about talent management programmes?
- Why are firms looking for talent management?
- How useful is performance management to the firm?
- Why is quality important to an organisation?

- How may quality affect performance?

Explorer

The researcher as explorer loves to enter 'unknown sector' and keep a record about what he finds.

For example:

- What happens in acquisitioned firms and are required to implement talent management programme of new parent company?
- What will occur if a shift system will be applied at work?
- How will low-cost housing schemes impact poverty alleviation in developing countries?
- What will happen if the firm practises social partnership?

Brief case: The Paradigm Shift: Bringing Research to the Community

Literature may plebiscite the value of state or strategic research level but there is little on empowering communities for participating in research. Greenwood et al (1993) state the idea is clear where there is little initiative from communities which are preoccupied with petty problems and have little or nothing to do with research. Another good assumption could be States should offer a central idea and allow communities to take part. This is a plausible reason to believe how communities can provide efforts in developing research. The key problem does not lie here. Seen from a different perspective, communities have always been engaging in developing new ideas which succeed or fail in application. But they have not been valued in terms of contribution nor have they been given the chance to go deeper into research. Israel (1998) stated partners contribute expertise to enhance understanding of a phenomenon and for integrating knowledge gained with action to benefit communities. This aspect has been left to intellectuals and researchers who are the focal point of society as those who propose innovative ideas. There may be a literature gap might lie here because a research-driven culture does not only depend on a few powerful people who believe research is secret, reserved for high-tech scientists and the community basically on expertise. We must think of inclusive research. Lau (2008) commented a testing concept like e-democracy favours the use of technical tools – particularly the Internet – to let: citizens access information; petition, consult, deliberate, vote; and communicate to form e-communities and movements, and take part in e-activism.

Source: *Betchoo, N. 'Research for all, an Initiative to Promote Research in the Mauritian Society'.*

Questions:

1. Should communities be kept away from research? What might help here?
2. How might democracy favour a research culture?
3. What are the benefits of involving communities in research?

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Multiple-Choice Questions

1. To be able to write well demands good…skills from the researcher.
   A. communication.
   B. intellectual.
   C. personal.
   D. organisational.

2. Meeting people and respondents and arranging for research projects requires effective…skills.
   A. communication.
   B. intellectual.
   C. personal.
   D. organisational.

3. Internal motivation seeks…skills from the researcher.
   A. communication.
   B. intellectual.
   C. personal.
   D. organisational.

4. Interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation depend on researchers'…skills.
   A. communication.
   B. intellectual.
   C. personal.
   D. organisational.

5. Insiders probe problems affecting

A. our own organisation.
B. a different organisation.
C. our personal problem.
D. our internal problem.

6. Researchers wish to know how competitors cope with redundancy. We adopt an… point of view.
   A. insider.
   B. outsider.
   C. internal.
   D. external.

7. Explorers want to find
   A. the normal cause of employee turnover in a firm.
   B. the general cause of employee turnover in a firm.
   C. the reported cause of employee turnover in a firm.
   D. the real cause of employee turnover in a firm.

8. Stress factors cause employee turnover at work. The researcher acts as
   A. an explorer.
   B. a doctor.
   C. a detective.
   D. an assessor.

9. Pure research predicts effects while applied research establishes
   A. conditions.
   B. causes.
   C. creativity.
   D. casualties.

10. To sustain interest in research, researchers should be
   A. self-motivated.
   B. self-centred.
   C. ego-centred.
   D. self-satisfied.

Answers: 1A 2D 3C 4B 5A 6B 7D 8B 9B 10A

2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS IN HRM RESEARCH

Initial efforts to undertake analysis in human resource management is the basic situational analysis toolkit. We can analyse if we know parameters: strengths and weaknesses internal to the organisation; opportunities and threats external to the firms. Situation or SWOT Analysis is one of the best analytical and planning tools for finding gaps or planning future tasks in any area. We can use such flexible tools: in any project phase; for the initial planning; for mapping the market; or as validating the project's end.

HR SWOT Analysis is a Human Resource tool aligning teams and naming issues HRM faces. A human resource SWOT analysis considers internal and external factors that can boost or impede human resource functions in organisations.

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This analysis can speed a firm's transition from reactive to proactive for enhancing HR strategy and function. Human Resources can realise significant improvements and benefits when using HR SWOT Analysis.

HR supports group work, favouring solutions which are designed and implemented by a dedicated team of professionals. In such a case, SWOT Analysis can be a tool unifying vision and aligning team members' ideas. The beauty of such analysis is in the simplicity of the idea behind the tool.

Practicality of the SWOT analysis

Almost all can fill a paper after seeing SWOT analysis examples. But the most contributing benefit of the analysis is in the potential to generate vibrant, innovative ideas in limited time.

Most like to participate in brainstorming. We like to: present ideas; elaborate ideas of others; demonstrate a willingness to design and develop a new idea for the group.

SWOT allows focusing team members' creativity on different topics important for the successful development of a new product or process. Results always depend on proper, detailed preparation of facilitators. Facilitators must know the results of brainstorming. If the outcome is not well defined, the group will always find a solution that will not meet all requirements. The team has to know how big the challenge is. There is no immediate solution in the SWOT model but this highlights problems and initiates finding solutions.

Strengths

Organisations' strengths are internal factors which enable HR strategy and functionality.

HR strategy refers to long-term goals, such as building a high calibre workforce or becoming an employer of choice. HR functionality involves conducting open enrolment sessions for employees to choose new health insurance coverage.

Internal strengths for HR include executive leadership who support and promote HR strategic development. Another internal factor consists of HR staff knowledge and expertise because they are the employees ultimately responsible for carrying out tactical duties.

Weaknesses

SWOT analyses examine weaknesses in organisations. Weaknesses are internal factors challenging the success of HR endeavours. Budget constraints and cuts are conditions HR often must deal with, because HR is not a revenue-producing department. HR has to rely on sound justification to fund investments in activities.

Cash is one of many flaws.
Low employee morale and high turnover are serious internal factors disrupting HR.
Disruption refers to immediate and reactive measures HR must take to reverse workforce dissatisfaction.

Opportunities

One of the most significant external factors for HR is the chance for workforce growth, due to more demand for the firm's products and services. More business translates into better raises or higher wages for current employees, along with growth for the surrounding community through the hiring of more workers.

External factors also may present themselves as the firms' ability to land successful entrepreneurs whose business development activities improve reputation or industry ranking.

Threats

Threats are external factors which harm firms and HR departments. When a competitor gains market share, this affects profitability and may cause layoffs, business slowdown or closure.

Other external threats include firms in different industries offering better working conditions, wages, or benefits to employees and recruiting the best-qualified workers. HR departments cannot always insulate from all external factors because some are imminent.

Still HR can diminish external threats through assessing compensation structure, surveying employee opinion on working conditions, and strengthening employer-employee relations.

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool examining strengths, flaws, chances, and threats affecting an organisation. Although SWOT analysis may be subjective and limited, the human resource department can use this to measure performance and set goals.

SWOT analysis as a planning tool

HR can use SWOT analyses with other planning tools to develop steps supporting HR departments and firms' missions. SWOT analysis process starts by finding the strengths and flaws of HR team members, policies and procedures, work environment, communication, and effect on the organisation.

HR's chances can depend on internal and external factors and HR's ability to act. Threats can be internal or external, such as budget cuts, outsourcing, new competition, or increased health care premiums.

To add objectivity, customer or employee satisfaction surveys give external feedback. Additional information from senior management in the SWOT categories will also add valuable insight.

Comparing HR's SWOT analysis data to the company mission and strategic goals allows HR to consider how its strengths and weaknesses impact its ability to support the organisation. Threats may be confined to HR or affect the entire organisation. Opportunities identified through the process should have a positive impact on the HR department and support the organisation's goals and objectives.

SWOT analysis to set HR goals

HR can use SWOT analysis results to set goals for HR team members.
Department strengths and weaknesses may be attributable to individual team members, which finds top performers and those needing training.

The team should determine how to minimise or end threats. Chances become budget and staffing items.

SWOT as the basis for strategic plan

SWOT analysis results become the basis for HR's strategic plan. HR can use SWOT analysis results to set goals for HR team members. Department strengths and flaws may be attributable to individual team members, which helps identify top performers and those who need training. The team should determine how to minimise or end threats. Chances become budget and staffing items. SWOT analysis results become the basis for HR's strategic plan.

The SWOT analysis can become another lengthy report filed without an implementation plan. Managers can add team member strengths and weaknesses to individual performance appraisals with specific goals and action plans. Minimising HR threats and acting on opportunities become projects with timelines. Follow-up at regular intervals tracks efficiency and reveals plan revisions needs.

SCOPE Planning

SCOPE

The acronym stands for Situation, Core Competencies, Obstacles, Prospects, and Expectations There are attempts to take SWOT further. For instance, this analyses internal and external factors and aligns the internal with the external to provide a road map of strategic development. Situation refers to prevailing conditions under which everything must be considered, while internal core competencies of firms align with external prospects.
Obstacles and expectations can be either internal or external.
This model can present more information and has more flexibility than SWOT.

SOAR may be the new SWOT

In the new world, where motivation and engagement are configured into planning, there is a newer frame to replace SWOT.
There is a more people-focused approach that could inspire to achieve.
Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR).
Using SOAR opens the mind and spirit to consider future creations.

SOAR

SOAR is a strategic thinking, strategy formulation, and planning framework allowing organisations to construct futures through collaboration among SOAR is a strengths-based approach to building strategic capacity, and is an appreciative inquiry alternative to SWOT. SOAR applications include: strategy; strategic planning; team building; coaching; leadership development; and strategic summits.

SOAR as a creative problem solving approach

Five key "I" phrases are used for this collaborative approach: initiate; inquire; imagine; innovate; and inspire to implement. Each of these might map very nicely to the creative problem-solving or creative problem solving – CPS frame:

Initiate – explore visions.
Inquire – explore data, formulate challenges and chances.
Imagine – explore ideas.
Innovate – explore solutions.
Inspire to Implement – formulate and activate the plan.

SOAR as an inventive problem solving methodology:

- creates workplaces which have greater employee engagement, collaboration, community, meaning, purpose, creativity and energy.
- states that conversations achieve strategic outcomes, and contribute to achieving other business objectives necessary for creating sustainable workplaces.
- works with any person, no matter what role or level they hold in or outside an organisation.
- reinforces values, meaning, purpose, and strengths – the new management paradigm for creating new futures.

Imagine using a methodology aligning with values, and asking people to come from our and the firms' best strengths moving forward.

SOAR as a tool:

- helps to break down silo to connect more strongly with stakeholders and clients.
- creates an environment for respectful conversations and relations to flourish.
- has a solid strategic plan allow firms and teams to flourish.
- must have a proficient format and process.

NOISE analysis

While preparing for a focus group meeting, NOISE is inferred as

- Needs
- Opportunities
- Improvements
- Strengths
- Exceptions

A method using solution-focused language and can build upon the teams' understanding and goals. This helps find strategic alternatives addressing following questions:
Strengths and Opportunities (SO) – How to use strengths for taking advantage of opportunities?

Maximise on strengths and opportunities.
Strengths and Threats (ST) – How to take advantage of strengths for avoiding threats?
Maximise Strengths, Minimise Threats.
Weaknesses and Opportunities (WO) – How to use opportunities for overcoming current flaws?
Minimise Weaknesses and Maximise opportunities.
Weaknesses and Threats (WT) – How can you minimise your weaknesses and avoid threats?
No choice: Minimise both Weaknesses and Threats.

	External Opportunities	External Threats
Internal Strengths	SO "Maxi-Maxi" Strategy Strategies using strengths to maximise opportunities.	ST "Maxi-Mini" Strategy Strategies using strengths to minimise threats.
Internal Weaknesses	WO "Mini-Maxi" Strategy Strategies minimising flaws by taking advantage of opportunities.	WT "Mini-Mini" Strategy Strategies minimising flaws and avoid threats.

Activity One

A company's human resource manager highlights following elements while conducting a situational analysis in her firm:

- Intense, outside competition
- Competitors are likely to attract staff
- Economic condition does not encourage firm to attract talented staff
- Fairly high labour turnover
- Good communication flow
- Good state incentives regarding training
- Helpful, committed staff
- Lack of promotional prospects
- Lack of training provided
- Lean management structure
- Low level of employee experience
- Low innovation pace Possibility of benefiting from state training assistance
- Possibility of tax reduction
- Qualified staff
- Quality team in place

As human resource manager, you should classify these elements into a SWOT grid by separating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Write a brief memo to explain how the SWOT analysis will be helpful in preparing the company's human resource strategy.

Activity Two

A company's human resource manager is conducting a situational analysis in his firm.

The key issues are:

- The existing situation of his two-star hotel.
- Low rate of employee motivation.
- A competitive working environment in industry.
- Increase in operational overheads

Use the table below and fill diagram with four items per area you can develop under each heading.

INTERNAL – STRENGTHS	EXTERNAL – THREATS
INTERNAL – WEAKNESSES	**EXTERNAL – OPPORTUNITIES**

Once you develop the strategy table, find FOUR courses of action you are likely to implement in the next six months.

Solution Activity One:

STRENGTHS: – Good flow of Communication – Helpful and committed staff Qualified staff – The existence of a quality team – Lean management structure.

WEAKNESSES: – Lack of promotional prospects – Lack of training provided – Low level of experience of employees – Low pace of innovation – Fairly high labour turnover.

OPPORTUNITIES: – Possibility of benefiting from training assistance from government – Good incentives from government regarding training – Possibility of tax reduction.

THREATS: – Competition is intense from the Outside – Competitors are likely to attract existing staff – Economic condition does not encourage firm to attract talented staff.

The SWOT analysis is an essential tool for management because:
Weaknesses can be transformed into strengths.
Threats can be transformed into opportunities.
It identifies the organization present situation.

It prepares the firm for the future.

Solution Activity Two:

INTERNAL – STRENGTHS	EXTERNAL – THREATS
Employee loyalty and service. Employee experience. Worker performance. Organisational culture.	Competition from other companies. Poaching of staff. Better pay structures in industry. More talented employees at work.
INTERNAL – WEAKNESSES	**EXTERNAL – OPPORTUNITIES**
Low motivation. Workplace stress. Poor leadership and managerial support. Work inefficiencies.	Takeover by a bigger hotel. Aligning wages to industry level. Attracting existing staff. Expanding tourism sector and job prospects.

Four courses of action:

Develop a collaborative HR plan to better address employee needs.
Develop training opportunities.

Improve employee pay structure.
Develop employee performance related activities.

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Multiple-Choice Questions

1. In a SWOT analysis, threats are…to the organisation.
   A. neutral.
   B. feasible.
   C. external.
   D. internal.

2. Weaknesses under SWOT analysis could be converted to
   A. opportunities
   B. threats
   C. strengths
   D. power.

3. Government taxation and employee recruitment restrictions are
   A. strengths.
   B. weaknesses.
   C. opportunities.
   D. threats.

4. Long-term employee experience and loyalty represent a firm's
   A. threats.
   B. opportunities.
   C. weaknesses.
   D. strengths.

5. In the SCOPE model, core competences can be aligned with
   A. external prospects.
   B. internal prospects.

C. external threats.
D. internal threats.

6. Initiate exploits
   A. vision.
   B. ideas.
   C. implementation.
   D. solutions.

7. In the NOISE model, the 'I' represents
   A. initiatives.
   B. improvements.
   C. inspiration.
   D. ideas.

8. A maxi-maxi SO strategy means
   A. using opportunities to develop strengths.
   B. using strengths to develop opportunities.
   C. avoiding strengths and opportunities.
   D. choosing strengths only.

9. A Strategy that use strengths to minimise threats is a
   A. Mini-Mini ST.
   B. Mini-Maxi ST.
   C. Maxi-Maxi ST.
   D. Maxi-Mini ST.

10. In relation to internal weaknesses and external opportunities, a…strategy can be adopted.
   A. Mini-Mini WO.
   B. Maxi-Maxi WO.
   C. Maxi-Mini WO.
   D. Mini-Maxi WO.

Answers: 1C 2C 3D 4D 5A 6A 7B 8B 9D 10D

3 THE STEPS OF AN EFFECTIVE HRM RESEARCH

Scientific research involves a systematic process focusing on being objective, gathering much information for analysis so researchers can verify or falsify a hypothesis. All research and evaluation projects use this process. Under the scientific method, there are general considerations: questioning; developing a research theme; identifying questions linked with research; formulating a research theme; developing a literature review; creating research instruments; researching in various forms; analysing results and concluding implications of evidence from this research.

Scientific method of investigation

The process focuses on testing ideas at the workplace through a systematic process. In this process, the study is documented in such a way others can replicate the same study. Each *scientific* investigation must document the study so others can review the process and results.

The scientific research process is a multiple-step process with interlinked steps. If changes are made in one step of the process, researchers must review all other steps to ensure changes reflect throughout the process.

Research remains essential in the study of Human Resource Management. Like all major fields, marketing, management or any science, institutions look for dissertations, research, or even Research Methodology assignments to test how far students can apply this understanding in practical situations. Sub-sections below explain the steps of research.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

First, identify a problem or develop a research question. The research problem may be: something the firm identify as problematic; knowledge or information needed by firms; or the desire to identify a performance trend nationally. For instance, one problem a firm identified is absenteeism, which is a local problem and concern in the community. This serves as the focus of the study.

Example of a problem statement

Title: Studying Absenteeism in Tamilnadu's Tirupur District Textile Industry by Karthikeyan and Sivakami.

'Absenteeism is a great disaster faced by each organisation today which causes turnover. So firms must reinvest many amounts. People left organisations due to industrial and environmental factors.

Absenteeism starts with our mental absence so firms must take this as a key issue before initiating remedy and management.

The textile industry faces a significant problem on employees' regular attendance. There are many factors influencing if employees take leave. This study ensures a good result for absence. Employee absenteeism compels management to give target production. Often the textile industry faces tight competition from around Earth. So the textile industry should take steps, helping management know employees' dissatisfied basic needs and expectation.'

Step 2: Review literature

Researchers must learn more about the topic under investigation by reviewing literature. This step provides foundational knowledge about the problem area.

The review of literature educates researchers about past studies, how these studies happened, and findings.

Reviewing literature enables researchers to find statistics on long-term absenteeism effects in terms of performance and projected overhead costs. The information discovered during this step helps researchers understand the problem, recognise the absenteeism's effects, and identify a strategy to solve the problem.

Step 3: Clarify the problem

Several times the initial problem found in the first step of the process is too large or broad. In step three of the process, researchers clarify the problem and narrows the study's scope. This can only happen after reviewing literature. Understanding gained through reviewing literature helps researchers clarify and narrow the research project.

In this example, researchers identified absenteeism as the problem and purpose of research. We could research the broad topic using culture, leadership, management, performance, or productivity. A single study is too small to investigate each area. So we must focus the study's problem and purpose.

Step 4: Clearly define terms and concepts

Terms and concepts are words or phrases in the purpose statement or description. These items need to be specific as each apply to the study.

Terms or concepts often have different definitions depending on who reads the study. To lessen confusion about what terms and phrases mean, researchers must define with specificity. In this study, absenteeism concerns one group of people. And we should define absenteeism in context of productivity.

By defining the terms or concepts more narrowly, study's scope is manageable for researchers, easing collecting data and understanding the meaning of concepts.

Step 5: Define the population

Research projects can focus on a specific group of people, facilities, employee evaluations, programmes, financial status, marketing efforts, or the integration of technology into operations.

For example, if researchers want to examine a group of people in the community, the study could examine an age group, males or females, people living in a geographic area, or an ethnic group.

The research problem and purpose of study assist researchers in identifying the group to study. The group to study is always the population.

Defining the population assists researchers in many ways.
This narrows the study's scope from a large to a manageable population.
The population identifies the group the researcher's efforts will be focused on in the study.
This helps ensure researchers stay on the right path during the study.

Step 6: Develop the Instrumentation Plan

The plan for the study is referred to as the instrumentation plan. The instrumentation plan is a road map for the entire study, specifying who participates; how, when, and where data is collected; and the research content.

This plan is composed of many decisions and considerations addressed in concluding the research.

In the absenteeism study, researchers chose employees to participate in a motivation programme for three months. The group of participants is the sample. The study focuses on a small group to represent the large, actual population.

The researcher develops the plan for the research, indicating:

- which type of data to collect,
- when and how to collect data,
- who will collect the data,
  and how to analyse data.

The instrumentation plan specifies each steps to complete for the study. This ensures researchers thought through these choices and provide a step-by-step plan to follow.

Step 7: Collect data

Once the instrumentation plan is completed, the actual study starts with the collection of data. The collection of data is a critical step in providing the information for answering the research question.

Each study implies collecting some type of data – whether from literature or subjects – to answer the research question. Data can come from a survey, with a questionnaire, through observations, or from literature.

In the absenteeism study, researchers and fieldworkers collect data on the variables: age; workplace; work condition; stress; physical effort; and leadership among other areas.

The researcher collects this data at the first session and at the last session of the programme. Once the data is collected on the variables, the researcher is ready for moving to the final step: data analysis.

All the time, effort, and resources dedicated to steps one through seven, the research process culminates in this last step. Researchers have the data to analyse then answer the research question. In the instrumentation plan, researchers specified how to analyse data. Researchers now analyse the data according to the plan. We review and summarise results of this analysis in a manner relating to research questions.

We analyse the data to determine if there was a difference between the first measurement and the second measurement for each person in the programme. Then we analyse the data to determine if differences are statistically significant.

If differences are statistically significant, this study validates the theory. Results of the study also provide valuable information about one strategy to fight back community absenteeism. Conducting studies using the seven step scientific research process requires researchers to plan with time and effort.

Step 8: Analyse information and make a decision

Collecting data is one part of research. From the raw data, researchers decide on how to use in a proficient manner. A direct way is to use existing information and compile in the form of observations made. These could be using pie charts or bar charts. All information must present something with meaning.

Researchers may search deeper meaning for undergraduate students. For instance, we may need to test hypotheses. Inferences, interpretations, and deductions all depend on effective statistical and contextual analysis. This becomes a more demanding task but also helps find something new with the research problem.

Precaution

Limited time constrains researchers to conduct a scientific study. Researchers who do this conduct studies causing false or useless conclusions.

Research is long and complex. One should start when others assign a project. Creating a realistic timeline guides researchers through studies.

This involves detailing each task to happen and the time to take doing steps. This allows researchers enough time to organise resource tools or consult with supervisors for aid.

Check the timeline often to see if we accomplish tasks and adjust as research and report writing progresses. After choosing a topic, determine the purpose and focus of research and develop a topic statement. Write one or two sentences describing the research purpose. For instance:

Topic: The emerging importance of human resource management in the digital age.
Initial topic statement: Does HR practice today still have relative worth in the age of information technology?
Final Topic statement: HR philosophy still has value in the age of information technology.

Next, find keywords or concepts describing your topic and prepare an outline.
For example, the keywords identified from the above topic statement are:

HRM, digital age, information technology, HR practice.
Search the keywords identified from the topic statement to find information on the chosen topic.

Step 9: Write the final draft

The final draft of a paper should be typed and must include citations and a bibliography; some paper might require a title page, depending on the formatting style and/or the professor. The title page should include the: title of the paper; author's name; programme's name, supervisor's name, and when the paper is due. Footnotes are a matter of style and researchers can check with instructors on the format he or she prefers. In general, though, a footnote is indicated by an Arabic numeral raised a half space above the line, placed after the relevant sentence or passage. Footnotes may be arranged in numerical order at the bottom of the page on which they appear or a separate page (labelled endnotes) placed at the end of the paper just before the bibliography (American University, 2009). The bibliography is a list of your sources. How to arrange this depends on formatting style such as MLA, APA, Chicago, or Harvard among others. Before submitting papers, researchers must proofread for errors.

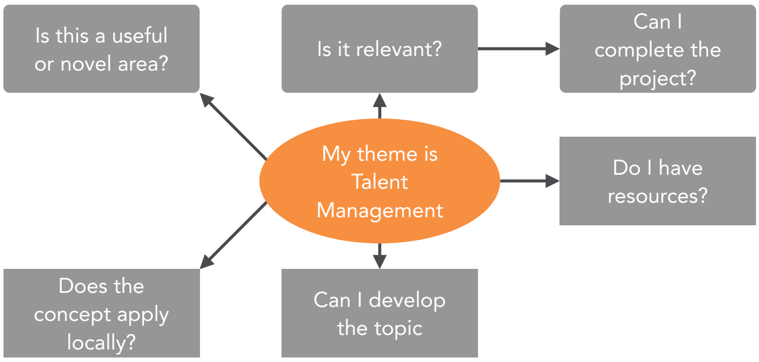
The importance of mind maps in research

Mind maps are diagram to visually organise information. We often create mind maps around a concept, drawn as an image in the centre of a blank landscape page, to which: *associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added*. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those.

Mind maps can be drawn by hand, either as rough notes during lectures, meetings, or planning sessions, or as higher quality pictures when more time is available. Mind maps are a type of spider diagram. An example is provided below.

Buzan (2011) states mind maps are powerful graphic techniques providing a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain. This harnesses the full range of cortical skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour, and spatial awareness – in one unique, potent manner. This frees us to roam the infinite expanses of our brains. Mind maps can apply to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking enhance human performance.

Mind maps in research
Deciding on my topic



Effectiveness

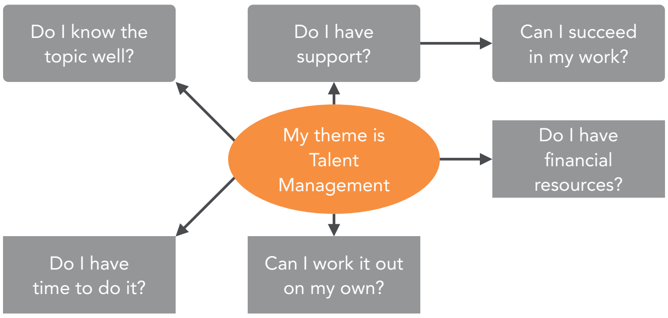
Cunningham (2005) conducted a user study in which 80% of the students thought mind mapping helped to understand scientific concepts. Other studies report positive effects through using mind maps.

Farrand, Hussain, and Hennessy (2002) found spider diagrams, which resemble mind maps, had limited, but significant, impact on memory recall in undergraduate students compared to preferred study methods.

This improvement was only robust after a week for those in the diagram group and there was a significant decrease in motivation compared to the subjects' preferred methods of note taking.

A meta study about concept mapping concluded concept mapping is more effective than 'reading text passages, attending lectures, and participating in class discussions'.
In addition, researchers concluded low-ability students may benefit more from mind mapping than high-ability students. The mind map can be further detailed here as illustrated below.

Mind maps in research
Further decision on my topic



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Blackenship, D. (2010) Applied Research and Evaluation methods in recreation, Human Kinetics. ISBN-13: 9780736077194.

Cunningham, G. and Slevin, E. (2010) Community psychiatric nursing: focus on effectiveness, Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health, Vool 12, No 1, pp 14–22.

Farrand, P.; Hussain, F.; Hennessy, E. (2002). "The efficacy of the mind map study technique". Medical Education. 36 (5): 426–431. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01205.

Karthikeyan, M. and Sivakami, P. (2010) A study on absenteeism of employees in selected textile industries in Tirupur district of Tamilnadu, Asia Pacific Journal, April 2010.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Science is a…process where steps are interlinked with the other steps in the process.
   A. single-step.
   B. multiple-step.
   C. two-step.
   D. three-step.

2. The first step in the process is to identify a problem or develop a
   A. research theme.
   B. research topic.
   C. research question.
   D. research element.

3. Reviewing literature informs researchers about which studies have been conducted
   A. in the past.
   B. in the organisation.
   C. in society in general.
   D. by competing researchers.

4. Researchers clarify the problem and…the scope of the study.
   A. increases.
   B. broadens.
   C. limits.
   D. narrows.

5. In research terms, the group to involve in the study is always called the
   A. population.
   B. people.
   C. sample.
   D. focus group.

6. The plan for the study is the
   A. instrumentation plan.
   B. instruction plan.
   C. intervention plan.
   D. initiation plan.

7. Collecting data is a critical step in providing information to
   A. answer the research topic.
   B. answer the research question.
   C. ask the research question.
   D. agree with the research question.

8. We often create mind maps around a single concept to which we add associated representations of ideas such as…
   A. images.
   B. texts.
   C. formulas.
   D. images and parts of words.

9. Creating a…timeline guides researchers through research.
   A. raw.
   B. fictitious.
   C. realistic.
   D. challenging.

10. Deductions will on effective statistical and contextual
   A. answers.
   B. anticipation.
   C. analysis.
   D. assessments.

Answers: 1B 2C 3A 4D 5A 6A 7B 8D 9C 10C

4 ABSTRACTS IN HRM RESEARCH

Undergraduate and Master's level dissertation abstracts have many structural parts. Though every dissertation is different, these structural components are likely to be relevant for most dissertations. When writing dissertation abstracts, the most important thing to remember is why the research was significant.

We should explain this in plain terms during the dissertation's introduction. Understanding the significance of research matters as how much one writes for each component of the abstract-in terms of word count or number of sentences- depends on the relative importance of each of these components to the research.

Four components of an abstract

There are *four* main structural parts, aiming to inform readers on:

- the background to and significance of the study,
- the research strategy,
- the research findings,
  and conclusions.

Researchers should write one or many sentences for each of these parts, with each making up a part of the 150 to 350 words that are often written in dissertation abstracts.

Study background and significance

The first few sentences of the dissertation abstract highlight the background to the research, and the significance of the study. In explaining the significance of the study, researchers must provide some context for research.

This includes the problem and motivation for researching. In building the background to the study, this part of the abstract should address:

- Why do such research?
- How is the study significant?
- Is the study interesting?

All of this must be encompassed in a few sentences. Only outline parts of the study one feels are most important; those aspects one thinks will catch readers' attention.

Researchers must only write some detail in the abstract.

- Never use jargon.
- The abstract must never be misleading.
- Ideas in abstract clarify report.
- Fluent prose.

Components of your research strategy

The relative importance of the methodological components in the dissertation abstract depend on if any part made the study significant.

- Ask: Did any of the following parts of the research strategy help make this study significant?
- The broad research design – quantitative, qualitative, or other type.
- Type of research design – experimental, case study, grounded theory, or ethnography or other types.
- Research methods – survey, interviews, focus groups, or observation.
- Analytical techniques – content analysis, statistical analyses, among others
- If the answer is YES, greater focus and word count should probably explain these parts of research strategy in the dissertation abstract.

Address some of these questions to explain the research strategy:

- What research design guided the study?
- What was the study's scope?
- What research methods did the researcher use?
- What ideas, parameters, variables did the researcher examine, measure, control, or ignore?
- What was the unit of analysis?
- What was the sample and population?
- What analysis techniques did the researcher use to arrive at findings?

Often, researchers can combine the answer to a number of these questions in one sentence, which helps make the abstract succinct.

Major findings

After discussing parts of the research strategy, the dissertation abstract should move on to present the research's main findings. Researchers use the word findings to emphasise the abstract includes little data and no analysis.

Answering some of the following questions may help write this part of the dissertation abstract:

- Did findings answer the research questions or hypotheses?
- What did the findings show in terms of these research questions or hypotheses?
- What are the most important findings?
- What is the findings' significance?
- To what extent are the findings reliable, consistent, generalised, steady, trustworthy?

One should avoid making vague comments or over-emphasising findings.

Conclusion

The dissertation abstract's last part should focus on the conclusions from your research and the resultant implications. Bearing in mind findings were discussed, you must address questions:

- What was learned?
- What are the findings' implications?
- Can we generalise findings?
- What are the research's limits?

When writing the conclusion part of an abstract, one needs to remember these conclusions should be accurate, specific, and concise. There is no need to re-summarise what you discussed or the contents of your dissertation.

There are two types of abstract: *descriptive and informative*. In most cases, supervisors expect researchers use an informative abstract for dissertations and theses.

Descriptive abstract

The aim of the descriptive abstract is to allow readers to decide whether to read the whole dissertation or just dip into chapters of particular interest. The person marking a dissertation will read every chapter, so there is little point in outlining each chapter in the abstract.

The descriptive abstract is a more appropriate place to tell the reader what to expect in coming chapters. Since the descriptive abstract never captures the essence of the research – purpose, significance, the choices of research strategy made, and the main findings – this fails to intrigue readers.

Example:

With 42,000 jobless people in Mauritius (Statistics Mauritius, 2012), there is the urgent need to create jobs in this country to cope with impending job crisis. Many school leavers, with or without requisite qualifications, enter the job market with little or no prospects. There has been continuous effort from institutions like the Ministry of Employment, the Human Resource Development Council, and the National Empowerment Foundation to develop literacy and numerical skills and competences for sectors like ICT, and employable skills for sectors like hotel and catering, tourism, and handicraft. Yet there is a need to empower young people to benefit from well-defined and targeted HRD programmes to build employment skills. This paper agrees HRD programs must be targeted and developed for tertiary level students who are quite vulnerable to fall in the unemployment trap. While they could be independent and can contribute to family finances, they could progress on being financially independent, innovative, and competitive. The study explained a properly defined HRD strategy for school leavers in terms of traineeship in selected areas could start economic empowerment.

Key words: Economic empowerment, HRD, Tertiary level students.

Informative abstract

Informative abstracts capture research's essence. While the person marking the dissertation inevitably read the whole document, the informative abstract should make this unnecessary, as informative abstracts include all main detail about dissertations.

Having finished reading an informative dissertation abstract, readers should know everything from the purpose and motivations of a research, to how the study was significant, research strategy, and the main findings and conclusions drawn.

These components are discussed in more detail in the section: It is for these – and other –reasons that informative abstracts are not only used in the vast majority of unpublished dissertations and theses, but also those that are published in Master's Abstracts International.

Undergraduate or master's level researchers should write informative abstracts. Or ask supervisors about thesis recommendations.

Example: **Universal Pension Review: Between Rational and Subliminal Judgment**

Research background and objectives

The aim of this research paper is to analyse rational and subliminal judgments around the heated national debate of reviewing the universal pension in Mauritius where the government intention is to review the pension of people becoming high-income earners. The Rs 5,000 universal pension was an electoral bargain which led the government to an overwhelming electoral victory.

Research framework

The National Pensions Act 1976 (Act No. 44) serves as the framework for Mauritius' pension system. Regarding the basic retirement pension, subject to section 10, a person who is 60 or over may receive a basic retirement pension.

Despite arguments for and against the review of universal pensions, there are two broad types of arguments which were briefly discussed.

The rational economic perspective

A scientific perspective is the rational economic one. This is the scientific rationale for universal pension. The immediate question would be asking if the universal pension needs to address each senior citizen of retirement age.

The subliminal perspective

The subliminal perspective is complex to understand but can implicitly question the argument of questioning the rationale of re-engineering the universal pension.

Approach & methodology

The research's goal is to see how respondents answered to rational economic and subliminal metrics. A questionnaire was designed based on the Likert scale to rank items for obtaining mean values per question. The sample size was 50 respondents in the age group 25–60. There was no precise location of respondents given public officers wherever they work, are subject to the same work conditions under Establishment. They were all educated and qualified before joining the public service while undertaking white collar jobs and having senior positions.

Data collection: secondary and primary data

Secondary data was taken from international scholarly work where respected researchers explained pensions' value within welfare systems in developed nations and the need to reengineer them. Primary data was taken from the local environment – published data in Mauritius – followed by fieldwork with respondents fulfilling the requirements of a representative sample.

Major findings

Despite there were arguments criticising the need for targeted pension in Mauritius, the subliminal perspective stated there were apprehensions from respondents who feared the pension re-engineering from uncertainty, apprehension, and the likeliness to live in empty nests – the fear of loneliness. This psychological test was more overwhelming than the rational economic view of pension targeting.

Conclusion

From the research findings, pension review by the State based on economic arguments are one of many decision criteria. People about to retire think of the basic universal pension as an acquired right regardless of the income they have.

Significance

This research is contemporary and focused on the government's strategy on a review of the pension scheme. This innovates by exposing the choices society has with regard to targeting universal pension but foretells despite rational arguments for reviewing the pension, the subliminal perspective has something more to add to the State proposal of universal pension reform.

Key words: universal pension, rational economic, subliminal, re-engineering.

Well-structured abstract

The dissertation abstract must be well structured as you have a short word count to communicate much. The dissertation abstract contains a number of basic structural components:

- The problem being addressed/the rationale for the research.
- The study's significance.
- Key theories underpinning the dissertation.
- Components of your research strategy.
- Main results/findings
- Conclusions.

Internally consistent

Structure dissertation abstracts with clarity, including each needed component like the research problem and parts of your research strategy. This fails if missing what the research is about or confusing readers. Internal consistency is the key issue here. Researchers should think about such internal consistency when comparing abstracts with the dissertation title and the document's main body:

The dissertation title

The dissertation title highlights the study's purpose, and components which matter to the research – a theoretical framework, method, outcomes.
The abstract follows the dissertation title and must be consistent with the title's meaning.

Fluid

Each part of the dissertation abstract – the research problem, components of research strategy – consist of one or more sentences. While these components must be clear, there must be cogent links between each part.

Such connections bridge information in each part.

A dissertation abstract should not:

- provide new information.
- cite.
- exaggerate or generalise; and
- abbreviate, initialise, or use acronyms.

The Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is great for helping researchers draft writing project with many sources.

Bibliographies are alphabetised lists of sources relevant to a areas of inquiry or research questions.

Annotated bibliographies go beyond citing sources to provide readers with more information about the content of sources.
The content information is called the annotation.

Evaluative annotations

These include both a description and a critical assessment of the article or book being annotated.

They give readers a sense of the quality of the source and the argumentative position of the author relative to others in the field.

Some evaluative annotations focus on how the source responds or contributes to a particular research question or area of inquiry in the field. Methodology and data collection often form part of an evaluative annotation. These annotations may be stand-alone entries, or comparative, referencing other entries to give a total picture of how different articles on the topic are in conversation with each other.

Annotated bibliographies are core to the research process, which work with large numbers of sources over a long period of time. There us much difficulty to recall details about each source on a topic. Well-written annotations crystallise key information in each article or book in a format which others can access during the writing process.

Annotated bibliography are made for responding to research question or representing exploratory research on a broader topic earlier in the research process.

Writing about each source individually clarifies scholars' views and methods on a topic.

So annotated bibliographies serve as the basis of literature reviews. These function as nuts and bolts of research, showing different themes and positions emerged about a topic in literature.

Dessler, Gary. *Human Resource Management*. 14th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2014.

Provides an accurate overview of HRM responsibilities and roles in modern personnel management. Addresses the ever-changing nature and application of HRIS technologies for business problems.
Mathis, Robert L., and John H. Jackson. *Human Resource Management*. 14th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2014.
Offers an updated look at challenges facing HRM professionals in modern organisations with business case studies from 2006 and beyond.
Noe, Raymond A., John R. Hollenbeck, Barry Gerhart, and Patrick M. Wright. *Human Resource Management: Gaining a Competitive Advantage*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2013.
Integrates the practice of HRM with a strong focus on sustainability, technology needs, and globalisation trends for business.

(Source: Oxford biographies (2017) Annotations, www.oxfordbiographies.com)

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Betchoo, N. (2013) Youth empowerment as a human resource development strategy in Mauritius, Issues in Business Management and Economics Vol.1 (8), pp. 218–229, December 2013.

Betchoo N. (2016) Universal Pension Review: Between Rational and Subliminal Judgment, International Journal of Trend in Research and Development (IJTRD), ISSN: 2394–9333, Volume-3, Issue-5, pp 444–450.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Abstracts explain the essence of
   A. surveys.
   B. fieldwork.
   C. statistical analyses.
   D. problem statements.

2. Abstract length should be around
   A. 150–300 words.
   B. 1500–3000 words.
   C. 75–120 words.
   D. 400–800 words.

3. Key words in an abstract are important for
   A. coding.
   B. coding and referencing.
   C. copyright purposes.
   D. originality.

4. Researchers state
   A. missing findings in the abstract.
   B. main findings in the abstract.
   C. all findings in the abstract.
   D. only a few findings in the abstract.

5. Extended abstracts include
   A. all the information of the research.
   B. a preliminary account of the research.
   C. a detailed and structured account of the research.
   D. a detailed and final account of the research.

6. Useful abstracts
   A. challenge readers' interest.
   B. defies readers' interest.
   C. sustains readers' interest.
   D. tests readers' interest.

7. A brief account of scholarly work can be illustrated in
   A. an unannotated bibliography.
   B. an annotated biography.
   C. an unannotated biography.
   D. an annotated bibliography.

8. Annotations are helpful in
   A. highlighting all scholars' contributions.
   B. stating all scholars' contributions.
   C. stating scholars' single contribution.
   D. highlighting scholars' key contributions.

9. The language used in abstracts should be
   A. simple and direct.
   B. technical.
   C. coded.
   D. ambiguous.

10. In abstracts, avoid…
    A. the study background.
    B. citations.
    C. sample size.
    D. study aims.

Answers: 1A 2A 3B 4B 5C 6C 7D 8D 9A 10B

5 LITERATURE REVIEW IN HRM RESEARCH

Writing out of order literature reviews derail dissertations. This chapter summarises key information on how to write a high-quality dissertation literature reviews. There is a: discussion of review purposes; taxonomy of literature reviews; and a discussion of steps in conducting a quantitative or qualitative literature review.

If the literature review is faulty, the remainder of the dissertation may also be flawed, because 'a researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field'. Boote and Beile (2005) wrote pre-dissertation students must learn skills for analysing and synthesising research to assess, synthesise, and improve research. Such skills enable students to choose a dynamic dissertation topic, and apply appropriate methods for collecting and analysing data. Boote and Beile (2005) explained having the abilities to 'build on the scholarship and research of those who have come before us' is known as generativity, which gives meaning, integrity, and sophistication to research efforts.

Examiners start reviewing a dissertation expecting this would pass. Poor conceptualisation or literature reviews harm the dissertation. Encountering an inadequate literature review, examiners proceed to look at data collection methods, analysis, and conclusions with more care. Given the importance of literature reviews in both dissertations and journal articles, it may be surprising that so many of them are wrongful.

Reasons for writing a literature review

Conducting a literature review is a means of demonstrating an author's knowledge about a field of study, including: vocabulary, theories, variables, phenomena, methods, and history. Conducting literature reviews informs students of influential researchers and research groups in the field.

Taylor and Procter (2008) have some useful questions to ask yourself at the start of the reading:

- What is the specific thesis, problem, or research question my literature review helps define?
- What type of literature review do I conduct?
- Am I looking at theoretical, methodological, policy, quantitative, or qualitative issues?
- What is my literature review's scope?

- What publication types do I use – journals, books, government documents, popular media?
- What disciplines do I work in – business, psychology, sociology, medicine?

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) argue that the literature review plays many a role in:

- delimiting the research problem.
- seeking new lines of inquiry.
- avoiding fruitless approaches.
- gaining methodological insights.
- suggesting further research, and
- seeking support for grounded theory.

Hart (1998) contributes additional reasons for reviewing the literature, including:

- distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done.
- discovering important variables relevant to the topic.
- synthesising and gaining new perspectives.
- identifying relations between ideas and practices.

- contextualising topic or problem.
- rationalising problem's significance.
- enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary.
- understanding subject structure.
- identifying main methodologies and research techniques being used, and
- contextualising research to familiarise with state-of-the-art developments.

Another purpose for writing literature reviews is to give a framework for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion section of a dissertation. Without establishing the state of the previous research, there is no chance to establish how the new research advances previous research.

Bourner's view on Literature Review

According to Bourner (1996) there are good reasons for spending time and effort on a literature reviews before researching:

- to identify literature gaps.
- to avoid reinventing the wheel.
- to carry on from where others reached.
- to identify and network with other people working in same fields.
- to deepen your understanding of your subject area.
- to identify seminal works in your area.
- to provide the intellectual context for your work, for positioning your project relative to other works.
- to identify opposing views.
- to put your work into perspective.
- to demonstrate you can access previous work in an area.
- to find information and ideas relevant to your project.
- to find methods relevant to your project.

Cooper's Taxonomy of Literature Reviews

Cooper suggests literature reviews can be classified according to five characteristics:
focus, goal, perspective, coverage, organisation, and audience.

Focus

The first characteristic is the focus of the review.

Cooper (1988) identifies four potential foci:
research outcomes; research methods; theories; and practices or applications.

'A literature review is an 'information analysis and synthesis, focusing on findings and not simply bibliographic citations, summarising the substance of the literature and drawing conclusions from it.'

These are highlighted in the Table below.

FOCUS Research outcomes. Research methods. Theories Practices or applications.	**GOAL** Integration. Generalisation. Conflict resolution. Linguistic bridge-building. Criticism. Identifying central issues.
PERSPECTIVE Neutral representation. Espousing position.	**COVERAGE** Exhaustive. Exhaustive with selective citation. Representative. Central or pivotal.
ORGANISATION Historical. Conceptual. Methodological.	**AUDIENCE** Specialised scholars. General scholars. Practitioners or policymakers. General public.

Theoretical Review

A theoretical review is appropriate if, for instance, the dissertation advances a new theory. Reviewing theories helps establish what theories exist, the relationships between them, and to what degree existing theories were investigated.

Many reviews integrate and generalise findings across units, treatments, outcomes, and settings. To resolve a debate in a field or to bridge language across fields.

Meta-analysis is an often used review technique where the goal is to integrate quantitative outcomes across studies. In other reviews the goal may be to analyse previous research, find essential issues, or explain an argument in a field.

Multiple goals of a dissertation

Dissertation reviews often have many goals. If a dissertation is just a review, the author may be interested in integration, but there may be a need to analyse research, identify key issues, or explicate an argument.

If a dissertation writer is using the literature review to justify a later investigation, the goal will emphasise analysing the literature, to identify and remedy a weakness with dissertation research. Without integration, the map of the research landscape would be as large as the research landscape.

Perspective

In qualitative primary research, review authors often decide to reveal own pre-existing biases and discuss how such biases affected the review. Or authors can attempt to take a neutral perspective and present review findings as fact. Since secondary research – review research – methods parallel primary research methods, authors should:

- give a qualitative review to follow the qualitative tradition and reveal biases, and
- follow the quantitative tradition and claim a neutral position.

Coverage

Deciding how wide is the span is a critical step in conducting a review.

Cooper proposes *four* coverage scenarios.

Exhaustive review

In an exhaustive review, the reviewer promises to locate and consider each piece of research on a certain topic, published, or unpublished. Finding every piece of research could take more time than is available. The key to the exhaustive review is to define the population in a restricted way with a convenient number of articles to review.

Exhaustive review with selective citation

Cooper (1988) calls this an exhaustive review with selective citation. The reviewer might choose only to look at articles published in journals, but not conference papers. Yet there is reason to exclude conference papers.

Representative sample of articles

A third coverage approach is to consider a descriptive sample of articles and infer about the entire population of articles perfect. Maybe a more certain approach is to gather evidence demonstrating the representative sample is representative. The soundest approach is doing both.

Purposive sample

Cooper's fourth article selection approach is to take a purposive sample in which the reviewer examines only the central or pivotal articles in a field. The key here is to convince readers the selected articles are the central or pivotal articles in a field, and excluded articles are irrelevant.

Organisation of Literature Review

There are many formats in which to organize a review.

Three of the most common are:

- historical format,
- conceptual format, and
- methodological format.

In the historical format the review is organised chronologically. This is preferred when emphasis is on progressing research methods or theories, or on a change in practices over time.

Example

The next paragraph speaks of a new form of socialism affecting the masses in advancing employee relations in Mauritius. In the early sixties, people started looking for white-collar jobs and new sectors developed. Though the island remained agricultural, industrial relations had more impact in various sectors of the economy (Schillinger, 2005). (…) The unions defended member interests and involved in major bargaining processes.
The development of the Free Zone sector in the early seventies spurred in industrial relations. Industrial development in Mauritius contributed to this country's economic progress. Job development was a priority when the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was set up in 1971 (SIDS-Mauritius, 2005). Many new sectors were developed in 1970 such as the textile sector, jewellery sector, and the tourism sector. Others were given more attention like, the fishing sector and existing agricultural sectors like tea, tobacco, and aloe. The success of EPZ industries as from 1980 onwards has been such they absorbed labour surplus. There was a labour shortage in the island and enterprises resorted to migrant labour for expanding production (maurinet.com).

Example

Overviewing Employee Relations theories. There are three major perspectives which contrast in approach to workplace relations' nature: Unitary; Pluralist; and Marxist. Each offers a different view of workplace relations and interpret such events as workplace conflict, the role of trade unions, and job regulation in a different way.

The Unitary perspective regards the organisation as an integrated group of people with one loyalty structure and unified by a common purpose. This means there are no barriers between different groups and departments which could lead to poor communication.

The Marxist perspective has been a tendency which prefers to focus on the politics of a society, according to Marx's theory, while both unitary perspective and pluralist perspective pay attention on industrial relations inside organisations. Marxist perspective criticises the capitalist society and system of production, distribution, and exchange (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004).

The Pluralist perspective regards organisation as combination composed of a variety of sectional groups with divergent interests over whom the government tries to maintain some kind of dynamic equilibrium (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004). The organisation is seen as multi-structured in terms of groups, leadership, authority, and loyalty, bonuses, and working hours (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004).

The literature review can be organised methodologically, as in an empirical paper – introduction, method, results, and discussion. In some cases, best to mix and match these organisational formats.

A second common organisational scheme relates to concepts. The review may be organised around the propositions in a research rationale or, in a theoretically-focused review, organised according to the literature's theories.

The stages of conducting a literature review are:

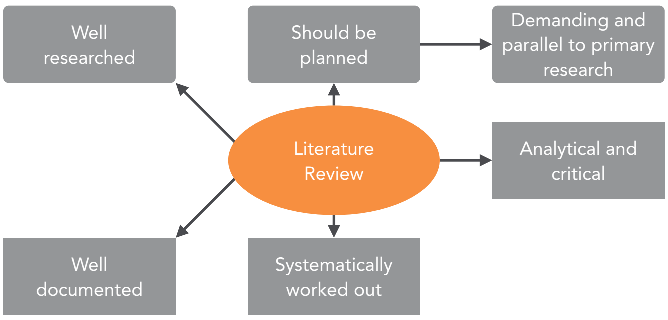
- Problem formulation.
- Data collection.
- Data evaluation.
- Analysis and interpretation.
- Public presentation.

Conducting and reporting a literature review parallels conducting primary research. With a few modifications, what one knows about conducting primary research applies to conducting secondary research (i.e., a literature review).

The most frequent mistakes made in reviewing the literature are researchers:

- relate with vagueness literature review findings to the researcher's study.
- takes little time to define best descriptors and identify best sources to use in literature review related to one's topic.
- relies on secondary sources in reviewing literature.
- accepts without question another researcher's findings and interpretations as valid, rather than examining each aspect of research design and analysis.
- omits considering contrary findings and alternative interpretations in synthesising quantitative literature.

Mind maps in Literature Review
Deciding on Literature Review



A Template for Literature Review

1.	**Formulation**	**YES**	**NO**
	Well formulated problem? Clear initial ideas? Interesting topic? Potential to find literature on topic?		
2.	**Development**		
	Suitable sources? Authoritative sources? Is the topic too new? Is the theme too often debated? Are there new developments in the area?		
3.	**Analysis**		
	Is there enough room to conceptualise literature? Can we see differences in approach? Are there literature gaps? Does the review progress clearly? Does the review challenge the researcher?		
4.	**Writing**		
	Logical review? Conceptual? Historical? Methodological? Is the literature readable? Is there information which can be added or trimmed?		

(Author's own source)

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Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Conducting a literature review informs the student of the…researchers and research groups in the field.
   A. general.
   B. influential.
   C. local.
   D. international.

2. Literature review affects finding
   A. new lines of inquiry.
   B. old lines of inquiry.
   C. existing lines of inquiry.
   D. past lines of inquiry.

3. A reason to review literature is to see what has been done and
   A. what should not be done.
   B. what needs to happen.
   C. what to avoid.
   D. what was achieved.

4. Finding research gaps means finding out
   A. a single difference in theory.
   B. differences between past and current findings.
   C. what should not be achieved.
   D. what researchers have never discovered.

5. In Cooper's taxonomy, research outcomes refer to
   A. perspective.
   B. organisation.
   C. audience.
   D. focus.

6. Literature review can be all except
   A. historical.
   B. conceptual.
   C. analytical.
   D. methodical.

7. Many reviews integrate and…findings.
   A. singularise.
   B. amend.
   C. change.
   D. generalise.

8. If reviewers look at articles published in journals, he or she adopts a/an
   A. representative view.
   B. exhaustive view only.
   C. exhaustive view with selection.
   D. purposive view.

9. Most frequent mistakes made in reviewing literature are researchers
   A. do not clearly relate the literature review findings to own study.
   B. clearly relate literature review findings to own study.
   C. never relate the literature review findings to own study.
   D. always relate the literature review findings to own study.

10. The first stage of conducting a literature review is
   A. data evaluation.
   B. problem presentation.
   C. data collection.
   D. problem formulation.

Answers: 1B 2A 3B 4A 5D 6C 7D 8C 9B 10A

6 SECONDARY RESEARCH IN HRM PRACTICE

Secondary research is published and cheapest as the data already exists. Secondary research divides into internal and external research. A secondary method of research is one used by researchers to gather data existing in some profile or form. Often the good practice for researchers is conducting secondary before primary research. The goal is to grasp what researchers, scholars, and others wrote before embarking on new research.

Researchers use secondary sources for many reasons and the sources of such data are several and diverse. These range from highly quantified sources such as statistics to the more qualitative such as personal documents and diaries, government and business reports and the mass media. These sources of information do also testify the real nature of the research. For instance, there has there been a topic on employee turnover in a rural firm. It should be found out where such example did really exist or existed in a similar form.

Secondary sources can be current or historical. Current is from what recently took place in the HR area. Historical relates to developments undergone in such an area. For instance, human resource welfare, over the years. There are many reasons why researchers use secondary sources.

On a practical level the use of secondary sources may represent saving much time, cash, and effort. Even a case study style might require such type of already published information. The basic argument is it may be unnecessary or impractical for researchers to create forms of data using primary methods when such data exists.

Advantages of secondary data

Secondary research offers some advantages for research gathering namely:

Ease of Access

In earlier years accessing good secondary data required researchers visiting libraries or waiting until a report shipped. When online access became an option researchers needed training to learn different rules and procedures for each data source. The Internet changed how secondary research is accessed by offering convenience – online access from many locations – and homogenous methods for each data source.

Cheap to obtain

Researchers are often attracted to secondary data as getting this information is cheaper than if the researchers do the research.

May help explain research query

Secondary research is often used before larger primary research to help clarify what is to be learned. For instance, a researcher doing human resource analysis, but who is not familiar with HR trends could access secondary sources to find a list of employers.

Answers the research question

Secondary data collection is often used to help set the stage for primary research. In the course of doing so researchers may find the exact information we were looking for is available through secondary sources, eliminating the need and expense to carry out our primary research.

Might show problems in conducting primary research

Creators of secondary research often provide details on how the information was collected. This may include discussion of difficulties encountered. The secondary research may be a research report written by a Human Resource department. These reports often include a section discussing the procedures used to collect the data and in this may disclose problems in obtaining data, such as many people declining to take part in research.

After reading this the researcher may choose the information to be obtained is not worth the difficulties for researching. While secondary research is often valuable, it has drawbacks.

Challenges of secondary research

Abilities of the researcher

Research conducted using primary methods is largely controlled by the researcher. However, this is not the case when it comes to data collected by others. Consequently, the quality of secondary research should be scrutinised closely since the origins of the information may be questionable.

Organisations relying on secondary data as an important component in their decision-making (e.g., HR research studies) must take extra steps to evaluate the validity and reliability of the information by critically evaluating how the information was gathered, analysed and presented.

Incomplete data

Many times a researcher finds that research that appears promising is in fact a riddle released by the researcher. This often occurs when a small portion of a study is disclosed, often for free, but the full report, which is often expensive, is needed to gain the full value of the study.

Untimely

Caution must be exercised in relying on secondary data that may have been collected well in the past. Obsolete information may offer little value especially for companies in fast changing situations.

Others information

In most cases secondary research is not undertaken specifically for one company. Instead it is made available to many either for free or for a fee. There is rarely an information benefit gained by those who obtain the research.

Not tailor-made to researcher's needs

Secondary data is often not presented in a form exactly meeting researchers' needs. For example, a researcher obtains an expensive research report that looks at how different age groups feel about certain products within the HR area.

Collection of Secondary Data

The secondary sources can be classified into published and unpublished sources.

Published Sources

Published sources are international, national, government, semi-government, private corporate bodies, trade associations, expert committee, and commission reports and research reports.

We collect statistical data in different fields like:
national income; population; prices; employment; wages; labour cost; and performance. These reports are published on often – annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily. These published sources of the secondary data are below.

Government Publications

The Central Statistical Organisation – and various public institutions compile and publish data often. Some key publications are:

- Trade Journals.
- Reports on labour market.
- Pay and Salaries Commission Report.
- Statistical Abstract.
- Employment Relations Act.
- Government Gazette.
- Economic Survey and so on.

Example of a statistical abstract

Low-wage jobs and labour market issues by Country-Source: Eurofound, December 2016

Country	Objectives of low-wage jobs	Specific measures implemented or proposed; other issues	Background and comments
Germany	To reduce unemployment	Introduction of national minimum wage in 2015	
Hungary	To reduce unemployment and protect employment	Wage level remains relatively low – not in line with increase in cost of living, immigration and labour shortage in some sectors	Public works programme
Norway	To increase job creation and opportunities for hiring migrants and refugees	Setting aside collectively agreed minimum wages	Considered a breach of the Norwegian model; unions and even some employers' organisations are against a lower entry wage
Romania	To reduce unemployment and protect employment	Minimum wage a hot topic; increased several times	Unemployment rate still comparatively low
Spain	To reduce unemployment and protect employment	Labour reforms and economic crisis; generalised salary devaluation in 2014 to stimulate employment recovery	Trade unions criticised the employment recovery considered to go hand-in-hand with salary devaluation
Sweden	To increase job creation and opportunities for hiring migrants and refugees	Proposed departure from wages set by collective bargaining	Government intervention is strictly opposed by social partners. But some employers are open to offering low-wage jobs

Reports of Committee and Commissions

Central Government sometimes appoints committees and commissions on matters of great importance.

Reports of such committees matter as these five valuable data:

- National Wages Council Report.
- Remuneration Orders' Report.
- Report by Commission of Mediation Council.
- Report on working conditions.
- Select committee on minimum wages.

Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and magazines also collect data in respect of many social and economic aspects.

Some of them are:

- Business and trade magazines – a large coverage of business and HR issues.
- HR focused papers.
- Reports of private sector business papers.
- Articles and interviews in local papers.
- Articles written on HRM in any country.
- Snapshots or 'infography' from graphic work.

HRM Manpower Services	**20 years of experience in industry** **A hallmark of HR services**	
20 expert consultants 30 associate consultants Over 50 adjunct experts	**Highly motivated staff – Hard working**	90% of our staff are graduates. 75% are aged 20–35. 55% engaged in further studies.
100% customer satisfaction	**80% loyalty rate**	**25 consultancy reports in 12 months.** **75% implementation satisfaction.**

An example of a snapshot designed by author. (2017)

Secondary research can happen at any stage of the creative process.

Each secondary research process involves **five** steps that can be repeated as needed:

- Identifying the subject area and where to find the information.
- Gathering existing data.
- Comparing data from different sources, if necessary and feasible; and
- Analysing data.
- Evaluating information.

Identifying data trends

Before starting any secondary research, it is helpful to define the research topic. The researcher would prepare a list of questions for solving by the end of the process. This step helps narrow down the topic and also allows researcher to have an active role in conducting the research. After identifying the research area, the researcher would look at various sources of information and decide where to get necessary data.

At this step, researcher looks at the topic and breaks it down in to keywords and their replacements.

For instance, when looking at the topic: 'What are trends in women salaries?'
The key words would be salaries, women, and trends.

Accordingly, our synonyms would be wages, female, and employment.

Using these words to search can save researcher a lot of time in finding valuable data and also warrant no important information to be missed out. At this final step, the researcher should seek actionable findings to move the project forward. It is important to look back at the list of research questions from the first step and ask if they have been answered and if there is any new question.

Inputs

Secondary research would start during or after brainstorming. Brainstorming brings in ideas or themes that would become the topic of secondary research. Secondary research topics can come from different stages of the creative process. Anytime a new question arises in the creative process, we can use secondary research to answer.

Example

Harbison (1967) identified major human resource problems in developing societies: (a) rapidly growing population; (b) mounting unemployment in the modern sectors of the economy and widespread underemployment in traditional agriculture; (c) shortages of people with critical skills and knowledge for proficient national development; (d) inadequate or under-developed organisations and institutions for mobilising human effort; and (e) lack of incentives for people to engage in activities which matter for national development. There are other major human resource development problems such as nutrition and health, but these lie for the most part in other technical fields and are beyond this work.

Gathering current data

During the step of gathering data, the researcher should verify the credibility of information coming from the Internet. Please use screenshots or another method for saving important websites for reference since the online data might be changed without notice.

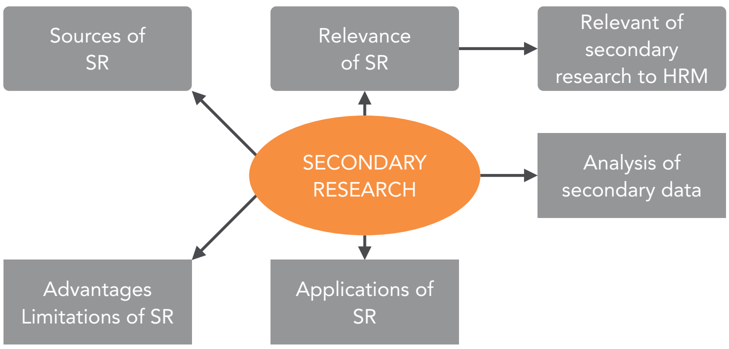
For data such as reports and statistics, the best way to verify credibility is consulting the appendix and references. The more detailed the references, the more trustworthy the data. Alone, copying or summarising information identified by secondary research has no value as far as the project is concerned.

Secondary Research is valuable when information is compared and analysed, when the researcher questions data, and when the researcher suggests with actionable findings to move the project forward.

Example:

Industrial placement is a necessity in today's evolving educational system. Education at the tertiary level is inadequate without exposing the student to a practical work environment. Pedler (1974) observed proficient learning places centres the experience around the student. Employers might argud we need trained students to allow us easily integrate the job environment while responding to the needs of the organisation where we will work. Students who are never posted to a company tend to perform worse than those who have ever been there. Industrial placement is seen as an activity bridging the gap academic learning provided by universities and work. Both universities and workplaces evolve at our own pace. If universities develop new course structures in line with what government and industry stakeholders project, workplaces might also have evolved to some extent. Industrial placement has become part of higher education curricula (Beggs et al., 2008) as educational institutions ofen do not have the facilities. Hence it is an avenue through which the industry complements what is taught in the classroom (Rothman, 2007). Offices dramatically changed in some settings where information technology has been harnessed by creating 'smarter' work environments. These are more productive than the traditional office and need qualified, capable, trained employees. Manpower Group (2012) confirms in this perspective young people lack specific 21st century workplace skills such as: cooperation; communication; critical thinking; creativity; and a focus on the enterprise needs. Workplaces are respond to needs of international settings. For instance, companies might now be working 'around the clock' and need trained staff to cater existing needs. Students who are trained in this new and constrained environment are those who are more likely to develop opportunities to be employed.

Mind maps in secondary Research
Secondary research in HRM



Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Compared to primary data, secondary data is
   A. inaccurate.
   B. cumbersome.
   C. more expensive.
   D. cheaper.

2. Secondary data must be obtained…primary data.
   A. at the same time as.
   B. after.
   C. before.
   D. at any time with.

3. Today secondary data is facilitated by
   A. private partners.
   B. government.
   C. online surveys.
   D. research companies.

4. Secondary research is often used prior to larger scale primary research to help clarify
   A. what is to be learned.
   B. what was learned.
   C. what was not learned.
   D. what was the truth.

5. Secondary data collection is often used to help set the stage for
   A. pure research.
   B. personal research.
   C. professional research.
   D. primary research.

6. …information may offer little value especially for companies in fast changing circumstances.
   A. Recent.
   B. New.
   C. Obsolete.
   D. Practical.

7. The third step in conducting secondary research is
   A. identifying the subject area and where to acquire the information.
   B. comparing data from different sources.
   C. gathering existing data.
   D. analysing the data.

8. Secondary data is often not presented in a form…meeting the researchers' needs.
   A. exactly.
   B. generally.
   C. more or less.
   D. inadequately.

9. Researchers should make sure to verify the…of the information coming from the Internet.
   A. volume.
   B. quantity.
   C. length.
   D. credibility.

10. For data such as reports and statistics, the best way to verify credibility is to consult the
    A. Appendix only.
    B. Reference only.
    C. appendix and references.
    D. bibliography and records.

Answers: 1D 2C 3B 4A 5D 6C 7B 8A 9D 10C

7 PRIMARY RESEARCH IN HRM PRACTICE

Primary research consists of original primary data collected by the researcher. It is often undertaken after the researcher has gained insight into the issue by reviewing secondary research or by analysing previously collected primary data. The key point here is the data one collects is unique to the research until published remains original.

Primary research is any type of research that the researcher himself collects. This includes surveys, interviews, observations, and ethnographic research.

A researcher knows how to use primary and secondary sources in writing and to cohere each.

Primary sources can be first-hand observation/analysis, or modern-day explanations with the events described. Primary sources document events, people, viewpoints of the time. When research is more contemporary, rather than historical in context, the scope of possible primary sources broadens. Primary sources represent one person's perspective.

Primary sources are used regularly with secondary or tertiary sources to broaden the scope through which a researcher is looking at an event, period, or occurrence. It is important when using anything as a primary source the researcher be mindful of and sensitive to the bias of the analyser that created the primary source, and also to the broader cultural biases of the era in which the primary source was created.

The researcher's perspective

The researcher's perspective, or the arguments or points for which a researcher plans to use a primary source as evidence, is significant in determining what sources will be primary.

Replicas of primary sources remain primary for many research purposes. Some attributes are based more on the perspective represented in the source and context in which the source is being used by researcher. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Primary means 'first', 'original,' or 'direct'.

Primary sources give us first-hand insights to the past. They are actual records that have survived from the past. They are in their original form articles or notes usually without explanation or interpretation. Primary sources do not speak for themselves, they need to be interpreted. Primary sources document events, people, and standpoints of time.

The nature and value of a source cannot be determined referring to the topic and questions meant to answer. Source needs to be established for personal properties.

Date and authority of sources must be verified before using them in the project. In other words, consider a document's attribution-the name of the author or publishing supervisor and how the document came into being first.

The researcher must remember primary source material is sometimes subjective. Primary sources are characterised by content, regardless of whether these are available in original format, in microfilm/microfiche, in digital format, or in published format. They may be published or unpublished.

Starting primary research

Primary research is any research that you go and collect yourself. Examples include surveys, interviews, observations, and ethnographic research. A good researcher knows how to use primary and secondary sources in her writing and to integrate them in a consistent fashion.

Conducting primary research is a useful skill to acquire as it can supplement the research in secondary sources, like journals, magazines, or books. The researcher can use it as the project's focus.

Primary research is an excellent skill to learn as it can be useful in a variety of settings including business, personal, and academic. When one is working on a local problem that may not have been addressed before and little research to back it up.

The researcher can undertake primary research in the form of surveying individuals in the firm and local decision makers to gain more information especially when one is working on writing about a specific group of people or a specific person.

Example

Writing about the recruitment in a local small or medium enterprise.

When the researcher is working on a topic that is relatively new or original and few publications exist on the subject, information should be collected in the most proficient manner.

For example, if one wanted to write on the application of flexitime in Medical Health centres in his country. He can also use primary research to confirm or dispute national results with local trends.

Starting point in primary research

Consider the following questions when thinking about conducting primary research:

- What do I want to realise?
- How do I plan on determining it? This is called research methods or methodology.
- Who am I going to talk to/observe/survey? These people are called subjects or participants.
- How am I going to be able access these groups or people?
- What are my preconceptions about this topic?
- How can I make sure my preferences are not reflected in my research methods?
- What do I expect to discover?

Types of primary research

Many types of primary research exist. This presentation is designed to offer the researcher an overview of primary research that is often done in writing modules.

Interviews

Interviews are one-on-one or small group question and answer sessions. Interviews provide much information from a small number of people and are useful when we want to get an expert or knowledgeable opinion on a subject.

Surveys

Surveys are a form of questioning that is more rigid than interviews and that involve larger groups of people. Surveys provide limited information from many people and are useful when we want to learn what a larger population thinks.

Observations

Observations involve taking organised notes about occurrences in the world. Observations provide the researcher insight into specific people, events, or sites and are useful when you want to learn more about an event without the biased viewpoint of an interview.

Analysis

Analysis involves collecting data and organising it in some fashion based on criteria the researcher develops. These are useful when the researcher wants to find some trend or pattern. A type of analysis would be to record information in two major locations and analyse gender roles.

Primary research is conducted all of the time. Media use it as our primary means of reporting news and events. National surveys and surveys discover what the population thinks about a particular political figure or proposal and companies collect data on our consumer base and market trends.

When conducting research in an academic or professional setting, the researcher must be aware of the ethics behind the research activity.

Specific points to consider in primary research

The researcher should have the permission of the people who she will be studying to conduct research involving them. Not all types of research require permission – for example, if the researcher is interested in analysing something that is available publicly such as in the case of public message boards, leaflets – he does not necessarily need authors' permission.

The researcher should not do anything that would cause physical or emotional harm to subjects. This could be something as simple as being careful how you word sensitive or hard questions during interviews.

Issues on Ethics

There are many key phrases describing ethical protections the contemporary social and medical research establishment created to protect the rights of research participants.

Voluntary participation

The principle of voluntary participation requires people not be coerced into participating in research. This is relevant where researchers previously relied on 'captive audiences' for subjects like universities. Closely related to the notion of voluntary participation is the requirement of informed consent. This means prospective research participants must be informed about procedures and risks involved in research and must consent to participate (Trochim, 2006).

Ethical standards require researchers not put participants in a situation where we might be at risk of harm due to participation. Harm can be defined as physical and psychological. There are two standards which are applied to help protect participants' privacy.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Almost all research guarantees participant confidentiality-we are assured identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The stricter standard is the principle of anonymity which means the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study – even to the researchers (Trochim, 2006).

Right to service

According to Trochim (2006), the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but is sometimes difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points like a pre-post study). Researchers had to deal with the ethical issue of a person's right to service. Good research often requires the use of a no-treatment control group – a group of participants who do *not* get the treatment or program that is being studied. But when that treatment or program may have beneficial effects, persons assigned to the no-treatment control may feel our rights to equal access to services are being reduced.

Objectivity vs. Subjectivity

Objectivity versus subjectivity in research is an important consideration. Please ensure personal biases and opinions never interfere with research and researchers considers each side fairly.

Many types of research, such as surveys or observations, should be conducted assuming researchers will anonymise findings. Researchers should inform collaborators or respondents if research results will be anonymous or not.

Researchers should choose subjects based on what would most benefit research. Some types of research done in an institution require institutional approval. This means the research has to be approved by an ethics review committee to ensure no violation of the above considerations.

When reporting results, researchers must accurately represent what we observed. We should not take interview responses out of context and do not discuss small parts of observations without putting them into the appropriate context.

Oversimplifying the results

It is impossible to make extensive generalities about people based on a few interviews, observations, or surveys. It is hard to generalise about any occurrence relating to people because we are dynamic and circumstances always change.

Subjective methodology

If the researcher creates a biased survey or asks biased questions, she will get biased results. Correlation does not imply causation. Remember just because two results are related does not mean one causes another.

For example, effective HR planning helps achieve competitive workforce but this might not always be the case – see companies becoming unprofitable.

Avoiding other related factors

It is very difficult to be able to study all the factors relating to a specific group of people, an event, or an occurrence. Despite researchers do not include these factors in her primary research, these should still be considered when she starts analysing data.

For example, in a study of recruitment and performance, other factors like politics, finance, environment might not be included.

Selecting valid data

Some participants in the research may not take it seriously and could provide trivial, inaccurate answers or engage in unusual behaviours. This most likely occurs with surveys people complete but occasionally can occur during interviews or observations. If the researcher finds questionable information, best to omit it in the result analysis.

Stated behaviour vs. Actual behaviour

What people report our behaviour might not actually be how we behave. People will often report our behaviour in a more positive light than it may be. For example, all employees may state we are satisfied with our job. One of science's goals is description, others include prediction and explanation.

Descriptive research methods are pretty much as they sound – they *describe* situations. They do not make accurate predictions, and they do not determine cause and effect.

Three main types of descriptive methods

There are three main types of descriptive methods: observational methods, case-study methods and survey methods.

This may help one better understand research findings, whether reported in the mainstream media, or when reading a research study on its own.

Observational method

With the observational method or field observation animal and human behaviour is closely observed. There are two main categories of the observational method – direct observation and laboratory observation. The biggest advantage of the direct method of research is researchers view participants in natural environments.

Advocates of laboratory observation often suggest due to more control in the laboratory, results found when using laboratory observation are more meaningful than those obtained with naturalistic observation. Laboratory observations are often less time-consuming and cheaper than naturalistic observations.

In choosing between direct observation, participation or immersion, or any form of field research in between, the choice comes down to the research situation. Different situations require different roles for the researcher. While one setting might call for direct observation, another might be better with immersion (Babbie, 2001). There are no clear guidelines for making the choice on which method to use. The researcher must rely on his or her own understanding of the situation and use his or her own judgment. Methodological and ethical considerations must also come into play as a part of the decision. These things can often conflict, so the decision might be a difficult one and the researcher could find that his or her role limits the study.

Case Study method

Case study research involves an in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals. Case studies often lead to testable hypotheses and allow us to study rare phenomena. Case studies should not be used to determine cause and effect, and these have limited use for making accurate predictions.

There are **two** serious problems with case studies. Expectancy effects and atypical individuals. Expectancy effects include the experimenter's underlying biases that might affect the actions taken while conducting research. These biases can lead to misrepresenting participants' descriptions.

Example

The case for equality and diversity

Today's business environment is changing. The average age of the workforce is rising steadily and women now make up nearly half the workforce in the UK, double the numbers of 25 years ago. Projections show in less than ten years' time there will be two million more jobs in the economy – 80% of which will be filled by women. But the workforce is also changing in other significant ways. A recent Government report estimated the working age population will increase by a million in the next ten years, and minority ethnic communities will account for more than half that increase. (…)

(…) Businesses that take a positive approach to diversity generally are likely to do better than competitors. Research has also shown organisations with high quality Human Resources or Personnel systems – in which equality plays a part – deliver better products and services and ultimately better shareholder value.

A diverse team will = bring different talents to the workplace – these enhance the ability of a business to innovate and maintain a competitive edge. A recent survey of financial analysts by Ernst and Young showed innovation was rated one of the top ten nonfinancial variables crucial to the success of a business. In this communications age, where information spreads fast it has become apparent how damaging negative public image can be to firms (Department of Trade and Industry, 2013).

Survey method

In survey method research, participants answer questions administered through interviews or questionnaires. After participants answer the questions, researchers describe responses given. For the survey to be reliable and valid it is important questions are constructed well. Please write questions with clarity so these are easy to understand.

Please emphasise descriptive research methods can only describe a set of observations or collected data.

Example

Salary surveys are extremely powerful compensation and benefits benchmarking tool. These are important for the setting right compensation strategy and for following and monitoring the desired pay market. The salary survey is provided by the external compensation consultant, who gather the compensation information and salary details about people, match the information, and provides feedback about the pay market and pay structures back to the participating organisations.

Salary surveys provide the information about the average salary review percentage and the allocation of the growth of the salaries into specific job positions across the participating organisations. The salary survey can act as a tool to identify the key job positions in the organisation as the competitors can protect the key job positions and is usually visible in the salary surveys (HR Management Guide).

A table can help:

Job Category	Average Salary in Euros
Customer Service and Call Center	3,500
Media/ Broadcasting / Arts / Entertainment	4,000
Advertising / Graphic Design / Event Management	4,500
Business Planning	5,000
Electrical and Electronics	3,500
Recreation and Sport	4,000

References

Babbie, E. (2001). The Practice of Social Research: 9th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning.

DTI (2013) The Case for Diversity and Equality, Department of Trade and Industry (UK) 2013.

HR Management Guide (2016) Importance of Salary Surveys.

Trochim, W. (2006) Ethics in Research, research Methods Knowledge Base.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Primary research consists of collecting…primary data by the researcher.
   A. original.
   B. historical.
   C. previous.
   D. common.

2. …are one-on-one or small group question and answer sessions.
   A. Interviews.
   B. Surveys.
   C. Observations.
   D. Analyses.

3. …are a form of questioning that is more rigid than interviews and involving larger groups of people
   A. Interviews.
   B. Surveys.
   C. Observations.
   D. Analyses.

4. …involve taking organised notes about occurrences.
   A. Surveys.
   B. Observations.
   C. Interviews.
   D. Analyses.

5. The principle of…requires people not be coerced into participating in research.
   A. involuntary participation.
   B. public participation.
   C. voluntary participation.
   D. private participation.

6. According to Trochim (2006), the…standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy.
   A. quality.
   B. research.
   C. anonymity.
   D. analogical.

7. With the observational method human behaviour is…
   A. human behaviour is totally observed.
   B. human behaviour is generally observed.
   C. human behaviour is rarely observed.
   D. human behaviour is closely observed.

8. ….. research involves an in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals.
   A. Personal.
   B. Review.
   C. Analytical.
   D. Case study.

9. Descriptive research methods can only describe
   A. a set of observations.
   B. a set of facts.
   C. a set of ideas.
   D. a set of intentions.

10. When people report our behaviour might not be how we behave, this is
    A. actual behaviour.
    B. expected behaviour.
    C. desirable behaviour.
    D. 'out of the blue' behaviour.

Answers: 1A 2A 3B 4B 5C 6C 7D 8D 9A 10A

8 SAMPLING METHODOLOGY IN HRM PRACTICE

One essential component of human resource research comes from the need to define, describe and use a suitable sample for research purposes. This sample will then appropriately determine the target the researcher seeks and how such a sample is going to respond to the questions and arguments the researcher wants to find. The sample determines the research quality in terms of output and result consistency. There are techniques in deciding about a suitable sample but, in general, it should be fairly large to research, suitably identified to ensure all respondents are in line with the sample population and see there are enough respondents to provide feedback good for research. Failing to have a good sample normally makes a general survey with general answers to a problem. A defined sample that is scientifically developed helps the HR manager gain enough data that answers most of the questions raised in a dissertation or research. Please note all respondents cannot participate in a survey given this is time consuming and not scientifically appropriate. In small populations, each respondent might be included, say, in research where there are 30 respondents. As the size increases, there is greater possibility of defining a good sample in a stratified manner. This chapter covers the aspect of sampling methodology and learners could gain suitable information on which sample to choose and which one suits the needs of our research.

The Sample concept

In research terms a sample represents a group of people, items, or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure we generalise the findings from the research sample to the population as a whole.

A sample is the group of people who take part in the investigation. The people who take part are referred to as 'participants'. Sampling is the process of selecting participants from the population.

The target population is the total group of people from which the sample might be drawn. Generalisation refers to the extent to which we can apply our research findings to the target population we are interested in. In psychological research one is involved in learning about large groups of people who have something in common. This group that is of interest to the researcher is the target population.

In some types of research, the target population might be as broad as all people, but in other types of research the target population might be a smaller group such as: male workers, female employees, full and part-time workers, HR managers, trainers, or employees in a department.

If the sample selected is going to represent the target population then one needs to make sure people in it are similar to the other members of the target population. This is important as the researcher wants to generalise from the sample to target population.

The participants in research, the sample, should be as representative as possible of the target population. The more representative the sample, the more confident the researcher can be results are generalised to the target population.

Sampling bias

One problem which can occur when selecting a sample from a target population is sampling bias. Sampling bias refers to situations where the sample does not reflect the characteristics of the target population. One may then consider different types of probability samples.

Example

Studying volunteers only

This produces selectivity or bias in assigning subjects to various groups. That volunteers are motivated to participate in the study may mean we differ from the study population in the factors being studied. Better to avoid using non-random procedures introducing the choice.

Sampling of full-time employees only

If full-time employees are involved in the research sample, we might reflect just our problems. Nothing could be said of part-timers or casual workers that might also have a role to play.

Probability and non-probability samples

Although there are many different methods that might be used to create a sample, they generally can be grouped into one of two categories: probability samples or non-probability samples.

Probability Samples

The idea behind this type is random selection. Each sample from the population of interest has a known probability of selection under a given sampling scheme.

There are different types of probability samples.

Simple Random Sampling

The most widely known type of a random sample is simple random sampling. This is characterised by the probability of selection is the same for each case in the population.

Simple random sampling is a method of selecting n units from a population of size N such that every possible sample of size has an equal chance of being drawn. In real-world social research, systems using simple random sampling are hard to find.

Example

Spending patterns of middle class of employees. What is middle class? How might this concept differ say from upper and lower-middle class employees?

Stratified Random Sampling

In this form of sampling, the population is divides into two or more mutually exclusive segments based on some categories of variables of interest in the research. It is designed to organise the population into homogenous subsets before sampling, then drawing a random sample within each subset.

With stratified random sampling the population of N units is divided into subpopulations of units respectively.

These subpopulations, called strata, are non-overlapping and together encompass the whole of the population. When these have been determined, a sample is drawn from each, with a separate draw for each of the different strata. The sample sizes within the strata are denoted by respectively.

Example

Sample Size	Random
Sample	Women 60 Men 70
Age Group	18–55
Age stratification	None
Region	Urban/Rural No differentiation
Union characteristic	White Collar *Banking and Financial* *Education* *Public services* Blue Collar *Manufacturing* *Transport* *Construction* Non-unionised
Respondents profile	Public union respondents 70% Private union respondents 30%
	Expert member checking with 5 key members - 3 union leaders - 2 academic or University staff.

Systematic Sampling

This method of sampling is at first glance different from simple random sampling. In practice, it is a variant of simple random sampling involving some listing of elements – every nth element of list is then drawn for inclusion in the sample.

Say the researcher has a list of 1,500 people and she wants a sample of 100.

Creating such a sample includes:

Divide number of cases in the population by the desired sample size. In this example, dividing 1,500 by 100 gives a value of 15.

Choose a random number between one and the value attained in Step 1. In this example, one chooses a number between one and 15 – say eight.

Starting with case number chosen in Step 2, take every tenth record (8, 18, 28, etc.).

Or, assume that the N units in the population are ranked one to N in some order (e.g., alphabetic).

Cluster Sampling

Sometimes, the sampling unit consists of a group or cluster of smaller units we call elements or subunits. These are units of analysis for a proficient study.

There are two main reasons for doing cluster sampling.

Although the first intention may be to use the elements as sampling units, it is found in many surveys that no reliable list of elements in the population is available and it would be too expensive to make such a list.

In many nations, there are no complete and updated lists of the people, houses, or farms in any large geographical region. Social research is often conducted in situations where a researcher cannot choose the kinds of probability samples used in large-scale social surveys.

For example, say one wanted to study dual-career couples at work – there is no such list of people nor is the researcher likely to create such a list. Yet she needs to get some sample of respondents to research.

To gather such a sample, the researcher would likely use some form of non-probability sampling.

The key difference between probability methods of sampling and non-probability methods is that non-probability researchers do not know the probability any element of a population will be chosen for study.

Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is a method of choosing subjects who are available or easy to find. This method is also sometimes referred to as availability or convenience sampling. The primary advantage of the method is that it is easy to do, relative to other methods. A researcher can just hand out surveys.

One place this used to show up often is in university courses. For instance, all students taking introductory HR courses are given a survey and compelled to fill.

There is the advantage to this design in that it is easy to do, particularly with a receptive audience, and in some universities one can attain a large number of interviews through this method.

Quota Sampling

Quota sampling is designed to overcome the most obvious flaw of availability sampling. Rather than taking just anyone, researchers set quotas to ensure the sample represents certain characteristics in proportion to frequency in the population.

Note for this method, any researcher must know something on the characteristics of the population ahead of time. Say one wants to ensure she has a sample proportional to the population in terms of gender, she will have to know what percentage of the population is male and female, then collect a sample matching the researcher's requirements.

HR studies are fond of this research design. The primary problem with this form of sampling is even when one knows that a quota sample is representative of the particular characteristics for which quotas have been set, she has no way of knowing if sample is representative in terms of any other characteristics.

Sample representativeness

This is the primary concern in statistical sampling. The sample obtained from the population must be representative of the same population. This can be accomplished by using random statistical sampling techniques or probability sampling like cluster or stratified sampling.

The reason behind representativeness being the primary concern in statistical sampling is it allows the researcher to draw conclusions for the entire population. If the sample is not representative of the population, conclusions cannot be drawn since the results the researcher obtained from the sample will be differ from results if the entire population is to be tested.

Practicability

Practicability of statistical sampling techniques allows researchers to estimate: the possible number of subjects that can be included in the sample; the type of sampling technique; the study's duration; respondent number; ethical concerns; respondent availability; the need for the study; and the amount of workforce the study demands.

These factors contribute to the decisions of the researcher regarding to the study design.

Sampling Risks

There are two types of sampling risks. First comes the risk of incorrect acceptance of the research hypothesis and the second is the risk for incorrect rejection.

These risks relate to the possibility when a test is conducted to a sample, results and conclusions may differ from the results and conclusions when the test is conducted to the whole population.

The risk of incorrect acceptance relates to the risk the sample can support a theory about the population when it is not existent in the population.

Or, the risk of incorrect rejection relates to the risk the sample can reject a theory about the population when in fact, the theory holds true in the population.

A sampling example

The research was undertaken in two public organisations: A public university and two public post offices located in north and the eastern part of a country. The framework was benchmarking digital transformation in two unrelated public sectors. Benchmarking enhances transparency and performance after entering the public domain. Punniyamoorthy and Murali (2008) support the argument benchmarking should be a reference or measurement standard for comparison; a performance measurement that is the standard of excellence for a specific business; and a measurable, best-in-class achievement. To ensure credible results, a relative comparison was made before using a questionnaire. Postal services use digital technologies but are operated by few staff. Universities use technology too but have more staff. To ensure consistent results and consider outcomes to be representative of a normal distribution, 30 respondents were chosen: 40 from the university comprising 18 lecturers, twelve administrative staff and ten students while in the postal department, 30 employees mainly clerical and administrative or postmaster level were included.

Sample Size

A key argument is to determine sample size. It is a common acceptance among researchers that the bigger the sample, the better the study becomes. This is not necessarily true. In general, it is much better to increase the accuracy of data collection for example, by improving the training of interviewers or by better pretesting of the data-collection tools than to increase the sample size after a certain point.

The WHO Essential Medicines and Health Products Information Portal (2017) states in qualitative studies the aim is not to be representative of the population. The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from such studies have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected, and the analytical qualities of the researcher than with the sample size. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research. It depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the study and practical factors. Often qualitative researchers refer to the redundancy criterion: that is when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units, stop collecting data. One can also use pragmatic criteria in defining sample size, considering the amount of time it costs to do and transcribe the interviews and the number of sub-groups from which one will select respondents. A qualitative study with 40 informants is a relatively large study. Generally qualitative comparative studies have at least 10 informants per group.

In quantitative studies, as a general rule we can say the desirable sample size is determined by the expected variation in the data: the more varied the data are, the larger the sample size we will need to attain the same level of accuracy. Researchers should consult a statistician, who can often make precise calculations to determine desirable sample size. Examples of such calculations follow below. For descriptive studies, we cannot say more than the sample size needs to be large enough to reflect important variations in the population, but small enough to allow for intensive study methods.

A quantitative study should aim to quantify well-defined variables, for instance, the proportion of semi-skilled employees working on industrial machines. Sample size calculations are based on estimates of what these proportions are likely to be (informed guess or results of previous surveys). These estimates are made before selecting a sample. For a simple random sample, the table can be used to determine the required sample size.

Sampling size calculations for multi-stage sampling are more complicated. Best to consult a statistician. Statistical advice is needed to define sample sizes for comparative studies like those in evaluation studies when experimental groups are compared with control groups, where one wants to test differences between two groups. The desirable sample size can often be calculated, with some aid, if the researcher is able to make a rough estimate of the outcome of the study, and is clear about main objectives and variables (WHO Portal, 2017).

Sample size estimates for a simple random sample

The table below shows how a sample size might develop. It comes from Lutz (1982) who developed an estimate of sample size depending upon the desirable number defined.

Estimated sample size proportion	Desirable sample size	Estimated proportion
0.05	420	0.95
0.10	325	0.90
0.15	290	0.85
0.20	255	0.80
0.25	225	0.75
0.30	195	0.70
0.35	170	0.65
0.50	100	0.50

The interpretation is as follows;

If there are 100 respondents, an estimated proportion would be 50% or 0.5. The smaller the size, the larger will be the proportion. As the number rises, say 170, the estimated proportion of respondents would be 65% and the size could be 35%. In a sample of 420 employees, 95% should be potential respondents (around 400) and around 21 respondents might be helpful in this case. The larger the sample, the more willing should be the estimated proportion and the lower the sample size.

Sampling for focus group discussions

The main decision one must take when planning focus group discussions is what focus she intends to have, and how many group discussions she intends to hold. Focus group discussions are often used to contrast views of different 'focused' groups: for example, managers versus operatives; men versus women. The researcher decides which population sub-groups must be interviewed. Please limit the scope of the study to those sub-groups which have direct experience with the problem. Often local opinion leaders are asked to select respondents for the focus groups. The researcher should aim for around six to eight participants per group and conduct at least two focus group discussions per population group involved. So, for instance, two with men and two with women, or two with managers and two with operatives. If the conclusions of the two groups disagree, the researcher might hold a third discussion to further investigate the issues.

References

Lutz, W. (1982). Sampling: how to select people, households, places to study community health, 3rd ed. International Epidemiological Association. Edinburgh.

World Health Organisation (2017) Essential Medicines and Health Products Information Portal, A World Health Organization resource, http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/en.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Sampling is the process of choosing participants from the
   A. republic.
   B. public.
   C. population.
   D. country.

2. This group which is of interest to the researcher is the
   A. target audience.
   B. target market.
   C. target population.
   D. target sample.

3. One of the problems that can occur when selecting a sample from a target population is
   A. sampling size.
   B. sampling data.
   C. sampling bias.
   D. sampling scope.

4. Under probability sample, the sample should be
   A. perfect.
   B. non-random.
   C. precise.
   D. random.

5. In stratified sampling, subpopulations are known as
   A. samples.
   B. strategy.
   C. structure.
   D. strata.

6. Convenience sampling is a method of choosing subjects who are
   A. easy to find.
   B. exceptional to find.
   C. tough to find.
   D. easy to find.

7. Researchers set quotas to ensure the sample we get represents certain characteristics in proportion to our
   A. frequency in the sample.
   B. frequency in the population.
   C. size in the population.
   D. location in the population.

8. If the sample is not representative of the population, results the researcher obtained from the sample will be…from the results of the entire population.
   A. different.
   B. same.
   C. identical.
   D. consistent.

9. In quantitative studies, as a general rule the desirable sample size is determined by the
   A. unexpected data variation.
   B. expected data variation.
   C. expected value in the data.
   D. unexpected value in the data.

10. In a small sample of 30 HR students, the acceptable sample size would be
    A. 30.
    B. 3.
    C. 12.
    D. 9.

Answers: 1C 2C 3C 4D 5D 6D 7B 8A 9B 10A

9 THE USE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN HRM PRACTICE

Considering writing a piece of research work without a questionnaire might be a testing question for a student. An apprehension is much work from literature review in the form of secondary data collection, analysis, and review, might tempt the researcher to feel there has not been anything new developed so far by her.

Then there is the task to create some personal work to avoid the risk of using existing research or plagiarising. For this sake, the design of a survey in the form of a questionnaire becomes important to the researcher. This might appear to be an easy and tough task for the student. If it is easy, then the questionnaire is formulated by thinking out an idea and writing questions without refereeing to what was developed. This ends up more in the form of a survey with generalisations. Or the reference to existing literature and the development of a questionnaire from such work remains testing. There must be parts found in the literature review that impact the questionnaire. Please find literature gaps in producing new questions needing testing.

The development of a questionnaire comes in various forms. Some students and academics might risk producing tough questions with complex wordings that are difficult to answer or might make the respondent give up. Some others might use simplistic wording and this might make the questionnaire boring.

An important element linked with the questionnaire might be question type. There are open and close-ended questions but a many styles might encourage the respondent to answer more often. The length and the time to fill the questionnaire might impede the survey exercise. We hope researchers could develop questionnaires which could be done by enough respondents in reasonable time and ensure that the questionnaire is well filled.

The response rate will be another element in questionnaire design. As seen in the previous lesson, it was essential to have a suitable sample size with respondents who are willing to answer. This should be a major consideration for the academic. Often poorly filled questionnaires defeat the purpose of a study in the same way as unreturned questionnaires.

Since questionnaires involve personal effort in design and drafting questions, they formulate a fresh perspective for the research. The questionnaire prompts the writer to develop new questions, concepts, and arguments around the discussion topic. It is also important to find what others derived from our questionnaires. Being inspired from others' work without copying the questionnaire might be rewarding. Copying and changing words makes no sense. As the questionnaire is creative and the most challenging one in a research, this chapter clarifies how to be effective in developing a suitable HR-relayed questionnaire.

The Survey

Surveys provide an important source of basic scientific knowledge. The word survey is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals. Information is collected by standardised procedures so each person is asked same questions in similar ways.

All of the survey's results should be presented in completely anonymous summaries, such as statistical tables and charts. Surveys provide an important source of basic scientific knowledge. Economists, psychologists, HR managers, political scientists, and sociologists conduct surveys to study:

- income and expenditure patterns among households,
- the relevance of training programmes at work,
- the implications of employee welfare at work,
- comparative work behaviour,
  and the effects on stress of women working outside the home.

While many of the principles are the same for all surveys, the focus here will be on methods for surveying individuals.

Newer methods of data collection, information is entered online by a trained interviewer or by the respondent.

Types of Surveys

Surveys can be classified by data collection methods. Mail, telephone interview, and in-person interview surveys are most common. Extracting data from samples of human resource and other records is often done.

Mail Surveys

Mail surveys can be relatively low cost. As with any other survey, problems exist in use when insufficient attention is given to getting high levels of cooperation. Mail surveys can be most effective when directed at particular groups, such as subscribers to a specialised magazine or professional association members. Mail surveys are rare in society while online surveys are more popular.

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are an efficient method of collecting some types of data and are being increasingly used. These are useful to situations where timeliness is a factor and the length of the survey is limited. Telephone interviews might have the disadvantage of asking the respondent questions when he or she has no material or any other evidence to support arguments. Sometimes, the validity of the answer becomes questionable. And there might be the risk of guiding the respondent to answer the question.

In-person interviews in a respondent's home or office are much more expensive than mail or telephone surveys. These may be necessary especially when collecting complex information. Some surveys combine various methods.

The Census

A census is often seen as the opposite of a sample as its intent is to count everyone in a population rather than a segment. But population censuses rely on a sampling frame to count the population. This is the only way to be sure everyone is included. Otherwise those not responding would not be followed up on and we could overlook people.

The fundamental premise of a census is the population is not known and a new estimate is to be made by the analysis of primary data. The use of a sampling frame is inclusive as by suggesting the population size is known.

Omnibus Survey

An omnibus survey is a method of quantitative marketing research where data on many subjects is collected during the same interview. This is also known as the piggyback survey. It is a research in which multiple clients share the cost of conducting research.

Subscribers usually receive the portion of the information that is collected specifically for them. A survey which covers a number of topics, often for different clients.

Omnibus surveys can also be used to reach more specific audiences such as men or women, certain age, education, or income groups, or even individuals who engage in a specific behaviour.

Omnibus surveys are a cost-effective way to get valuable, proprietary information about the citizens of virtually any country in the world. An Omnibus is a shared cost survey.

The mode of data collection must be decided by mail, telephone, or in person. Once this is determined a questionnaire can be developed and pretested. Planning the questionnaire is one of the most critical stages in the survey development process. Social and behavioural scientists have given a great deal of thought to the design issues involved.

Questionnaire design

Questionnaire design has elements often appearing to be just plain arguments, but, when executed, may involve some refinement. It is common sense to phrase concepts and questions with clarity. Or the resulting data may confuse.

Designing a suitable questionnaire involves more than well-defined concepts and plain wording. Please attend to length. Long questionnaires may bore respondents and make errors from inattention, refusals, and incomplete answers. We may also contribute to higher non-response rates in succeeding surveys involving the same respondents.

Planning the questionnaire is one of the most serious stages in the survey process. A questionnaire are questions used for gathering information used to benefit a person. While more than one person might complete the questionnaire, the responses are not aggregated for analysis. The key difference is questionnaires can stand alone such as when used for job applications, research, or case studies.

These questionnaires are not for research or studies, but to collect information to assist an individual or organisation. In these cases, the responses are not grouped for investigation. When questionnaires are used to research or evaluate a group, then the questionnaire becomes a study or survey.

In these cases, the responses are aggregated and summarised to demonstrate or invalidate a hypothesis. Hence, questionnaires and surveys questions to gather information, but the intention of the data gathered that distinguishes them.

Regardless of if the researcher drafts questions for a questionnaire or a survey, online survey may have three main benefits over paper:

- Economical – Online questionnaires and surveys are a much faster and cheaper way to collect data than conducting an interview or printing a hard copy.
- Standardised Questions – Merging questions makes it easier to compare results.
- Tabulated Answer – Bounded answer options makes it easier to tabulate results.

The design of a questionnaire depends on whether the researcher wishes to collect:
Exploratory information – qualitative information for the purposes of better understanding or the generation of hypotheses on a subject, or quantitative information to test specific hypotheses which have previously been generated.

A well-designed questionnaire should meet research objectives. It should obtain comprehensive, accurate information. The questionnaire designer must ensure respondents understand questions and are not likely to refuse answering, lying, or trying to conceal attitudes.

A good questionnaire is organised and worded to encourage respondents to provide accurate, unbiased and complete information.

There are nine steps involved in the development of a questionnaire:

- *Choose the information required.*
  These could range from the simplest to the most advanced question. All key elements of the HR research must be included. Seek which information is more likely to be found in the questionnaire.

- *Define the target audience.*
  Choose who will respond the questionnaire. Where are we situated? What is our profile? How educated might we be to answer the questionnaire? Are we available to answer questions?

- *Choose the method(s) of reaching your target audience.*
  Basically, handing of questionnaires is proposed if respondents work in the same organisation. Those who are distant could be contacted through mail. Telephone surveys might also apply.

- *Decide on query content.*
  Please: check questions are well drafted; avoid prejudicial material; see whether the questions affects religious sensitivity; and omit slang.

- *Develop the question phrasing.*
  Wording of questions is important. Use clear, simple words when questioning. Avoid lead questions giving a tendency to the question like: How far are you satisfied with your work condition where satisfaction is already being forwarded in the answer.

- *Put questions into a meaningful order and format.*
  Start from simplest to advanced questions. Please never skip questions. Do not ask a definition to a term while this could have been gradually developed in a more semantic way in the upcoming questions. The flow ensures methodical way to answer questions correctly and meaningfully.

- *Check the length of the survey.*
  Too long questionnaires are boring and tiresome. These might defeat the purpose of research. At post-graduate level, long questionnaires might matter. But these must be shorter and concise at the undergraduate level.

- *Pre-test the questionnaire.*
  Questionnaire pre-testing should be done with a much smaller sample say 10–20 respondents. This ensures wrongly addressed questions are reviewed and improved. This activity claims the questionnaire is tested for validity through the expected answers obtained.

- *Develop the ultimate survey form.*
  Prepare the questionnaire so that it looks attractive. Provide space for answering the questions. Have legible presentation and guidance given to the respondent.

  No question should be included unless the data it gives rise to is useful in testing one or more of the hypotheses established during the research design. Opening questions that are easy to answer and which are not perceived as being intimidating, and/or are perceived as being interesting, can greatly assist in gaining the respondent's involvement in the survey and help to establish a rapport.

Closed questions

These provide the respondent with an easy method of indicating her answer – she does not have to think about how to articulate his answer. They prompt the respondent so that the respondent can rely less on memory in answering a question. Responses can be easily classified, making analysis straightforward. They permit the respondent to specify the answer categories most suitable for her purposes.

Examples

Do you like to work on shift? ☐*Yes* ☐*No*

When do you complete your tasks?…

Since how many years have you been working in the company?

☐ *Less than 1 year* ☐ *1–3 years* ☐ *Over 3 years*

Disadvantages

They do not allow the respondent to give a different response to those suggested.

They put forward answers respondents may not have considered.

Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions have many advantages when utilised in a questionnaire. These allow the respondent to answer in her own words, with no influence by any specific alternatives suggested by the interviewer.

These often reveal issues which are most important to the respondent, and this may reveal findings which were not originally anticipated when the survey was initiated. Respondents can qualify answers or emphasise the strength of their opinions.

Examples

Do you think that a management information system will help to improve your tasks? If yes, how?

How could you help in improving productivity in your department?

Where do you expect to be in the next five years?

Disadvantages

Respondents may find it difficult to communicate responses – to properly explain our attitudes or motivations. Some respondents need prompting or reminding of the types of answer we could give. Data collected is in the form of verbatim comments – it has to be coded and reduced to manageable categories. This can be time consuming for analysis and there are numerous opportunities for error in recording and interpreting the answers given on the part of interviewers.

Opening questions

The first question is crucial because it is the respondent's first exposure to the interview and sets the tone for the nature of the task to be performed. If respondents find the opening question easy and pleasant to answer, we are encouraged to continue.

Question flow

Questions should flow in a psychological order, so one leads to the next. Please group together questions on one subject, or one particular part of a subject. An open-ended question here and there even if not analysed may provide much-needed relief from a long series of questions.

Modern approach to surveys: Survey Monkey and Google forms

Two useful survey tools have been developed and also used by HR professionals and academics. Google and Survey Monkey have certain attributes as the world's leading online survey platform, SurveyMonkey gives researchers the power to create any type of survey with ease.

Comparing Online Surveys: SurveyMonkey and Google forms	
Survey features	
SurveyMonkey: The researcher can choose from 15 different question types, including multiple choice, text box, Net Promoter® Score, and A/B comparisons. She saves time and creates more effective surveys by choosing from over 1,600 questions written by our survey experts.	**Google Forms:** These forms let researchers survey and get answers. Google Forms helps choose from nine different question types, including text, and multiple choice. There are user-created Google form templates available from different sources, but these are not expert-designed and certified.
Getting responses	
SurveyMonkey: The researcher can send out your survey lots of different ways. She must get a web link to cut and paste it into emails, social media posts or your website. She can use the email collector to track who responds. She can also add embedded or pop up collectors to any website. By upgrading, she can host surveys on research.net, the white label domain. By sending the company his your criteria, SurveyMonkey Audience can even find the right people to take the survey.	**Google Forms:** The researcher can share the link to your form anywhere on the web or email it out from Google Forms, but she cannot track who responds or include any additional data. She can also use html to embed her form into a website.
Analysis and reporting	
SurveyMonkey: The researcher can get responses in real time, slice and stake her data to find insights, and share her results with others for additional feedback. She can convert your data into custom charts and reports to show your results.	**Google Forms:** The researcher's survey data is available in simple bar graphs, pie charts, and text displays. Users cannot filter results, but data is automatically exported into a Google Spreadsheet

Questionnaire sample on HRD for young graduates

1. Do you feel ready to work? ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No

2. Do you want to be trained prior to work?
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No

3. In which area/s do you want to be trained?

   ....

4. When you are being trained, you want to be:
   ☐ easily employable with several skills
   ☐ better skilled in a few areas
   ☐ more proficient in a particular area

5. Are you aware of the economic condition?
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No

6. How do you rate the economic climate?
   ☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Good

7. Do you want to follow an empowerment programme? ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No

8. How do you rate government's role in the Empowerment programme?
   ☐ Very Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

9. How would you follow an HRD or training programme?
   ☐ Totally funded ☐ Partly funded

10. What is your expectation from such a programme?
    ☐ To get a job fast
    ☐ To develop potential skills
    ☐ To provide me with essential skills that I can use at anytime

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Survey Monkey (2017) Create Surveys, Get answers, www.surveymonkey.com.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Surveys provide an important source of basic
   A. scientific appraisal.
   B. scientific intention.
   C. scientific purpose.
   D. scientific knowledge.

2. In a census, the…is being surveyed.
   A. region.
   B. sample.
   C. population.
   D. target audience.

3. An omnibus survey is a method of quantitative research where data on many subjects is collected
   A. during the same research.
   B. during the same interview.
   C. during different interviews.
   D. during separate interviews.

4. A questionnaire
   A. collects information.
   B. validates information.
   C. provides information.
   D. to disclose information.

5. A benefit online surveys may have over paper is that it is
   A. economical.
   B. ecological.
   C. ergonomic.
   D. readable.

6. The researcher should use…words when asking questions
   A. clear and complex.
   B. clear and simple.
   C. flawless and simple.
   D. clear and modest.

7. Questionnaire pre-testing ensures wrongly addressed questions are reviewed and
   A. deleted.
   B. replicated.
   C. improved.
   D. previewed.

8. Closed questions provide the respondent with an easy method of indicating her
   A. perception.
   B. idea.
   C. opinion.
   D. answer.

9. Open-ended questions have the advantages of allowing the respondent to answer
   A. as lengthily as possible.
   B. briefly.
   C. as expected by the researcher.
   D. in his own words.

10. Questions should flow in some kind of…order so one leads easily and naturally to the next.
    A. psychometric.
    B. ascending.
    C. psychological.
    D. descending.

Answers: 1D 2C 3B 4A 5A 6B 7C 8D 9D 10C

10 HRM DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Once the questionnaire has been drafted and sent to the respondents, the next effort comes from analysing and presenting data in a meaningful, readable format. This step remains a bold one in this formalises research work or puts into evidence what has been developed from primary research. This is this part that counts more in rewarding the student in her research.

This chapter analyses such a step where it comes to assessing and presenting data. It could be the longest part of the dissertation but please take care to ensure the number of pages and data never remain excessive whereby the other components of the research like literature review or research methodology might be undermined. Please take care to ensure the analysis phase counts up to 35 or 40% of the dissertation and not more. The reason could be other parts have an influence on primary research and need to be also assessed on equal grounds.

Data analysis is a cumbersome exercise because the researcher first asks how and what to present in her findings. The questionnaire answers form the basis of efficient primary data analysis but the argument could be whether all questions answered need to be presented in the analysis. All information gathered must be displayed in the analysis but it remains clear the information must be presented in a meaningful manner.

A suitable clue to presentation might be the drafting of the questionnaire. A well written questionnaire must ensure ideas flow in a logical manner and these can group into sub-chapters or sub-themes. Provided ideas are logical, questions could be grouped to defend a central idea or better a hypothesis. This is important because it facilitates the assessor, the panel member, and the student.

Please present data in an attractive way. Whatever the level of students, please present information attractively. Charts, diagrams, and figures must be included to ensure readability but mainly favour grasping key ideas. Sometimes, well-displayed charts might efficiently summarise excess information which could take pages and become boring to read. At the same time, over using charts might be detrimental if repeating formats, like a series of bar and pie-charts.

Regarding tables, statistical tables can be used but they must be clear enough to tempt readers to glance them. If these are complex, the readers pay too little attention to material that could be meaningful. Making such tables complex and highly formulated could also affect the reading for readers. Please explain technical terms.

The scope and purpose of data presentation are now handled in the subsequent sub-headings.

Scope and purpose of data analysis

Data analysis is the process of developing responses to questions through the examination and interpretation of data.

The basic steps in the analysis process consist of:

- identifying issues.
- determining the accessibility of suitable data.
- deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of importance.
- applying the methods, and
- appraising, summarising and communicating the results.

Data analysis plays a key role in data quality assessment by pointing to data quality problems in a given survey. Analysis can influence future improvements to the investigation process.

Data analysis is vital for understanding results from surveys, managerial sources, and pilot studies. It is also useful for: providing information on missing data; designing and rewriting surveys; planning new statistical activities; and formulating quality objectives.

Data Analysis section

Results of data analysis are often published or summarised in Data Analysis section. A researcher is concerned with the relevance and usefulness to users of the information contained in data.

Analysis is the principal tool for obtaining information from data. Data from a survey can be used for descriptive or analytic studies. Descriptive studies are directed at the assessment of summary measures of a target population.

Analytical studies may explain the behaviour of and relations among characteristics. For instance, studying risk factors for stress at work of workers would be analytical.

To be competent, researchers must understand relevant issues. Both current and those likely to emerge in the future and how to present results to the audience. The study of background information allows researchers to choose suitable data sources and appropriate statistical methods.

Any conclusion in an analysis, including those which can impact human resource policy, must be supported by the analysed data.

Questions concerning Data Analysis

Before conducting an analytical study, please address the following inquiries:

Objectives

- What this study's aims?
- What issue am I addressing as a researcher?
- What questions shall I answer?
- What are the key questions of the research?
- Which hypotheses am I trying to find?

Justification

- Why is this topic stimulating?
- How will these responses contribute to existing information?
- How is this study relevant?
- What can be the contribution of my study to society?
- How can it partly address today's pertinent questions?

Data

- Which data am I using?
- Where does this come from?
- How is such data meaningful?
- Is the data valid, trustworthy?
- Why is it the best source for this analysis?
- Are there limitations?

Analytical methods

- Which statistical techniques are appropriate?
- Can I use the tools? SPSS, Nvivo, Excel?
- Are techniques applicable to my research?
- Can these help clarify the problem?
- Can these make the findings meaningful?
- Will these satisfy objectives?

Audience

- Who is interested in this issue, why?
- Can the audience follow my arguments?
- Is the tone of the message acceptable?
- Is the language used to the point?
- Is my research technical or descriptive in perspective?

Ensure the data is appropriate for the analysis to happen. This requires investigating a wide range of details such as if the target population of the data source is related enough to the target population of the analysis.

Arguments could be:

- whether the source variables and their concepts and definitions are relevant to the study.
- whether the longitudinal or cross-sectional nature of the data source is appropriate for the analysis.
- whether the sample size in the study area is sufficient to obtain meaningful results, and
- whether the quality of the data, as charted in the survey documents or assessed through analysis is sufficient.

If more than one data source is used for the analysis, investigate if the sources are reliable and how each may be appropriately integrated into the analysis. Check with experts on the subject matter, on the data source and on the statistical methods if any of these is unaccustomed to the researcher.

Software choices

Having determined the appropriate analytical method for the data, investigate the software choices that are available to apply the method. It is advisable to use suitable software, if suitable, for implementing the chosen analyses, since these software packages have usually undergone more testing than non-commercial software.

- Determine whether it is necessary to reformat the data in order to use the selected software.
- Include a variety of diagnostics among the analytical methods if the researcher is fitting any models to his data.
- Refer to the documentation about the data source to determine the degree and types of missing data and the processing of missing data that has been performed. This information will be a starting point for what further work may be required.
- Consider how unit and/or item nonresponse could be handled in the analysis, taking into consideration the degree and types of missing data in the data sources being used.
- Consider if imputed values should be included in the analysis and if so, how they should be handled.

Nvivo software

NVivo is software supporting qualitative and mixed methods research. It is designed to help the researcher organise, analyse, and find insights in unstructured, or qualitative data like: interviews, open-ended survey responses, articles, social media and web content.

When working with qualitative data, NVivo claims that work might be more time consuming, challenging to manage, and hard to navigate. Completing this research without software can make it hard to discover links in the researcher's data and find insights that will give her an edge.

NVivo gives the researcher a place to organise and manage her material so that she can start to find insights in the data. It also provides tools allow us to question our data in a proficient way.

By using NVivo to support a research project, researchers may:

- work more efficiently
- save time
- organise, store, and retrieve data fast.
- find connections in ways that are impossible manually.
- rigorously back-up findings with evidence.

With NVivo, research becomes portable. Researchers can work in the field, at work, at home – anywhere. NVivo also keeps their projects secure.

SPSS Software

IBM SPSS Statistics is a leading statistical software to solve many business and research problems. This powerful tool provides researchers with techniques, including ad-hoc analysis, hypothesis testing, and reporting, to ease access and manage data, select and perform analyses and share their results. The solution offers a base edition with optional add-ons that can be activated to expand predictive analytics capabilities as researchers need them. SPSS Statistics is available as a flexible subscription option or a perpetual license.

The original SPSS manual (Nie, Bent & Hull, 1970) has been described as one of 'sociology's most influential books' for allowing ordinary researchers to do our own statistical analysis. Statistics included in the base software:

- Descriptive statistics: Cross tabulation, Frequencies, Descriptives, Explore, Descriptive Ratio Statistics
- Bivariate statistics: Means, t-test, ANOVA, Correlation (bivariate, partial, distances), Nonparametric tests
- Prediction for numerical outcomes: Linear regression
- Prediction for identifying groups: Factor analysis, cluster analysis

Arranging ideas in a logical way

Chambers and Skinner (2003), Korn and Graubard (1999), Lehtonen and Pahkinen (1995), Lohr (1999), and Skinner, Holt and Smith (1989) have developed ideas and concepts illustrating design-based analytical methods. In our work, we state the researcher should arrange ideas in a logical order and in order of relevance or importance. Use headings, subheadings, and sidebars to organise the article. Please simplify language as the subject permits.

Depending on the audience for the article, some loss of accuracy may sometimes be an acceptable for a more readable text.

Researchers should use graphs, text, and tables to communicate the message. Each can also use headings conveying the meaning.

When tables are used, researchers should take care the overall format contributes to the clarity of data in tables and promotes understanding. This includes: spacing; wording, placement, and appearance of titles; row and column headings; and other labelling.

The researcher should include information about the data sources used and any shortcomings in the data that may have affected the analysis. Please either have a section about the data or a reference to where readers can get details.

Checklist using analytical tools in research

- Include information about the analytical methods and tools used.
- Either have a section on methods or a reference to where the reader can get the details. Include information regarding the quality of the results.
- Standard errors, confidence intervals, and/or coefficients of variation provide the reader important information about data quality.
- The choice of indicator may vary depending on where the article is published.
- Ensure all references are accurate, consistent, and referenced in the text.
- Check for errors in the article.
- Check details such as the consistency of figures used in the text, tables, and charts, the accuracy of external data, and simple arithmetic.
- Ensure the intentions stated in the introduction are fulfilled by the rest of the article.
- Make sure the conclusions are consistent with evidence.
- Have the article reviewed by others for relevance, accuracy and comprehensibility, regardless of where it is to be disseminated.

- As a good practice, ask someone from the data providing division to review how the data were used.
- As a good practice, consider presenting the results to peers prior to finalising the text. This is another kind of peer review that can help improve the article.
- Always do a dry run of presentations involving external audiences.

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research represents more of an approach to examining a research problem than a methodology. Mixed method is categorised by a focus on research problems requiring:

- an examination of real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences.
- an intentional application of rigorous quantitative research assessing magnitude and frequency of constructs and rigorous qualitative research exploring the meaning and understanding of the constructs; and,
- an objective of drawing on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques to formulate a holistic interpretive framework for generating possible solutions or new understandings of the problem.

Longitudinal research

A longitudinal study follows the same sample over time and makes repeated observations. For example, with longitudinal surveys, the same group of people is interviewed at regular intervals, enabling researchers to track changes over time and to relate them to variables that might explain why the changes occur.

Longitudinal research designs describe patterns of change and help establish the direction and magnitude of causal relationships. Measurements are taken on each variable over two or more distinct time periods. This allows the researcher measure change in variables over time.

Longitudinal research is also a type of observational study sometimes referred to as a panel study. What do these studies tell researchers? Longitudinal data each analysing the duration of a phenomenon. It enables survey researchers to get close to the kinds of causal explanations often attainable with experiments. Longitudinal studies ease predicting future outcomes based on earlier factors.

Uses of charts and their appropriateness

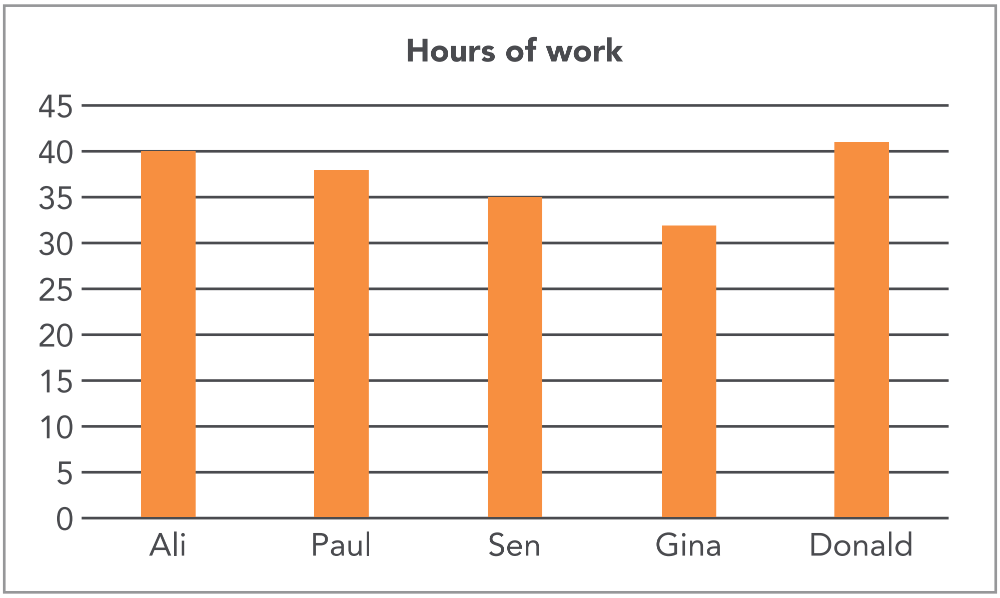
Bar charts

A bar chart is a chart or graph presenting grouped data with rectangular bars with proportional to the values each represent. The bars can be plotted vertically or horizontally. A vertical bar chart is sometimes called a line graph.

A bar graph is a chart using horizontal or vertical bars to show comparisons among categories. One axis of the chart shows the specific categories being compared, and the other axis represents a discrete value. Some bar graphs present bars clustered in groups of more than one.

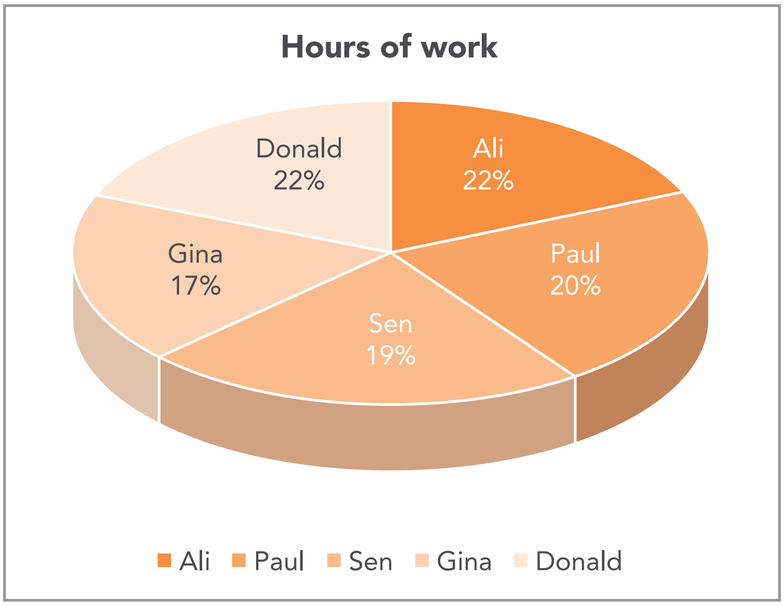
From one set of data, a range of simple presentations are possible.

Employees	Hours of work per week
Ali	40
Paul	38
Sen	35
Gina	32
Donald	41



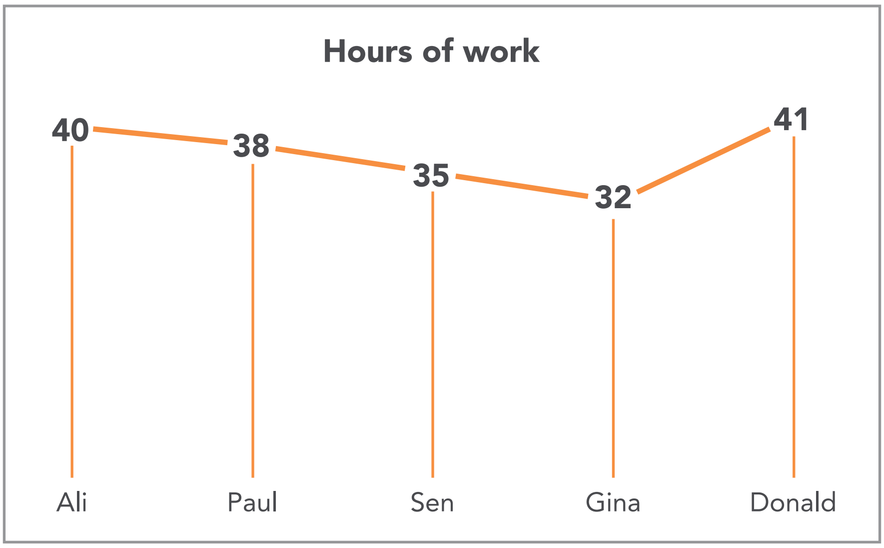
Pie charts

A **pie chart** is a circular graphic divided into slices to illustrate numerical proportion. In a pie chart, the arc length or central angle is proportional to the quantity it represents. While this is named for resembling a sliced pie, there are variations in presentation. Pie charts are widely used in business and media. Pie charts are criticised, and many experts suggest avoiding them, pointing out that research has shown difficulty comparing different sections of a pie chart, or to compare data across different pie charts. Pie charts can be replaced in most cases by other plots such as box plots or dot plots.



Dot plot

The dot plot as a representation of a distribution consists of group of data points plotted on a simple scale. Dot plots are used for continuous, qualitative, and univariate data. Data points may be labelled if there are few of them. Dot plots are one of the simplest statistical plots, and are suitable for small to moderate sized data sets.

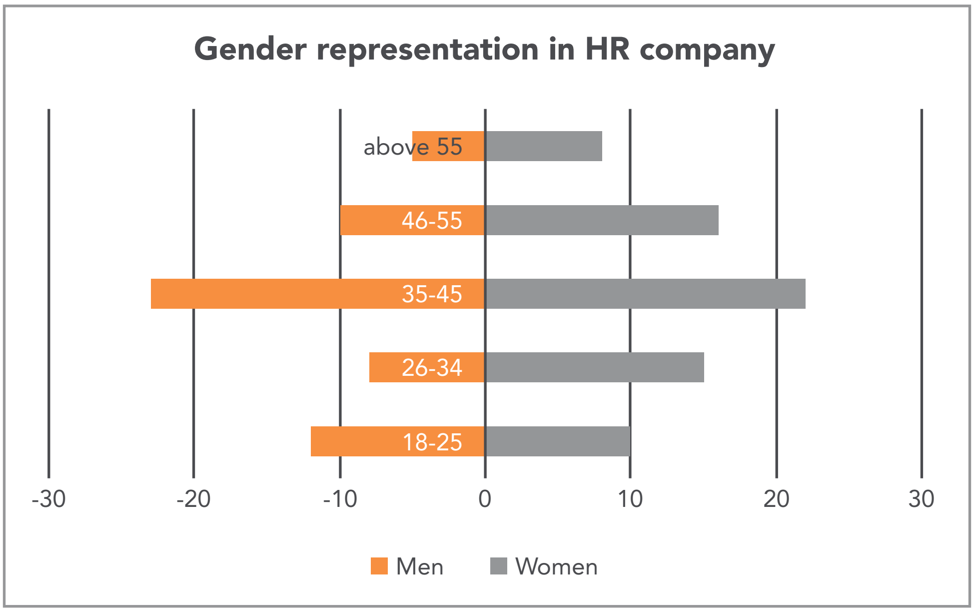


Stacked chart

A stacked chart can represent two sets of data in a mirror-like effect and these can clearly show contrasts between the data exposed. The technique is to use an Excel chart and put negative values against the second variable under question. The chart will look like the one presented below.

Gender representation at work in HR Company		
	Men	Women
18-25	10	12
26-34	15	8
35-45	22	23
46-55	16	10
Above 55	8	5

Ensure that the negative values do not appear on the chart as they will confuse the reader.



When to use graphs and tables

Graphs and tables are used interchangeably in research or they may be used separately. Few (2004) in *Common mistakes in data presentation* makes the following remarks.

- There must be no exaggeration of using graphs.
- Graphs should be used appropriately.
- Please never use complex graphs.
- Please give reasons for using graphs and tables.

When to use tables	When to use graphs
To look up individual values.	To communicate message in the shape of data.
To compare individual values.	To reveal relationship among many values.
When precise values are required.	To illustrate changes in different instances of measure.
When multiple values are needed.	For visual perception.

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Multiple-Choice Questions

1. A properly written questionnaire ensures ideas flow in a/an…manner.
   A. logical.
   B. illogical.
   C. considerate.
   D. particular.

2. The first step in data analysis is
   A. identifying issues.
   B. determining the accessibility of suitable data.
   C. deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions.
   D. applying the methods and techniques of data collection.

3. …is the principal tool for obtaining information from data.
   A. Evaluation.
   B. Interpretation.
   C. Analysis.
   D. Decision.

4. Questioning goals researchers wish to attain is the…stage.
   A. analysis.
   B. decision.
   C. objective.
   D. discussion.

5. For the audience, data should be presented with
   A. complexity and objectivity.
   B. simplicity and complexity.
   C. clarity and complexity.
   D. clarity and simplicity.

6. Nvivo software applies to analysing
   A. illustrative data.
   B. informative data.
   C. quantitative data.
   D. qualitative data.

7. The benefit of SPSS software could come from managing
   A. small amounts of multivariate data.
   B. large amounts of multivariate data.
   C. large amounts of singular data.
   D. small amounts of singular data.

8. The researcher should use graphs in addition to text and tables to…the message.
   A. contradict.
   B. communicate.
   C. criticise.
   D. comment.

9. A longitudinal study follows the same sample over time and makes repeated
   A. ideas.
   B. observations.
   C. concepts.
   D. perceptions.

10. An examination of real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences could be assessed through the
    A. Observational approach.
    B. Quantitative approach.
    C. Qualitative approach.
    D. Mixed method approach.

Answers: 1A 2A 3C 4C 5B 6B 7D 8D 9B 10D

11 MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

This section covers 20 objective questions from all the chapters of the book. Choose a single answer per question to test your understanding of the course.

1. Compared to pure research, applied research in HRM is
   A. customer focused.
   B. professional oriented.
   C. academic oriented.
   D. industrially based.

2. An insider is an individual undertaking research in
   A. A different organisation.
   B. His own organisation.
   C. A new organisation.
   D. A traditional organisation.

3. An organisation's strengths are internal factors that enable
   A. human resource practice.
   B. human resource strategy.
   C. human resource policy.
   D. human resource operations.

4. Threats are…factors that negatively the company.
   A. local.
   B. insider.
   C. internal.
   D. external.

5. In SCOPE planning, the acronym S stands for
   A. Situation.
   B. Strategy.
   C. Shared values.
   D. Symbols.

6. The first step in the research process is to
   A. identify a problem.
   B. discuss the topic.
   C. create a problem.
   D. find solutions to a problem.

7. The…plan serves as the road map for the entire study.
   A. business.
   B. instrumentation.
   C. human resource.
   D. induction.

8. The first few sentences of the dissertation abstract highlight the
   A. validity of the research
   B. background of the research.
   C. quality of the research.
   D. value of the research.

9. The…abstract captures the essence of a research.
   A. shortened.
   B. extended.
   C. descriptive.
   D. informative.

10. A format in literature review that relies on sequenced facts is
    A. the exhaustive format.
    B. the descriptive format.
    C. the historical format.
    D. the conceptual format.

11. Secondary data has the advantage of being
    A. tough to obtain.
    B. large in quantity terms.
    C. extensive and detailed.
    D. already prepared and documented.

12. The term primary data in research refers to
    A. replicated data.
    B. copied data.
    C. direct data.
    D. indirect data.

13. The principle of voluntary participation requires that people should…into participating in research.
    A. be coerced.
    B. be influenced.
    C. not be paid.
    D. not be coerced.

14. A situation where the sample does not reflect the characteristics of the target population is
    A. research objectivity.
    B. author's bias.
    C. sampling bias.
    D. sampling type.

15. A sampling unit that consists of a group smaller units refers to
    A. random sampling.
    B. cluster sampling.
    C. stratified sampling.
    D. quota sampling.

16. A/An…survey is a method of quantitative research where data on a wide variety of subjects is collected during the same interview.
    A. omnibus.
    B. scientific.
    C. census.
    D. original.

17. A…study follows the same sample over time and makes repeated observations.
    A. longitudinal.
    B. qualitative.
    C. quantitative.
    D. routine.

18. Dot plots used in presentation are applicable for continuous, qualitative and…data.
    A. multivariate.
    B. univariate.
    C. bivariate.
    D. multipolar.

19. A…can represent two sets of data in a mirror-like effect and these can clearly show contrasts between the data exposed.
    A. double-dimensional.
    B. bipolar chart.
    C. mirror chart.
    D. stacked chart.

20. …is the process of developing responses to questions.
    A. Data development.
    B. Data synthesis.
    C. Data mining.
    D. Data analysis.

Answers: CBBDA ABBDC DCDCB AABDC

12 SELECTED PAPERS IN QUALITATIVE HRM RESEARCH

With the perspective of promoting qualitative research in Human Resource Management, the author has annexed in this book, two research articles published in a near past. They focus on his local context but these texts do also have an application to emerging economies. The first paper 'An evolution of industrial democracy in a small-island economy' concerns an evaluation of the Employment Relations Act 2008, ERA 2008, from its inception in 2008 up to the present date. Considered as a major revolution in industrial relations, the legislation met with mitigated results. Firstly, trade unions have contested the legislation in terms of loopholes and inadequacies concerning employee protection.

Secondly, the public including people at work were not fully knowledgeable of the legislation because of its complexities and numerous issues that are addressed but not looked into. The assessment of the ERA is seen from the perspectives of employee relations whereby it addresses better the pluralistic perspective since Mauritius, a small-island economy in the Indian Ocean, has maintained its cultural identity of democracy and alongside industrial democracy. The research emphasises that through amendments to the legislation, it is seen that employee relations must sound and dynamic to maintain the concept of industrial democracy and see that employees are better off with the ERA 2008 since it replaced the former Industrial Relations Act (1973).

The second paper titled 'Youth Development and Empowerment through HRD-Focus on Tertiary level students' aspirations' covers the aspect of unemployment and reference to Human Resource Development in Mauritius. With 42,000 unemployed people in Mauritius (Statistics Mauritius, 2012), there is an urgent need to create jobs in the country in order to cope with the impending job crisis. A lot of school leavers, with or without a School level qualification, enter the job market with little or no prospect for a job. There has been continuous effort from various instances like the Ministry of Employment, the Human Resource Development Council and the National Empowerment Foundation to develop skills and competences for individuals in sectors like ICT, literacy and numerical skills including various employable skills in sectors like hotel and catering, tourism, handicraft, etc. There is however a need to develop economic empowerment whereby young people would be able to benefit from well-defined and targeted HRD programmes to enable them build up employment skills so that they become employable.

This second paper considers that HRD programmes have to be targeted and developed for tertiary level students who are quite vulnerable to fall in the unemployment trap. While they could be independent and capable of contributing financially to the family, they could also move forward on being financially independent, innovative and competitive. The study explains that a properly defined HRD strategy for school leavers namely in traineeship for Tertiary level students in selected areas could be a starting step to economic empowerment.

It is hoped that both papers published and peer-reviewed in international publications are an eye opener to the development of effective qualitative research that helps prospective researchers critically think about developing suitable research themes. These can be of practical relevance to today's society and their application could be contextualised in any environment. The researcher is of the opinion that qualitative research remains valid to social sciences in particular Human Resource Management where students find it right to use factual information and transcribe them into meaningful researched information. These evidently cover most of the key concepts discussed in this book. Note that both papers have a different form of formatting and referencing.

RESEARCH PAPER ONE

The Evolution of Industrial democracy in a small-island economy, Mauritius

Citation: Betchoo N. "The Evolution of Industrial Democracy in a Small-Island Economy, Mauritius", International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, Vol. 29, pp. 39–47, 2014.

INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Relations Act 1973

Employment legislation has been the framework of effective industrial relations in Mauritius since the 1930s. It has prevailed in an environment dominated by a feudal system with more of employer influence in the sugar sector, the prevailing dominant sector up to the seventies. Since the 1970s, employee relations grew turbulent in a climate characterised by strike action in several sectors of the Mauritian economy that paralysed the docks, transport, sugar sector and even attaining white-collar sectors like education in private schools. Consequently, the Industrial Relations Act was promulgated in 1973 to counter such actions but also to see that violence upsurge and unrest could be curbed to ensure peaceful stability in Mauritius.

Trade unions, during that time viewed the legislation mainly as a deterrent to industrial action since it was linked with the perception of repression, uplifting of the individual's liberty and the threat of imprisonment for any form of deviation from such legislation. If the perception of opposition parties during the 1970s was at odd ends with that of the government, it implied that IRA could be an attempt to counter ongoing pressure from trade unions which could benefit from such a difficult industrial climate. Certain issues within the IRA could relate the legislation to a 'loi baîllon'[1], the rule-of-the-thumb in the years following the state of urgency. When the regime was discharged from power in 1982, the population wanted to feel assured that new changes to the IRA could offer more opportunities for individual and civil liberties.

The IRA remained practically the same when the new government stepped to power while the Public Order Act (POA), a complementary legislation was reviewed and renamed the Public Gathering Act (PGA) by 1983. Several issues within both legislations were frequently discussed but few remained solved. For example, the forty-hour week looks more like a compromise than a solved problem while inequalities concerning sex differences and jobs have been approached with some nuance without correcting anomalies that still persist.

From this point, it would be good to ponder whether new amendments to the IRA will offer wider avenues for industrial democracy to employees or whether there would be merely cosmetic changes. Trade unions will surely not appreciate the style, 'Plus ça change'[2] or associate the new developments with an existing cliché like the legislation is good in the form but not in essence.

DISCUSSION

The need for modern legislation

The critical issue behind expecting a subtler form of legislation is that trade unions and employees are willing to have wider industrial democracy at the place of work. Industrial democracy is not the most ideal form or employee participation but it is one of those concepts that can help Mauritius gain more credibility as a free state that offers room for human development. It still looks strange that Mauritius has maintained a consistent position at the level of human development in the sub-Saharan region according to a UN rating yet its workplace legislation has not made important leaps forward.

Ideally Mauritius should expect more flexible and improved industrial relations compared with the actual legislation that offers limited possibilities for employee freedom. For example, the right to strike action is prohibited as government views this to be counter-effective to the country's advancement. The fact that the country is an export-oriented economy makes it a reasonable argument to withhold industrial strike. Most governments seem to be careful on this issue as they may not want to see the country in a chaotic situation where law and order are threatened [1].

If strike action is still feared, IRA must make more provision for go-slows. In the actual context, employees can risk the threat of being laid off for some valid reason and also subject to legal action following a go-slow. Apparently, go-slows should not be treated to a similar level as strikes. Industrial democracy pictures go-slows as measures to create disobedience in a civilly acceptable way. Civil disobedience undertaken in a peaceful way with strong justification for such an action should be accepted as normal and reasonable.

Dynamics of the modern western workforce

Apart from the United Kingdom, most nations in the European Union tolerate strikes and go-slows. If was not unusual to hear in the past years, the chain of strike action that affected France and spread deeper into Europe. The first assessment was that these countries would have economics that would be shaken by strike action and that annual growth would be very poor. In fact, such condition rarely persists for a long time. Rather, occasional industry turmoil helps the western economies to readjust to changes.

If this perspective were translated to an open marked economy like Mauritius, it would be fair to say that industrial democracy would become more evident in the country. The argument here is not to appraise industrial strike or go-slow as a much-deserved right but to state that these factors comprise the dynamics of a developing economy. Haven't we heard of stagflation that occurs among economies that are too stagnant and are chronically affected by inflation? The main cause is that such economies fail to recognise the importance of workforce dynamics and the essence of industrial democracy.

Industrial democracy in practice

Apart from more flexibility expected from go-slows and strike action, industrial democracy must give more opportunity for employee participation in negotiation. The actual position of the private sector favours a more paternalistic management style than encouraging employee democracy. Recent moves of the private sector were aimed at replacing the actual tripartite with a new form of controlled collective bargaining. However, collective bargaining as translated to the Mauritian reality looks to be more distant and weaker as a negotiation approach than tripartite during compensation and salary revisions. Government may need to consolidate the right for employee participation in tripartites and allow trade unions negotiate freely without overemphasising the threat of job loss which is caused by an adverse economic environment [2].

A lot has been said on the participation of women at the workplace. If gender representation is fair at executive positions in the government, little can be said of progress achieved in the private sector. At this stage, there are reasons to argue in favour of more female participation at upper levels in private organisations. In order to see this as a possibility, trade unions should firstly provide chances for female representation in collective bargaining where women can also voice their opinion on key issues affecting them. Actually, most of the debate concerning female emancipation is centred at Ministry's level but too sparsely among trade unions.

The forty-hour week should be more thoroughly debated as it constitutes the flagship of industrial democracy. The reduction of working hours and a better equilibrium of a three-tier day offer more motivation to the workforce. Japan is now lowering to less than forty hours believing that Japanese need to work and rest, and not be called workaholics. In France, the 'semaine de trente-cinq heures[3]' helps saving jobs in industry. In Mauritius, the five-day week in several sectors has helped reducing absenteeism on Mondays considered as 'lundi cordonnier'[4] in a recent past. It is important to rethink of the forty-four week in several sectors, more importantly, in occupations requiring enduring physical effort.

The arguments discussed in this article should not be considered as prescriptions to better industrial harmony. They are just an evaluation of the variety of issues that a revamped IRA, enforceable as from next year, should essentially cover. In a world characterised by the need for more individual freedom, the consolidation of civil liberties and the creation of wealth, more equitably spread so as to reduce the poverty gap, it would be rewarding to see how far such debatable and thought provoking issues so fundamental to workers need to contained within the IRA. There is the expectation that the Mauritian workforce does not want to be deceived but considers such a long awaited change as an opportunity to align Mauritius with Industrial democracy and progress so endearing to a limited number of successful western economies.

Implementing the Employment Relations Act 2008

The Government of Mauritius implemented a new Employment Relations legislation to repeal the former Industrial Relations Act (1973), which is now obsolete in a milieu where the work pattern, technology, pace of work, and so forth are changing more rapidly than ever before. Additionally, there are contemporary issues like globalisation and international competition impacting employee relations. The increasing integration of national economies into the global market is demanding stronger integration of national trade union agendas [3]. With these changes, the role and orientation of trade unions in Mauritius has to evolve as well.

Trade unions presently act within a workplace where the dynamics have changed. For example, it has already been seen that trade unions can hardly mobilise employees around them to create the powerful workforce, which made management respond to their demands in the past. Pedersini considers membership as a key resource for trade unions while being a crucial component of a union's organisational strength and a fundamental element for legitimacy and recognition [4]. This trend, at the international level, is now clearly depicted in Mauritius whereby unions' influence has become marginal over the years following its industrial development. Trade unions come forward with the same agenda of improved pay and improved work conditions, while they are not really in a position to say that their orientation has changed. Unions still bear in mind that the emotional intelligence that they use in collective bargaining will bring them an opportunity to succeed in their task [5].

Trade unions have evolved under a paternalistic work structure, both in public and private sector organisations. Trade Unions in Africa are weak organisations with many internal problems [6]. Trapped between an ongoing deregulation of the African economies on the one hand and the consequences of neo-liberal globalisation on the other, they are quite often seen to be a relic of the past [7]. They have had enough arguments to bargain with employers in the past like wage rises, job insecurity and worker exploitation.

Today's work pattern is different since employers base their strategies not on their personal aims or orientations but also, to a large extent, on global factors which influence the nature of business. Employers are getting wearier of changes and seem to have put trade unions in a weak position whereby their bargaining power has drastically been reduced [8]. With globalisation and liberalisation, the Mauritian trade union movement is faced with new challenges. Trade unions can no longer confine themselves to such traditional issues as better conditions of work, but must deal with issues such as globalisation, sustainable industrialisation and the linkage between trade and environment, and related WTO issues [9]. This explains their need to broaden their spectrum and seek new concepts that are successfully applied elsewhere.

An overview of theories on Employee Relations

There are three major perspectives that contrast in their approach to the nature of workplace relations. The three views are: the Unitary, Pluralist and Marxist perspectives. Each offers a particular perception of workplace relations and will therefore interpret such events as workplace conflict, the role of trade unions and job regulation in a different way.

The Unitary perspective regards the organisation as an integrated group of people with one loyalty structure and unified by a common purpose. It means that there are no barriers between different groups and departments which could lead to poor communication and animosity, which would go against the notion of common values and common goals as that would not be advantageous to the common goal, of the success of the organisation. It is characterised by an integrated group of people, centralised authority and loyalty structure and a group of people have common values and interest. Furthermore, unitary perspective accepts that organisations only exist in perfect harmony and conflicts are not necessary [10].

However, the unitary approach however cannot easily accommodate non-conforming individuals. Unitary managers do not accept differing viewpoints, criticism of organisational norms and universal directions and people who are unwilling to be absorbed into the whole. Moreover, although trade unions try to balance the unfair empowerment, the organisations still insist to wipe off the presence of trade unions, because trade unions are threats for organisations to build up employees' loyalty. The unitary perspective seems to be more suitable for nineteenth-century, while the pluralist perspective seems to be appropriate for contemporary society [11]. The organisations are characterised by a widespread distribution of authority, ownership separated and political and industrial conflict separated.

The Marxist perspective has been a tendency which prefers to focus on the politics of a society, according to Marx's theory, while both unitary perspective and pluralist perspective pay attention on industrial relations inside organisations. Marxist perspective criticises the capitalist society and its system of production, distribution and exchange [12]. The critical analysis of the Marxist perspective includes social, political and economic structure. This perspective has broader range than the other two perspectives since it not only analyses the relations in organisations, but also in social, political and economic terms. There are some assumptions made by Marxist perspective. Firstly, social class conflict promotes the society development. Without the social class conflict, society may stagnate. Additionally, the distribution of economic power is not equal to the different class, so it causes the class conflict. Thirdly, the inequality is between the people who own the capital or materials and others who supply and sell their labour. Furthermore, the society's social and political regulations are based on the economic inequality. And finally, the social and political conflict is an expression of underlying economic conflict [13]. The unequal division between who own the capital in the organisations and who sell their labour causes conflict, and Marxism believes conflict is constant and inherent within the employee relationship. In this case, within capitalism society, this kind of conflict is unavoidable and inherent, and also the political and social conflict and would result in revolution and the ascendency of socialism over capitalism. The employees' salaries would be minimised to a subsistence level. Ultimately Marxists believe the only way resolve the conflict would be the abolition of capitalism. Trade unions, as a product of the conflict, may focus on the expression and protection of proletariat class. As a part of political process, trade union may gain the basic changes in the nature of economic and social systems.

The Pluralist perspective regards organisation as combination of composed of a variety of sectional groups with divergent interests over whom the government tries to maintain some kind of dynamic equilibrium [14]. The organisation is seen as multi-structured in terms of groups, leadership, authority and loyalty. The two main groups in Pluralist perspective are workers and managers. Because the different position these two groups stand, the purposes for working are different. In this case, conflicts are inevitable and legitimate, which due to the disagreement such as pay, working conditions, bonuses and working hours [15]. Pluralists believe that the interests of their employees compete with the organisations interest. For instance, workers want higher salaries or better working conditions, but organisations need to reduce the cost in order to maximise the profit. Pluralist perspective managers recognise the conflict; hence they try to solve the conflict by appropriate methods, for example, negotiation and bargaining and sharing decision-making information.

In Mauritius, the appropriate perspective should be pluralist perspective. All employees and employers have their own interests about work. Due to this reason, employees may not have common goal with employers. So conflict will appear. Unitary perspective regards conflict as irrational activities. That means unitary managers do not accept employees who has different working goals. Unitary perspective can only exist in ideal conditions [16]. The pluralist ideology reflects organisational and social changes happening in the mid-twentieth century to late twentieth century and extending into twenty-first century. This means that unitary perspective is less important and used more rarely in recent organisations. According to the Involvement and Participation Association [17], Pluralists believe that such differing interest can be managed to avoid open conflict and can be channelled to produce more positive outcomes.

Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s, the employee relations' climate in the Mauritius gave considerable attention to their pluralistic, union-management policies, since pluralist perspective is a pragmatic, effective alternative to the Unitarist perspective. According to the Pluralist perspective, authority is controlled by the mass of population, rather than by a small leader group. Mauritius is a traditional country that focuses on the human rights. In this situation, the reason why the pluralist perspective is appropriate for Mauritius could be argued as follows [18]. The pluralist perspective illustrates that if a majority of people do not like what their representatives or leaders are doing, they may make the representatives or leaders resignation through voting at the next election. Blyton and Turnbull state that the Pluralist perspective insists that employees could join in interest groups such as pressure groups and trade unions in order to protect this kind of authority.

Creating a new work environment under the ERA

Broadly, the new Employment Relations Act does not represent a fundamental change in approach to industrial relations but attempts in some ways to look into matters that were not well covered in the past and where corrective action was not initiated. Accordingly, it has opened the doors for the possibility to negotiate a well-defined group of elements forming the essence of the contract of employment [19]. It does not therefore represent a dramatic change from the Industrial Relations Act 1973 (IRA) but serves as an opportunity to review the former legislation with the new workplace environment.

The new Employment Relations Act comes in as a salutary initiative since it considers the human dimension of the work environment. Bryson views that if management–employee relations are a workplace attribute; one would expect a high degree of agreement about the state of those relations in a particular workplace [20].

Rather than assuming that rules should be promulgated in a mechanistic and bureaucratic environment, the ERA seeks opportunities to transform the human resource management philosophy in Mauritius. The ERA Report 2008 suggests that the new Act is basically transitory in nature with improvements brought in several areas. The credit goes to recognising trade unionism, consolidating worker rights while extending opportunities for better productivity through some reengineering of sick and casual leaves [21].

The role of trade unions

Trade unions will have their part to play although they must clearly accept that an employee-focused industrial relations strategy is far better than a profit-based or productivity-based one. Workers' perceptions of management-employee relations depend on practices and structures underpinning the relationship between management and employees (both collectively and individually) as well as individuals' own work experiences [22]. The new legislation is not free from shortcomings and criticism but the replacement of the former IRA remains a positive effort to give a face-lift to industrial relations in a contemporary context. So far, the essence of the change remains a good initiative although some refinement through representation and debate deserve to be encouraged in this democratic workplace environment of that Mauritius boasts within sub-Saharan Africa. The new Employment Relations Act does not come forward as a paradigm shift in industrial relations. The Act therefore marks the beginning of a new era in approach to the principles underpinning the employment laws of Mauritius [23]. It rather considers changes in a subtle way while bringing in some modifications, which fit in the contemporary context of industrial relations.

CONCLUSIONS

Employee relations have evolved with time and the importance of the ERA 2008 is more felt in today's context when employment attains 8% of the working population in Mauritius. The legislation came forward as a major change in employee relations since its initial drafting in 2004 [24]. It is a much more improved version of the Industrial Relations Act with focus on creating trade unions within organisations and aiming at widening democracy. Employers are against the creation of trade unions in the private sector while employees in private firms find it difficult not to be represented by trade unions in their pledges for better working conditions. Industrial relations in countries, sub-regions and regions, have been influenced by a variety of circumstances and actors such as political philosophies, economic imperatives, and the role of the State in determining the direction of economic and social development, the influence of unions and the business community, as well as the legacies of colonial governments [25]. Consequently, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) accepts the conventions that Mauritius adopted in several fronts whereby industrial democracy was practised and even mentioned how this positively influenced human development index in sub-Saharan Africa. In democracies, trade unions will apparently voice what they feel and in circumstances where legislation is already a handicap for them since many work statutes are implemented by the government to protect employee rights, unions will view the legislation as negative. However, after six years since it has been implemented, it has to be seen how the ERA posits itself as a useful yardstick in new work conditions affected by speculation, external markets, deregulation and a more competitive global economic climate upon which Mauritius is dependent and counts really much for its survival.

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RESEARCH PAPER TWO

Youth Development and Empowerment through HRD-Focus on Tertiary level students' aspirations

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INTRODUCTION

In an economic climate where the rate of unemployment has risen over the years, Mauritius, a small island economy, is under such threat because of macro-economic factors namely external that are affecting it and impact directly its labour. Incidentally, unemployment has attained the different categories of employees, more particularly, those in the manufacturing sector. In addition to this, a large percentage of the unemployed comes from the age group 18–30 (Statistics Mauritius, 2012). This study focuses on this particular sector taking into consideration that this represents a potential labour pool for the economy and if remedial measures are not taken to make it become employable, Mauritius might face a situation of jobless growth with its impending problems. Athal (2012) states that today's generation of youth – the largest the world has ever known, and the vast majority of whom live in developing countries – has unprecedented potential to advance the well-being of the entire human family. To counteract the huge problem of unemployment, Mauritius needs to establish more and stronger mechanisms for youth involvement.

In Mauritius, school leavers form an important proportion of available labour with students having varying levels of educational attainment namely pre- 'O' Level qualifications, 'O' Level, HSC or 'A' level qualifications including those who pursue University programmes at the Diploma or degree level. This research narrowed its segment by focusing on students who had been trained at the University level and were expecting to be employed following completion of their course. The 44,000 unemployed comprised 18,900 males (43%) and 25,100 females (57%). 17,500 or about 40% of the unemployed were aged below 25 years. According Statistics Mauritius, this segment was employable in a near past but with increasing numbers of students entering tertiary education, the threats of unemployment might be high. The MEF Ecobrief (no.20) states that given the significant social and economic costs, the problem of youth deserves special attention. An appropriate mix of policies is required to improve the unemployment prospects of the young unemployed.

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The rewards of a youth empowerment approach in high-poverty communities are significant (Ali, 2012). There has never been a better time to invest in youth empowerment they are tomorrow's leaders and if appropriate opportunities are made available to put their natural endowment to creative and productive channels, they are indeed capable of working wonders.

Today it is globally realised that youth empowerment leads a nation to prosperity for next generations. Many countries are focusing their youth by investing heavily in education, health, skills development and leadership education. These steps brought on forefronts, ultimately these nations leading the world. Ali (2012) states that youth empowerment is integral for national development especially for developing countries where it constitutes the majority of overall population. If these countries focus on youth development and empowerment it will lead them towards long-term prosperity. Those countries that invest heavily in their youth get high returns on their investment in every sector.

Knapp et al (2010) mention that growing attention has focused on initiatives that empower and support individuals and organisations at local level, thereby – among other things – offering ways to galvanise additional resources from within a community. Initiatives of this kind might help to prevent the emergence of some individual and societal needs, and help to meet needs that do arise, while generally making better use of the totality of resources within a community. Knapp et al (2010) further state that a number of approaches, concepts and terms have been used for these initiatives: building community capacity, investing in social capital and fostering community development are prominent examples.

Government Response to Work Programmes

Governments should care about youth unemployment. Youth employment is a signal of long-term economic health, but the best response thus far was to create positive policies of labour market integration for youth (ILO, 2010). The question naturally lies in why would someone who is likely to have a comparative advantage on the labour market -technical knowledge, higher flexibility in terms of working hours, higher innovation power – be under the threat of being left out or being trapped in a perpetual possible entry-level position? ILO (2012) purports that one of the answers would be that national employment policies are designed to address youth unemployment as a symptom of the economic crisis, much rather than as a solution to it. This is where Mauritius really needs to address its future human resource development strategy. It is useful to learn from external environments and see how empowerment effectively applies to the youth.

The United Kingdom Experience

In response to the high unemployment levels in the 1990s, the Government's Training for Work, Youth Training and other schemes took their place, providing a mix of training and/or work experience. Increasingly, providers were paid by outputs – people into jobs, which resulted in "creaming" – selection by the providers of those most likely to move into a job (McGregor et al, 1997). There was also a move from more expensive training and employment programmes to large-scale but cheaper compulsory job search programmes. Finn (1999) quoted an OECD report that the aim being to improve the "supply side" by activating the unemployed and getting them into whatever jobs were available as soon as possible, rather than putting them "on hold" in larger scale schemes (OECD, 1998).

Training and Informal Employment

Given the characteristics of informal employment, some elements of training can be particularly useful. For example, people who had been working in the formal sector might not be aware that informal employment can be an alternative. Another example is that informal employment opportunities are often presented to the potential workers through informal networks (Bingqin and Yongmei, 2010). By bringing the unemployed people out of their home and helping them to build up social networks can be potentially important. Bingqin and Yongmei (2010) further state that informal employment often requires a different set of skills such as entrepreneurship, or knowledge of specific types of markets that may not necessarily be required as employees in the formal sector. In this sense, training can be useful in facilitating informal employment.

Empowering People for Training

Apart from providing occupational skills, the mechanisms that training can help people to return to work have several dimensions. The first is information dissemination, which improves awareness of new employment or business opportunities (Ogbonna and Noon, 1999). The second is to provide job-searching techniques, such as the training of interviewing skills, resume writing and networking (Davy et al, 1995). The third is the psychological impact. The psychological well-being of the trainees can be improved either through resilience and social skills training (Mitchell and Trickett, 1980) or through social participation via taking training courses (Stolte, 2004). The last is the possibility of training to increase people's earning ability. Finn and Simmonds (2003) argue that it is not always clear if training can improve the trainees' earning ability.

The Relevance of Tertiary Education in Human Resource Development Strategy

In recent decades, there has been rapid expansion of tertiary-level education across many countries. This has had important and profound effects on labour markets and the way in which employers use highly educated labour (Machin and McNally, 2010). These expansions have, for the most part, been predicated on the assumption that more education is good for individuals and for society as a whole, not only in terms of economic outcomes like wages or employment, but also for a wide range of social outcomes like improved health, reduced crime and higher well-being. With expansion of the system has come a range of new questions that have emerged as a consequence of there being many more graduates. Is there now 'over-supply' of graduates? Is there evidence of "over-qualification" and skill mismatch?

This is a challenge for whole educational structures not just higher education since, in many countries, students have to make a decision between general and vocational education long before they reach the stage of entering higher education (Machin, and McNally, 2010). There is also a question of the balance between employer-provided training and education provided by institutions of higher education. Employers have a role in addressing concerns about skill mismatch. Governments have an important role in improving information about training opportunities, setting appropriate legal frameworks and ensuring portability of skills.

The benefits of education are well known: Education is the key to improved livelihoods, healthcare, nutrition and the exercise of civil and political rights (UNFPA, 2013). Education begins before and goes beyond schooling. According to UNFPA (2013) a new paradigm of "life-long learning" emphasises the transformative synergies that can occur between school, family, community and cultural experiences. It encompasses the acquisition of relevant capacities – the knowledge, marketable skills, social capital and values that enable individuals to function effectively in a range of adult roles, including worker, household provider, parent, spouse, family caretaker, citizen and community participant.

Youth Empowerment in Africa

Finding opportunities for young people is a critical challenge for Africa, where 62 percent of the population-more than 600 million young people-is below the age of 25. Swaniker (2013) states that since population growth will not slow in the decades to come, it is imperative that Africa leverages the talent and energy of its youth to create dramatically higher levels of prosperity and equality and avoid the latent risks of unemployment and social instability.

Today, Africa finds itself in a precarious position on this most important issue. Youth unemployment is three times the continent's overall average. The World Bank found that young people under 25 represent three-fifths of sub-Saharan Africa's unemployed population, and 72 percent of the youth population lives on less than $2 a day. Swaniker (2013) comments that the way youth is educated in Africa will make all the difference. Entrepreneurship must be an integral part of every young person's education. There is a need to impart not only the technical skills of entrepreneurship, but also the mindset of the entrepreneur, through formal and informal education systems.

THE CASE IN MAURITIUS

Given the rapidly changing economic structure of Mauritius, imminent policies, both short term and long term, are necessary to curb the unemployment problems (Ramdoo, 2005). The policies should focus on the occupational mobility of labour, by encouraging regular training/retraining in new techniques of production and technological know-how, therefore giving the unemployed a better chance of taking new jobs that become available elsewhere in the economy.

Today, the new sectors are service-oriented and therefore necessitate different input mix, generally more capital intensive than labour intensive. These new emerging sectors however have some potential to absorb labour, which necessitate skilled human capital. Ramdoo (2005) observed that those who are being laid off from the traditional sectors were not technically prepared to be absorbed in the new sectors. In fact, minimum requirements for job entry in the services sector are higher than what Mauritius required in the traditional sectors. They required not only additional academic qualifications but also additional skill such as language skills and a higher degree of technological know-how.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire survey comprising ten questions was developed for the research. The questions focused on the respondents' ability to give responses regarding: their willingness to work, the need for training, the areas where training was needed, the economic condition that prevailed, the role of the government in human resource development including expectations from the training programme.

A quantitative methodology was used. Qualitative data provides the texture of real life in its many variations; it gives insight into the reasoning and feelings that motivate people to take action. Anderson and Taylor (2009) explain that quantitative research is research that uses numerical analysis. The researcher knows in advance what he/she is looking for and all aspects of the study are carefully designed before the data is collected. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. The choice of quantitative research was useful because it helped the researcher assess the values with regards to research questions on youth empowerment. The statement of answers ranging from 'dissatisfied' to 'highly satisfied' would not provide the depth of quantitative data which would prove the worth of the results obtained.

Research Tools and Techniques

Questionnaires were directly sent to the respondents by contacting them firstly through telephone and getting them accept that the research focused on youth empowerment and was purely for research purposes. Respondents were then sent the questionnaires with the help of fieldworkers who made arrangements so that they could respond to the questions and give their insight into youth empowerment for young Mauritian school leavers. The answers were manually noted with appropriate coding.

Data was arranged and fed on computerised system which included the scientific calculator to carry out means and provide value for standard deviations. Since the questions included 4 options, the mean value was 2 and standard deviation figures could indicate whether the responses were within the range of acceptability or not.

Selected Sample for the Research

A sample of some 50 respondents was used for the research purpose. Although the sample size was limited, it was within the context of the findings and could also be explained by the short time span available to undertake the research. This sample was stratified since as at 2012, Statistics Mauritius figures explained that around 12% of the male workforce was unemployed compared with 19% of the female workforce in the age group 16–30. Taken as a ratio, the figure could be roughly 1:1.6 between the two sexes. 18 respondents were male and 29 respondents were female. A rounded figure could have been appropriate but the return rate influenced the size of the sample. The sample comprised University or post-secondary institutions where students were following academic courses but had little exposure to empowerment programmes directly relevant to the world of work. A majority was unemployed at the time of the survey while a few (3–5) had some part-time work experience in private companies. The sample could appropriately reflect the population of school leavers who were enrolled in a tertiary level class and who were jobless so far.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Ten questions were asked to the 47 respondents of the survey. The questions were essentially qualitative and the findings are presented below. The first set of questions focused on the options of the youth regarding empowerment. Four options were provided: Readiness to work, need to be trained prior to working, awareness of the economic condition and the need for an empowerment programme.

Finding One: Youth Outlook On Empowerment

Option	Gender	Yes	Partly	No	SD
Readiness to work	Boys	10	6	1	3.68
	Girls	14	14	1	6.1
Need to be trained prior to working	Boys	15	1	0	7
	Girls	28	2	0	13
Awareness of economic condition	Boys	9	7	1	3.4
	Girls	9	19	2	6.97
Need for an empowerment programme	Boys	12	4	0	4
	Girls	27	2	0	12.5

Table 1 Choices of respondents regarding youth empowerment

The first set of questions aimed at finding out the choices of respondents regarding youth empowerment. Boys and girls showed their readiness to work Boys were more ready to work while girls had more reservation to it. The Standard Deviation (SD) is more pronounced in favour of girls to boys (6.1:3.68).

A question assessed the need to be trained before working. Both boys and girls strongly agreed on the importance for training. SD values were high in both cases – 7 for boys and 13 for girls. There was a high consensus regarding training.

A question on the awareness of the economic condition spelled out that boys had better awareness of it compared with girls. The SD ratio between boys and girls was 3.4:6.97.

Concerning the need for an empowerment programme, girls had a stronger feeling with responses favouring an SD 12.5 to 4 for boys.

Finding Two: Economy and Government's Role

A second set of questions concerned the association of the present economic climate and the role of the government in developing Youth Empowerment programmes. The questions assessed the perception of youth on government regarding efforts to empower them.

Option	Scale Gender	1	2	3	4	Rating Average
Rating the economic climate	Boys	2	11	4	0	2.1
	Girls	3	10	13	1	2.45
Rating State role in Empowerment	Boys	2	11	5	0	2.16
	Girls	3	14	9	2	2.36

Table 2 Economic Climate and Government Effort

Another set of questions aimed at finding out how respondents could rate both the economic climate and the extent to which the State helped in youth empowerment. This was a perception question linked with semantic differentials. The lowest scale was 1 and the highest one was 4.

In general, the rating for boys and girls was broadly the same. The average values were all in the range of 2 to 2.5 meaning that the economic climate was not too suitable for job opportunities but also not too threatening for job seekers. In comparison, the role of the State was perceived to be fair with ratings coming higher than the mean value (2.45 and 2.36 for boys and girls).

Finding Three: Expectations from Training and an Empowerment Programme

Two questions, close in range, aimed at finding out the expectations of the respondents from training in general followed by an Empowerment Programme provided by the government or any related authority. To each question, respondents had to rank three options outlined in each case in Table 3. The findings are provided below.

Option Benefits of Training in general	Average Boys	Scale Girls	SD
To be easily employable	3.80	2.57	0.615
To be better skilled in a few areas	2.00	1.78	0.11
To be more proficient in a specialised area	1.75	2.00	0.125
Expectations from an Empowerment Programme	Boys	Girls	SD
To help me get a job quickly	2.36	2.36	0
To develop my potential skills	1.77	1.78	0.005
To provide me with essential skills ready for use	2.07	2.15	0.04

Table 3 Expectations from Training and an Empowerment programme

Regarding the benefits of training, both boys and girls wanted to be easily employable. Girls preferred to be specialised in a few areas while boys aimed to have broader skills. The standard deviations were minimal and the margin of error was weak. (Less than 1 in all cases)

In a second scenario, both types of respondents were asked about what they would expect from an Empowerment programme. There was unanimity in getting a job quickly followed by having essential skills to undertake a job. There was a weaker perception from both respondents regarding developing skills in general while this varied from training in general.

Finding Four: Funding of HRD Programme

A question asked for the type of funding that respondents would choose regarding an Empowerment programme. There was an understanding that totally funded programmes for the Youth are rare and those that will be valuable for them could be partly funded or levied by the MQA as this is the case for several programmes in the past. Figure 1 explains the options of the students regarding the funding of training.

Figure 1 Funding Options for Youth Empowerment Programmes

Both boys and girls favoured fully funded programmes while there was an acceptance of partial funding in case if the programmes could really offer job opportunities and training skills to the incumbents.

Finding Five: Areas of Training or HRD Empowerment Needed

An open-ended question asked for the areas of training that the respondents would look for in the immediate. Since the respondents were school leavers already undertaking an undergraduate programme, they had options that were more suited to their area of specialisation and their career option.

The areas of training were: Management, Human Resource Management, Accounting, Banking and Finance, Financial Markets, Public Relations, International Business, Offshore Business, Leadership and Ethics, Corporate Governance, etc.

It was noted that the respondents were students in their specialised fields or they had just enrolled for a University or tertiary level course. Some had been trained in the selected fields but were keen to see how HRD programmes could be provided whereby they could blend what they were actually studying and prospecting with contemporary and practical applications in a work-based environment.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first point to note in this research was that respondents felt the need to work while they also felt that they were not ready. This was more highly observed among girls. There was a high need for training prior to becoming employed. In today's work environment, employers look both for competences and experience prior to choosing a candidate. Respondents had a keen awareness of the economic condition and this was reflected in the rising unemployment level among the youth particularly, the age group 18–24.

Both boys and girls accepted the fact that they should be given the opportunity to follow an empowerment programme. The Dakar Youth Programme Strategy (2001) purported that there was a need for an increase in investment in relevant skills training, emphasizing training appropriate to the job market and the informal sector by among other things, greater collaboration between employers and training providers.

The role and influence of the government was another key issue in youth empowerment. Taking into consideration the prevailing economic condition, respondents wanted to see more effective involvement of government in the development of competences of the youth. Kasukuwere (2013) stated that it was the collective responsibility as Government, the Private Sector and Development Partners to design and implement practical programmes to generate decent employment, reduce poverty among the youth and economically empower them to play a more meaningful role in the development and uplifting of their communities and the nation at large.

The expectations from training and human resource development were highly rated by respondents. Training programmes would make the younger people more employable and better skilled. They could also develop competences in specialised areas. The expectations from an HRD empowerment programme were equally high. There was a need to develop skills that would be readily applicable at work. This perception was also aligned with the need to obtain a job quickly which reflected upon the actual work situation. Kirby & Bryson (2002) explain that by engaging young people as valued partners, Youth Empowerment Programmes aim to improve young people's belief in their own worth as well as in their ability to shape their lives and environments.

Regarding the funding of the HRD programmes, there was a strong consensus regarding having a fully funded empowerment programme for the youth. The respondents noted that they might need to fund partially such programmes since funding could help them attain better competences in selected areas. Invest Mauritius (2013) supports the view that grants awarded by the HRDC are based on a cost-sharing principle where grants will meet only part of the costs incurred for training by employers. This scheme has been recently reviewed in view of rendering it more attractive.

Since the respondents were mostly tertiary level students in a diploma programme, they favoured concepts like training in potential areas of business namely human resource management, marketing, financial and accounting sectors while there was a lesser need for training in the IT field.

The United Nations States Report on Youth in Africa (2011) comments that in order to take full advantage of its youth population and to ensure future prosperity, heavy investment is needed in the field of education. Youth issues require more critical and strategic planning. This paper analysed youth empowerment from a limited perspective but supported the view of the United Nations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With soaring unemployment of 30% in Mauritius among the 15–24 age group, there is a need to empower the youth of the country. There is a mindset that tells educated young people that they must be employed in white-collar jobs. In relation to this sentiment, a low status is also afforded to vocational training (UN, 2011). This might be fulfilled if the vocational aspect of jobs could be explained to the youth paying particular importance to their employability whatever be the sector. The researcher found it important to select a variety of programmes that could be of utmost importance in order to allow younger people get an opportunity for employment. This might come from a selection of empowerment programmes that had not been fully implemented so far in Mauritius but could be very useful.

Selected HRD programmes for the Youth

Stock Broking. A useful programme that can be suggested for the young university students could be a training programme in Stock broking. This has been so far reserved for professionals. With the expectancy of developing financial services in Mauritius, there should be the need for higher calibre staff in Stock broking. In South Africa, Legae (2010) commits to effectively source Black Empowerment Education, talent, build black experience and expertise and graduate BEE talent. With an optimal allocation of resources, it offers a favourable solution to the development of young aspiring black analysts and dealers.

ICT Empowerment Training Programme. In order to train SC and HSC school leavers for the ICT sector, a Rs 21m fund was announced in the National Budget in June 2009. The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) has envisioned training 2,000 people for the ICT sector in areas such as Call Centres, BPO, Software Development, IT Networking and Infrastructure. This professional training programme was intended to not only increase the number of employable persons for the ICT sector but also to equip the participants with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to find a job in this sector which offers real career opportunities.

Sales and Marketing. This area has been overlooked in Mauritius since it has been exclusively limited to commercial activities. With a growth of new businesses including shopping malls in Mauritius, empowerment programmes could be developed in the marketing area. These could lie within the scope of Sales, Marketing, Pricing and Customer Service, giving trainees the opportunity to become a specialist within this area. Barry Callebaut (2013) practices rotations which challenges prospective marketers to deliver your best and broaden their expertise by learning how the different activities in Sales, Marketing, Pricing and Customer Service interaction.

Entrepreneurship. This has assumed importance for accelerating economic growth both in developed and developing countries. It promotes capital formation and creates wealth in country. According to Lundstrom and Stevenson (2005) entrepreneurship is the process of exploring the opportunities in the market place and arranging resources required to exploit these opportunities for long term gain. It may be distinguished as an ability to take risk independently to make utmost earnings in the market. It is a creative and innovative skill and adapting response to environment. An example is Livewire, a Royal Dutch Shell social investment programme that helps young people around the world to start up and run viable businesses. Youth is defined specifically in each country of programme operation but is usually between the ages of 18 and 30. Shell Livewire helps tackle unemployment mostly by providing; pre-start up enterprise awareness sessions; business planning and management training; and, limited business capital. Each Livewire country programme closely reflects the local context, specific local partnerships and of course local young people.

All the programmes suggested seek to add value to existing local policies and other initiatives providing support for the development of young people and their economic future. This study focused on school leavers, particularly those entering tertiary level education. Considering the precarious nature of employment and the extent of competition in the domestic environment, the research aimed at finding out why empowerment was essential and how selected HRD programmes could benefit the youth.

ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Assumptions

The key assumption of this study is that it focuses on school leavers who are actually engaged in tertiary studies. It does not cover all types of school leavers whether they are employed or unemployed. The reason behind this sample selection is that students involved in studies are presently unemployed and have apprehensions about their future. The country is far from those days of economic boom (1986–1990) and no employment is guaranteed despite a qualification. The study wanted to look into this area where the level of uncertainty is present although students may have chosen a course of study that meets their needs. From this uncertainty, the researcher has based his target audience expecting that HRD empowerment programmes might well apply to such group of young people. There is a common statement that educated young people, particularly at the tertiary level, are apt to get a job while figures now mention a high level of unemployment.

Limitations

The sample size, being roughly 50, might be low compared to a potential population of 46,000 students (Statistics Mauritius, 2012) actually enrolled for tertiary studies. However, it reflects mainly those students who are reading for an undergraduate programme and are about to think of gaining a job in a near future.

Delimitations

This study is not a national survey on youth and empowerment opportunities. It is not also a policy on what any local organisation is apt to apply regarding the recommendations made. As a Conference paper, it is useful in shedding light on youth empowerment by highlighting the need for such programmes particularly among aspiring graduates.

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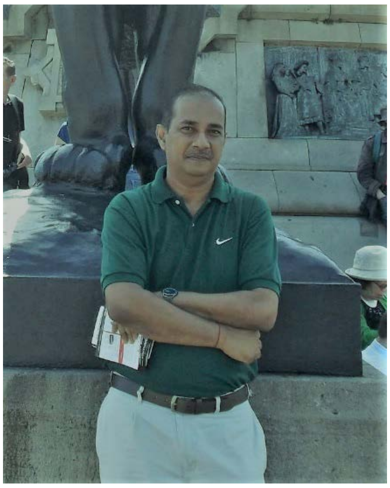
ENDNOTES

1. Baîllon: A French term relating to blocking employee freedom of speech
2. The more it changes, the more it remains the same (adage)
3. Semaine de trente-cinq heures: French locution for 35 hour-week.
4. Local Mauritian term for marked absenteeism at work on Mondays.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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