

**Anxieties and Challenges of conducting a
Business Research Project:
Developing an inclusive Business Research Module on a
Postgraduate Level**

Focus

- ❑ expectations of the business research project
- ❑ making the business research or dissertation ‘journey’ a satisfying and inspiring one
- ❑ aligning students’ project management concerns and their career paths with the project criteria/ curriculum



Context and Rationale

- ▶ Most postgraduate disciplines and fields of study within HEIs require the students to carry out a research or dissertation project as part of their qualification criteria. A business research project is an extended piece of writing that provides insights and presents the outcomes of the work carried out on a particular subject
 - ▶ It typically makes a contribution to a given field of study.
- ▶ **Sadly...**
 - ▶ Students are often left to make onerous decisions on their own, which inevitably results in project reports that are either ‘nothing to write home about’ or a student having a dissatisfying learning experience who dreads conducting any project in the future.
 - ▶ Most postgraduate students fail to see the link between the experience acquired and potential impact of the business research process on their desired career pursuits



- ▶ Do postgraduate students **really** have the basic knowledge & understanding on how to confidently undertake their business research projects?
- ▶ Can the Business Research Methods Curriculum be designed such that students are **enabled** to **learn** business research processes and develop skills at level 7 to help them undertake their principle research project more confidently?

Challenges of PG students: The Students' Voice

▶ “for many international students, doing a business project is a vague thing knowing how to do one is thus a necessity”

“we come from different backgrounds so some are left behind when it comes to decision making for the dissertation”

Suppositions of supervisors???



“...perspective to what we're doing and a lot of people do not know this”



Reflecting on and Sharing Experience

As a supervisor:
How do you work with your student?
Do you make the dissertation process
so ambiguous for your student?
Do you teach/ deliver research
methods session?
Do you talk/ tell it OR do you
interact/ engage....



▲ As a student:
▲ How is/ was it working with
your supervisor?
▲ Did you simply hand in a
project report to obtain your
qualification OR...

Reflecting on Students' Experience: Starting/ Planning the business research project

Case: The student is indecisive about a project topic/ title

- ▶ 'I'm in the stage of choosing and deciding on a dissertation topic; I have an option to either define my title or choose from the list of topics approved by school, which have been available for a month now. However I can't seem to choose a topic that appeal to me. I'm running out of time because I'm expected to confirm my dissertation topic/ title with the school office next week'
 - ▶ What would you advise the student to do at this point as an immediate response to the circumstance?

Way Forward...

- ▶ **Be available and self-motivated**
- ▶ It's okay to evaluate your sessions immediately (not just end-of-year module evaluations)
 - ▶ Embed and integrate the 'students' voices and sessions on Learning Development within curriculum/ module preparations and deliveries
- ▶ Work professionally and humanely with the students
- ▶ Need for lecturers to encourage their students that seeking guidance and advise from '**Learning development units**' is a good developmental initiative for a better learning experience
- ▶ Update and train yourself as lecturer/ supervisor to meet students' needs and institutions' requirements
- ▶ Design & deliver research methods sessions that foster interaction and engagement

Evidence on implementation of way forward pointers



Final Questions to ponder on...

How do you view research methods? How & where do the stages of the research process correspond with your role as an Academic?



In Summary...

The business research project typically makes a contribution to a given field of study.



Is the theoretical platform (evidence) of their work really clear?

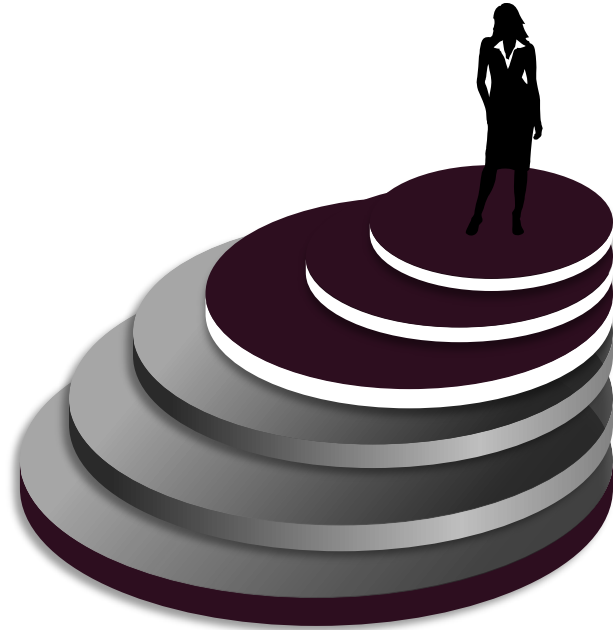
How many of your students' project outcomes have you used (practicality and usability)?

Learning
Life Skills
Knowledge
Active
Networks
Technologies
Friendships
Independence
Employability
Placement
Academic
Cultural
Research
Peer
Sport
Innovative
Diverse
Feedback
Subject
learning
Awareness
background
Opportunities
Transferable
Intrapersonal
Social
long
Interpersonal
Community
Reflective
New
Professional
Innovations
Learners
Professional
Technologies

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