Assessment 3

24754 Studio 2: Specialisation - Autumn 2025
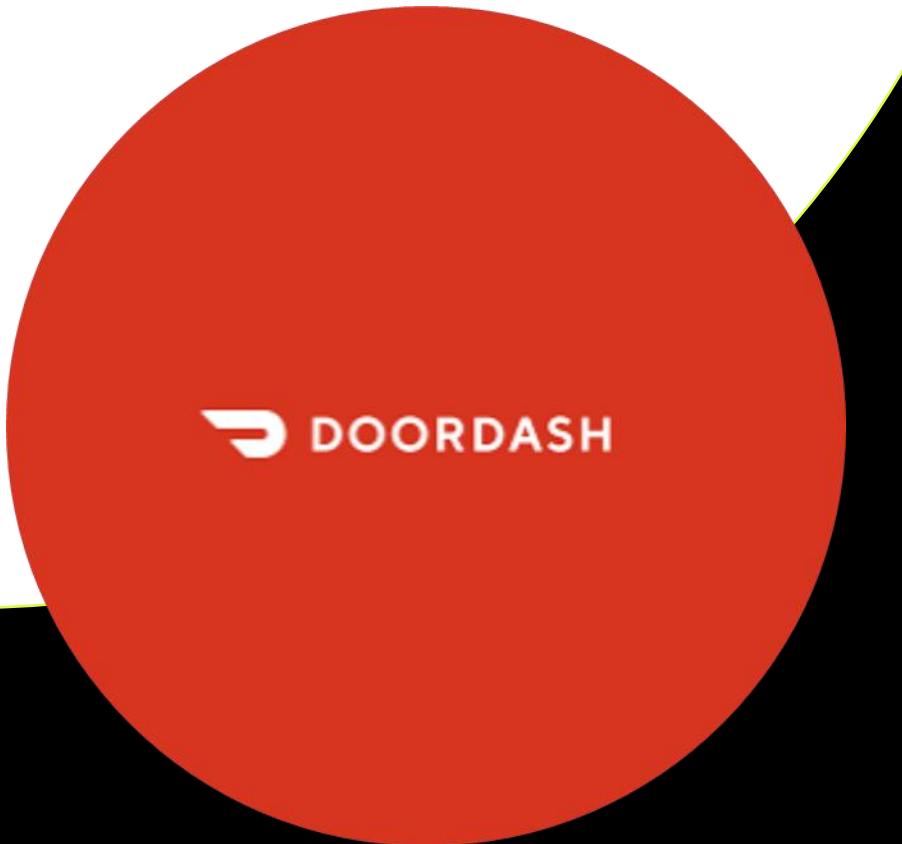
Reflective Essay

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Reflection Essay: Lessons Learned from Assignments 1 and 2

During the process of completing Assignment 1 and Assignment 2, I went through multiple stages of designing, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting research data. These assignments were not just academic tasks; they served as hands-on learning experiences that deepened my understanding of business analytics. Throughout the process, I encountered challenges that pushed me to improve, and Graham's detailed feedback highlighted many areas where I could refine my approach. In this reflection, I will explain exactly what I did in each phase, what issues emerged, and how I will specifically fix them in future projects.

1. Planning and Defining Variables

In Assignment 1, I began by writing down four dependent variables (DVs): customer satisfaction, repeat purchase intention, willingness to recommend, and brand loyalty. These were the outcomes I wanted to explain. Then, I selected independent variables (IVs) like price sensitivity, product quality, app design, service reliability, and ease of navigation, which I believed would influence the DVs. I referred to only one external source, Statista, to justify these variable selections. I didn't refer to course modules or use multiple academic sources. At the time, I believed Statista's data was sufficient to validate my choices, but I now realise that relying on a single secondary source limited the academic and conceptual depth of my model.

What I will do differently:
In the future, for every IV and DV, I will locate and cite at least 3–5 scholarly sources or credible industry reports. For example, if I am including product quality as an IV, I will find peer-reviewed articles that define and measure product quality and explain its link to customer satisfaction. I will include these sources directly below each variable in my planning table and mention them in the methodology section. This will improve the theoretical robustness of my research model.

2. Secondary Data Collection

To describe the business environment, I collected secondary data about market size, trends, and competitors. I made a comparative table showing three DoorDash competitors (Uber Eats, Menulog, Deliveroo) and compared them on pricing, features, and customer reviews. However, I only cited Statista in the methods section, and I did not specify where the rest of the data came from.

What I will do differently:
I will create a source attribution matrix, where each data point (e.g., market growth percentage, app rating) is linked to its source (e.g., IBISWorld 2024 report, App Store review metrics). I will mention sources beneath each table and include full references in the reference list. This will improve transparency and credibility.

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3. Survey Design and Questionnaire

In Assignment 1, I designed a questionnaire to measure the IVs and DVs, but I made several mistakes. Firstly, I did not consistently follow the format of asking participants to rate three statements for each construct using a clear 7-point Likert scale. I also failed to explain what the scale meant (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), which could have confused participants. Additionally, the three items under each variable were not worded identically. For example, under the variable "product quality," I used statements that had subtle but important differences in focus, which made it difficult to treat them as a single reliable construct.

Graham also pointed out that the wording of statements should be binary and evaluative—like "good vs. bad" or "strong vs. weak"—so participants make clear, judgment-based decisions. At the time, I did not fully understand why, but after collecting responses, I saw that vague or descriptive statements led to inconsistent interpretations and weakened the quality of my data.

What I will do differently:
I will ensure each variable is measured using three carefully worded, parallel, and binary evaluative statements that reflect the same construct, and I will explicitly explain the 7-point Likert scale to participants at the beginning of the survey. For example:

Variable: Product Quality

- Statement 1: "The products I received were of good quality."

- Statement 2: "The products I received were strong and durable."

- Statement 3: "The overall product quality was excellent."

Each of these will use the same 7-point scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." I will also include a short paragraph before the survey starts to explain the scale clearly and consistently.

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4. Sampling and Data Quality

To meet the requirement of collecting at least 100 responses, I mostly shared my survey with friends and university peers. Due to time constraints and the urgent need to reach the minimum sample size, I focused only on friends and family. As a result, the sample was heavily skewed toward students, which introduced demographic bias and limited the generalisability of my findings. It does not accurately reflect the full diversity of DoorDash users, such as full-time workers, parents, or older adults.

Another issue was that I only realised later that some responses were invalid or carelessly filled. For example, some participants gave the same rating for every question or skipped key sections. Fixing these problems took significant time and effort. I had to rework parts of the survey, redistribute it, and carefully screen responses for quality before proceeding with the analysis. This delayed the rest of the assignment and showed me the importance of data quality checks and piloting the survey early.

What I will do differently:
I will always include a structured introduction at the beginning of the survey explaining the aim, estimated time, and assurance of anonymity. To improve attention, I will include an attention-check question like: "Select option 4 for this question." I will also diversify my sample beyond just friends and students by sharing it through university mailing lists, community groups, or targeted forums to reduce bias and improve representativeness.

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5. Descriptive and Regression Analysis

In Assignment 2, I used descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) for each variable and performed multiple linear regressions to examine relationships between IVs and DVs. For example, I found that product quality had a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention.

However, I made several important mistakes:

- I only explained a few descriptive statistics and skipped others, such as ease of navigation or price sensitivity.

- My explanation of regression results was too technical and lacked clarity. I used terms like "p < 0.05," "R-squared," and "coefficient" without defining them.

What I will do differently:
I will create a table listing the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for every IV and DV and write a short explanation for each. For example:
"Ease of navigation had a mean score of 4.8 out of 7 with a standard deviation of 0.9, showing moderately positive and consistent responses."

For regression, I will explain:

- What the dependent variable is (e.g., customer satisfaction)

- What the independent variables are (e.g., app design, product quality)

- Which variables had a statistically significant effect and what the p-value means

- The direction of the effect (positive or negative)

- What the effect means in plain English
  Example: "App design had a positive effect on customer satisfaction (p = 0.03), meaning users who rated the design higher were also more satisfied."

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6. Communication and Presentation of Findings

Initially, I used technical language and assumed the reader had statistical knowledge. Graham pointed out that many clients may not understand regression outputs or statistical terminology.

What I will do differently:
I will simplify the language. For example, instead of saying:
"There is a statistically significant relationship with p < 0.05,"
I will say:
"People who rated the app as high quality were also more likely to use it again."

I will also use visuals like bar charts and scatter plots with short annotations underneath explaining what they show in simple terms. Visuals will help communicate patterns clearly, especially to non-technical audiences.

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7. Business Recommendations

In my final report, my recommendations were vague and generic. I said things like "improve app experience" or "offer discounts," which were not clearly tied to the data.

What I will do differently:
I will create a "Data-Driven Recommendations" table that links each suggestion directly to a specific analysis result and explains how the recommendation can be implemented in practice. For example:

Finding	Recommendation	How to Implement
App design score had a strong effect on brand loyalty	Redesign app interface to simplify navigation	Conduct UX testing and reduce checkout steps from 3 to 1 based on user feedback
Product quality strongly influenced customer satisfaction	Ensure consistent product packaging and temperature	Introduce a quality assurance checklist for delivery drivers and enforce strict vendor guidelines
Price sensitivity was high among students	Introduce limited-time discounts during weekday lunch hours	Use app notifications and promo banners targeting high-usage time blocks
Ease of navigation impacted willingness to recommend	Improve search function and order tracking interface	Redesign search bar placement and integrate real-time delivery updates

Each of these actions is clear, feasible, and directly linked to the statistical findings.

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8. Documentation and Transparency

I listed all my references at the end of the report, but I did not show where each fact or chart came from in the body of the document.

What I will do differently:
I will cite sources directly below each figure or table (e.g., "Source: IBISWorld, 2024") and also include an appendix listing all datasets, where I got them, and how I cleaned or transformed them. This will make my process fully transparent.

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9. Time Management and Interim Reviews

I started both assignments close to the deadline. This meant I could not get interim feedback on my survey questions, sample quality, or initial analysis. As a result, I had to redo parts of the assignment in a rush.

What I will do differently:
I will create a timeline with deadlines for each major step: planning, survey design, pilot testing, data collection, analysis, drafting, and review. I will seek feedback at two or three stages especially after survey design and before analysis, to catch errors early and reduce last-minute rework.

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10. Conclusion

Together, Assignment 1 and 2 gave me a practical experience of how to design a business research project from scratch, collect and clean data, perform descriptive and regression analysis, and communicate the results in a way that informs business decisions. I now understand the importance of:

- Clearly defining IVs and DVs with academic justification

- Writing well-structured and consistent survey questions

- Using a consistent Likert scale with clear explanation

- Performing and interpreting descriptive statistics for every variable

- Explaining regression results in plain English

- Making specific, data-based recommendations with clear implementation steps

- Planning in advance and seeking feedback early

With these lessons, I am confident that I can approach future research tasks with more depth, clarity, and professionalism.