Research Methods and Professional Practice Unit 8 Reflection

Description

This unit was the eight unit of the Research Methods and Professional Practise module. The goals of this unit were to understand how to analyse qualitative and quantitative data, to learn how to present data using charts and graphs, to learn how to create dashboards for business intelligence and to develop critical thinking skills in evaluating and interpreting charts and graphs.

For this unit, we were required to read Chapters 1, 17, and 18 from Basic Business Statistics: Concepts and Applications (Berenson et al., 2015), watch a video on data visualisation (Elsevier Research, 2023), review the Financial Times visual vocabulary poster (FT, 2023), and examine the Microsoft webpage on Power BI dashboards (Microsoft, 2023).

The formative activities for this unit were the research proposal formative, the inference worksheet and the peer responses to the collaborative discussion on ethical challenges relevant to the case study.

Feelings

The inference worksheet was a source of confusion for me, as it did not contain any exercises and instead focused on the steps for proving or disproving a hypothesis using quantitative data. This lack of clarity led to uncertainty, and I had to adapt by using the steps outlined in the worksheet for each spreadsheet in the Unit 8 exercises folder on the learning platform.

Additionally, I was frustrated by the repeated mistakes in the references provided on the learning platform, a recurring issue throughout the module. As because of this I had to double-check sources, which increased the time I spent on the unit.

On a positive note, the research proposal formative was a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from Dr Outram before the assignment deadline. This helped boost my confidence and clarified areas where improvements were needed.

Evaluation

While the inference worksheet was confusing, working through the steps helped me improve my understanding of how to apply inferential statistics to data analysis. This practical experience was beneficial, even though it required additional effort.

The errors in the references on the learning platform significantly hindered my workflow and detracted from the professional standard I expected in postgraduate studies. However, the constructive feedback on the research proposal formative was a highlight, allowing me to refine my approach and align my work with the module's expectations.

Overall, the unit introduced valuable tools and techniques for data visualisation and business intelligence, which I can apply in my academic and professional career.

Analysis

The lack of clarity in the inference worksheet highlights the importance of clear instructional materials in facilitating effective learning. Despite this challenge, the task provided me with practical exposure to data analysis techniques, which will be beneficial for future research. The repeated referencing errors on the learning platform suggest a need for improved quality control to ensure students can trust and efficiently use provided resources.

On the other hand, the structured feedback on the research proposal formative demonstrated the value of formative assessments in supporting student learning. This experience underlined the importance of seeking feedback early to improve the quality of submissions and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Conclusion

This unit reinforced the importance of clarity in instructional design and the role of formative feedback in enhancing learning outcomes. Despite the frustrations caused by unclear instructions and incorrect references, I was able to develop critical skills in data analysis and visualisation. These skills will be invaluable for my research and future career. Moving forward, I will actively seek clarification on unclear tasks and focus on using feedback to improve my work.

Action plan

In future modules, I will reach out to lecturers or peers for clarification on unclear instructions early in the process to avoid wasting time, I will cross-check references to ensure accuracy, I will explore additional resources on data visualisation tools and I will allocate extra time for reviewing provided materials to account for potential discrepancies for each unit.

References

Berenson, L., Levine, D. & Szabat, K. (2015) *Basic Business Statistics: Concepts and Applications 14th Ed.* Pearson.

Elsevier Research. (2023) *The why and how of data visualization.*

FT. (2023) *Charts that work: FT visual vocabulary guide.*

Gibbs, G. (1998) Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.

Microsoft. (2023) *Why data dashboards are important.*