

Scope of Reflective Report

The scope of this report is to outline my learning experience in preparing the dissertation titled, “Barriers to highly skilled Labour mobility in the United Kingdom health sector”. This report is classified in accordance to the main chapters of the thesis, which consist of the following: introductory chapter, literature review chapter, research methodology chapter, data analysis chapter and conclusion chapter. Finally, attention is devoted to what I have learned from this study.

Introductory Chapter

Initially I regarded the dissertation as an impossible project. An 18,000 words thesis together with a 2,000 words reflective report seemed too much for me. The tutor kindly suggested that I divide the dissertation into a number of manageable tasks. Such an approach was very helpful and I started with the introductory chapter, which was divided into the following sections: background of the study, research problem, justification of the study, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, and outline of the study.

The introductory chapter is a very important chapter because it guided me through the whole dissertation. The most important matters that guided me through the whole research process consist of the aim and objectives of the study and the research questions. International migration is an important and very vast topic. The setting of the aim of the study, which consists of evaluating whether there are barriers to employment in the United Kingdom (UK) to professional migrants was helpful to set a target. The objectives were also useful to set clearer targets. The first objective, which comprises identifying the ability of professionals like doctors and nurses to move between EU countries either as self-initiated or corporate relocations outlined the importance of considering factors like education required, skills necessary and finance available. The motives of international migration were also related to this objective. The second objective which consists of identifying stakeholders in the UK's healthcare industry that actively discourage or encourage professional mobility hints towards the need to identify individuals and/or entities that promote or limit international migration in the UK. The third objective which comprises identifying mobility barriers that can be enacted by hospitals in the UK highlights the need to identify issues that limit the growth of international migration for doctors and nurses. These objectives were fine-tuned into four research questions, which were central for the data analysis and conclusion chapters. Such matter will be considered in further depth when discussing these two chapters.

The identification of the aim and objectives of the study was facilitated by performing some background reading on international migration in the UK health sector. The research problem was also helpful to a specific issue that was examined in this study. This comprises barriers that limit international migration within EU member states. The outline of the study was also helpful to set up a framework composed of a number of tasks of the remaining chapters.

Literature Review Chapter

The reading and examination of the literature was not only conducted when I was preparing the literature review chapter. The literature was also considered while preparing the data analysis chapter and the conclusion chapter. This approach was adopted in order to comply with an important measure targeted to enhance the validity and reliability of the study. This measure is suggested by Morse et al. (2002) which consists of theoretical sampling. Thinking theoretically means that the researcher evaluates themes emerging from the qualitative study by referring back to applicable theories (Morse et al., 2002). Therefore, when the main themes were identified in the data analysis chapter these were compared to literature present in the literature review chapter and with additional literature derived from secondary research.

The Internet provides a more convenient way to conduct secondary research because one can download articles in the comfort of his house. However it also leads to a problem that I faced, which consists of information overload. The first measure that I thought of adopting in order to mitigate this problem was to select the most recent articles, which consist of articles published from 2008 onwards. However such approach is risky because one may fail to consider old theoretical models which are relevant and good for this study. Therefore, two additional criteria were set, which comprise the following: consider articles that had a high number of citation by other scholars and evaluate articles in terms of their relevance to this study.

The Internet search helped to identify a good number of literature. Furthermore, I identified an important source which consists of Buchan (2008). This document was utilised considerably in the literature review chapter because it was recently published and it is highly relevant to this study. It focuses on migration of health service professionals. Even though Buchan (2008) is a very good source, I was cautious in using it in the data analysis and conclusion chapters where theoretical search was also conducted, because excessive use of

this source while analysing the qualitative may lead to bias in the way data is interpreted. Therefore, additional literature was considered in the data analysis and conclusion chapters in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

The literature review chapter helped to provide a theoretical understanding of the topic examined, which was useful when the interview questions were set and the initial list of codes were adopted in the data analysis chapter. Furthermore, the literature review helped in the research methodology.

Research Methodology Chapter

I have never conducted a research of this scale and therefore at the beginning of this chapter I was quite lost. Kumar (2005) was very helpful because this textbook outlined in simple English the steps necessary to conduct a research. The sections of the research methodology chapter started developing with the help of this book.

I started with the population of the study because it provided an insight from whom the information will be collected. The research philosophy was then considered, which was followed by the research model. In the research model emphasis was placed on three main methods which comprise the quantitative research methodology, the qualitative research methodology and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The selection of the qualitative methodology was based on arguments put forward by different scholars, which comprise the following: Punch (2008), Krathwohl (1998), Silverman (2009) and Kumar (2005) and Patton (1990).

Once the qualitative research model was selected I had a clear model to use, which acted as a yardstick for the sample selection and the data collection instrument. The aim and objectives of the study also played a very important role in the selection of the sample and the data collection instrument. In the research methodology chapter another suggestion provided by Morse et al. (2002) was used in the preparation of the sections of the research methodology chapter, which consists of methodological coherence. Methodological coherence highlights the need of "*congruence between the research question and the components of the method*" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 18).

Yin (2009) provided a good insight of case study research and the case study approach was adopted because it had important benefits for this study. The case study approach helped to gather rich qualitative information on a complicated topic like international migration. I had

been in contact with three hospitals residing in London and due to cost and time constraints only one hospital (case study) was selected. Before collecting the primary data from the management of the selected hospital, native doctors and nurses of the selected hospital and migrant professional workers attention was devoted to ethical principles in order to ensure that no participant was harmed in any manner. I felt that confidentiality and integrity were the most important ethical principles. The interviews proceeded very smoothly and I think there was a steep learning curve during the data collection. I realised that icebreaker activities are very effective to stimulate conversation. I started using a joke of a lost researcher in order to break the ice.

Data Analysis Chapter

The data analysis model selected, which consists of the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework was very helpful because it provided a systematic approach on how to examine qualitative data. Initially I felt as if I was not able to see the wood for the trees. All the qualitative data present in the interview transcripts confused me. The preparation of the contact summary sheet was a key step because it helped me to understand well the concept of coding. A significant number of codes emerged during the data analysis stage. In order to have all the codes in front me I printed all the codes on an A3 paper with a font 10 Calibri Body. I started linking the codes together in order to develop the main themes, which served as pillars for the conclusion chapter.

The research questions played a very important role in the identification and classification of the main themes. I felt that the interview process was also helpful to provide more reality to the study. Listening to the replies of participants and investigating important themes via probing helped to show that some of the theoretical principles that I read in the literature review are a reality in the UK healthcare industry.

When the themes started emerging I was very happy because what was advocated in section 3.8 (qualitative data analysis technique) and the strengths of case study research and interviews were becoming a reality. An interesting aspect that I did not consider while preparing the literature review chapter consists of the conflict between native and migrant workers due to weak communication and other factors. It was interesting reading about conflict while doing the data analysis chapter and linking such literature with the qualitative data emerging from my study. I think this factor shows that the selection of an exploratory qualitative study was a good choice.

Conclusion Chapter

I am happy with the implications of the study noted in the conclusion chapter because these are unveiling important themes, and appropriate recommendations are also provided. At the beginning of the research I did not envisage that such interesting themes will emerge. It is true that the reading of the literature, collection and analysis of the qualitative data required time and effort, but it was worth the try.

The findings of this research are showing barriers that other researchers have already noted: for example educational barrier and income barrier. However I believe that important implications emerged from this research. For example, the role of the human resource department emerged as vital in order to decrease barriers to international migration. Important implications on the difficulty of migrant professionals to identify cultural norms present among native doctors and nurses emerged. The induction programme is a helpful training medium that was recommended to mitigate the aforementioned issue. Social activities also resulted as an effective solution that can help migrant professions in the transitional period of migration. This research also helped to identify specific motives and barriers for the health sector in the UK.

Skills Acquired from Study

I think that this study was beneficial because it helped me to enhance important skills that I can use in the working environment. These skills consist of the following: communication skills (verbal and written), research skills, ability to think philosophically and qualitative data analysis skills. Verbal communication skills were developed by asking questions to participants during the interview and communicating with my tutor. Written communication skills were mainly developed while writing the dissertation. Research skills were developed at different stages, which comprise conceptualising the aim and objectives of the study, and the research questions in adherence to the area examined, researching for the literature, developing the research model, selecting the sampling strategy and the data collection instrument and more.

The ability to think philosophically was mainly developed while preparing the research philosophy. The preparation of the data analysis and conclusion chapters was helpful to developing data analysis skill. I think that the preparation of a dissertation is a very good learning process that helps in developing salient skills.

References

- Buchan, J. (2008). *How can the Migration of Health Service Professionals be Managed so as to Reduce any Negative Effects on Supply?* Copenhagen: World Health Organisation.
- Krathwohl, R. D. (1998). *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research*. Second Edition. Harlow: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Incorporation.
- Kumar, R. (2005). *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide for Beginners*. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Miles, B. M. and Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Morse, M. J.; Barrett, M.; Mayan, M.; Olson, K. and Spiers, J. (2002). Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (2).
- Punch, K. (2008). *Introduction to Social Research – Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Silverman, D. (2009). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Third Edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Yin, K. R. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. London: Sage Publications.