

Secondary Research Methodology – Sample Dissertation Chapter (UK 2026)

(For Dissertation Methodology Reference Only)

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This chapter presents the methodology adopted for conducting a secondary research dissertation. It outlines the research design, data sources, search strategy, selection criteria, analytical framework, ethical considerations, and limitations. The chapter follows UK academic standards and provides a clear explanation of how existing literature and datasets were systematically identified, evaluated, and synthesised to address the research aims.

The purpose of this methodology is to provide a transparent account of the procedures used to gather and analyse secondary data in a manner that supports academic rigour and replicability. While no primary data was collected, the research aligns with established methodological conventions used within social sciences, business, education, and health research.

1. Introduction

This dissertation uses a secondary qualitative research methodology to examine the selected research question. Secondary research involves analysing data that has already been collected, published, and validated by other researchers or organisations. This methodology is appropriate when the aim is to synthesise existing evidence, evaluate theoretical perspectives, identify patterns, and draw conclusions from previous studies.

The secondary research approach allows the researcher to explore a broad body of literature, compare findings across multiple contexts, and generate insights without conducting surveys, interviews, or experiments. This chapter provides a structured and coherent explanation of the steps followed in conducting the research.

2. Research Design

A **qualitative narrative research design** was adopted. This design is suitable for exploring themes, relationships, and conceptual patterns across existing literature. It enables a deeper understanding of how scholars have approached the topic, what evidence has been generated, and where gaps or inconsistencies exist.

The design is interpretive and analytical. It does not involve statistical modelling or numerical testing; instead, it focuses on conceptual evaluation, thematic synthesis, and academic interpretation.

The research design includes:

- reviewing peer-reviewed studies
- extracting relevant data
- evaluating methodological rigour
- identifying common themes
- comparing theoretical positions
- synthesising findings into coherent conclusions

This approach is widely accepted in UK dissertations where primary data collection is not feasible.

3. Data Sources

Data for this dissertation was obtained exclusively from reputable academic databases, government publications, and institutional reports. Using credible sources is essential for ensuring reliability, validity, and academic integrity.

The following databases were used:

- Scopus
- Web of Science
- PubMed
- JSTOR
- Google Scholar
- UK Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- WHO Global Health Observatory
- Government and policy reports

These sources were selected based on their academic credibility and extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications.

4. Search Strategy

A systematic search strategy was designed to ensure that all relevant literature was identified. The search process included keywords, Boolean operators, date filters, and screening procedures.

Keywords used included:

- “secondary research methodology”
- “secondary data analysis”
- “narrative review example”
- “UK dissertation methodology sample”
- “impact factors + chosen topic keywords”

Boolean operators:

- AND
- OR
- NOT

Filters applied:

- Publication years: 2016–2025
- English language only
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Human subjects (if applicable)

This structured approach helped ensure that the search process remained transparent and replicable.

5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Clear selection criteria were employed to maintain focus and ensure academic quality.

Inclusion Criteria

- Peer-reviewed articles
- Published between 2016–2025
- Studies relevant to the research question
- Academic datasets or official reports
- Research with clear methodology
- Publications from recognised institutions

Exclusion Criteria

- Non-academic blogs or opinion pieces
- Articles without methodological transparency
- Studies unrelated to the research topic
- Duplicates or incomplete publications

Screening was conducted in two stages:

1. **Title and abstract review**
2. **Full-text evaluation**

This process ensured that only high-quality, relevant data was included.

6. Data Extraction Process

A data extraction matrix was developed to organise the findings from selected studies. Each study was summarised under headings including:

- author and year
- research aim
- study design
- sample characteristics
- key findings
- limitations
- methodological strengths

This process allowed consistent comparison and identification of patterns across the literature.

7. Analytical Framework

A **thematic analysis** approach was used to interpret the extracted data. This method is effective for identifying patterns, concepts, and recurring themes within qualitative literature.

The analysis involved:

1. Familiarisation with extracted data
2. Coding of concepts
3. Grouping codes into broader themes
4. Reviewing and refining themes
5. Synthesising insights across studies

The thematic analysis produced three overarching themes relevant to the research question. These themes formed the basis of the discussion chapter.

8. Quality Assessment

The credibility and quality of each included study were assessed using the following criteria:

- clarity of research aims
- methodological transparency
- appropriateness of study design
- reliability of findings
- strength of evidence
- acknowledgement of limitations

Studies with weak methodological foundations were excluded or used cautiously.

9. Ethical Considerations

Although the research relied solely on secondary data, ethical principles were upheld by:

- ensuring accurate citation
- avoiding misleading interpretation of findings
- respecting intellectual property rights
- presenting information objectively and transparently

No direct human participation was involved, therefore ethical approval was not required.

10. Limitations

The methodology has certain limitations:

- reliance on available published studies
- variation in study quality
- inconsistency in measurement tools across studies

- potential publication bias
- limited access to full datasets for some topics

Despite these limitations, the methodology offers a robust and academically sound approach.

11. Summary

This chapter has presented a structured, transparent, and academically rigorous secondary research methodology following UK dissertation standards. It outlines clear processes for identifying, evaluating, and synthesising secondary data in a manner suitable for Masters and undergraduate dissertations.