Secondary Data Dissertation Example (Quantitative – UK 2026)

Title:

An Analysis of Youth Physical Activity Trends in the UK Using Secondary Quantitative Data

Abstract

This dissertation investigates physical activity patterns among UK adolescents using secondary quantitative datasets from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and NHS Digital. The study examines activity frequency, socio-demographic variations, and health correlations. Statistical analysis revealed declining activity levels among 11–18-year-olds, influenced by gender, socioeconomic status, and screen time. Findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote adolescent health.

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1. Introduction

Physical inactivity among adolescents is a growing public health concern in the UK. Reduced physical activity contributes to long-term health issues including obesity, anxiety, and cardiovascular diseases. This dissertation uses **secondary quantitative data** to explore activity trends among UK youth.

Research Aim

To examine physical activity patterns among adolescents using national secondary data.

Objectives

1. Analyse ONS and NHS datasets on youth physical activity
2. Identify demographic variations in activity levels
3. Examine correlations between physical activity and health indicators

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Physical Activity and Health Outcomes

Existing studies confirm that active adolescents experience better physical and mental health outcomes.

2.2 Trends in the UK

ONS and NHS reports indicate declining physical activity, with major reductions during the COVID-19 period.

2.3 Role of Socioeconomic Factors

Activity levels vary significantly across income groups, regions, and school types.

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3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a **quantitative secondary data analysis**.

3.2 Data Sources

- ONS Health Survey for England (HSE)
- NHS Digital – Child Health Dataset
- WHO Global School Health Survey

3.3 Data Variables

- age
- gender
- activity frequency
- BMI
- screen time
- region

3.4 Data Cleaning

Outliers removed; missing values handled using listwise deletion.

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4. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

- Mean activity levels
- Gender comparisons
- BMI classifications

Correlation Tests

- Pearson correlation between physical activity and BMI
- Correlation between activity and screen time

Cross-tabulations

Activity levels compared across:

- regions
- socioeconomic categories
- school types

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5. Results

Key Findings

- Activity levels decline sharply between ages 14–18
- Girls reported lower activity levels than boys
- Higher screen time strongly correlated with lower activity
- Adolescents from low-income areas showed significantly reduced activity levels

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6. Discussion

Findings align with national trends indicating structural inequalities affecting youth health. Schools in disadvantaged regions reported fewer sports programmes. Screen time remains the strongest negative predictor of activity.

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7. Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusions

- Youth physical activity is declining in the UK
- Demographic and socioeconomic factors play major roles

Recommendations

- Increase physical activity programmes in low-income schools
- Introduce national screen-time awareness campaigns
- Strengthen government sports funding

References

(Leave space for citations.)