Course Analysis

MF2086 Research Methodology in Management and Organization, 6 cr

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1 Course information

The course in research methodology is a practical course in learning to use the most prevalent approaches techniques and methods that are applied in qualitative and quantitative research. Students will become skilled in utilizing these methods appropriately in practical research situations of different nature. Learning will be based on their own research activities where students will formulate their own research questions and proposition, search and evaluate past research, design interview questions, find interviewees, conduct interviews, transcribe, code and analyze text, document results and make conclusions for quantitative research. In continuation, students will make hypotheses, design survey items to test hypotheses, distribute surveys to respondents, post-process response data, form variables, visually analyse survey data, statistically analyse and interpret survey data, make conclusions based on analyses for further research, and to compare the utility of different research methods for different research situations and objectives.

In the course, seminars are also carried out, where the research activities and outcomes are discussed and critically reviewed. Comparisons and evaluation reports are also written for the enhancement of research activities.

Course responsible teacher:

Jens Hemphälä

Other teachers in the course:

Examiner:

Jennie Björk

Learning activities:

The course is carried out in smaller groups and individually where all the students work on a general research topic and where each group focus on a separate sub-topic.

The students lead and execute the research project while learning about and practicing the use of the applied research methods and discussing their respective strengths and weaknesses.

2 Students' view of the course

Summary of students´ view of the course based on for example LEQ survey and/or interviews or other activities.

Students' responses from the feedback session in the end of the course:

From the course feedback, the strengths and weaknesses of the course were addressed.

Strengths

- Gives the students opportunity to research something they want. The possibility to send the survey to classmates makes it more fun and less frustrating. How the weekly lecture was setup.
- GOOD with much time in classroom to ask questions
- Reasonable workload
- The course should continue to have a lot of classroom-time for the groups to work on the hypotheses. It was nice to have a quick and easy way to ask for help and/or feedback.
- The workflow and the ability to survey the class where you know you'll get a sufficient amount of answers allow us to focus more on actually learning and understanding the methods - great!
- Having the clear structure and reasonable pace

Weaknesses

The challenges with the course relate mostly to the statistics and R programming, especially since many students have little prior knowledge of this. A comment regarding this was that R takes a lot of time and even more hands-on practice regarding R programming was expressed.

A clarification for one assignment is to “change the assignment description for the reports. Making it much clearer that the "document" actually refers to a Report”. Having more information in slides if you miss a lecture was also one comment to improve. Regarding presentations a suggestion was to make

it clearer in the assignment description that a ppt presentation is expected and that it should last appx 10 min.

3 Teacher analysis of the course

The analysis should present the development of the quality of the course as well as measures that have been taken after previous course analysis. The course's strengths and weaknesses based on the course evaluation and the teacher's reflection.

Course context

It is noted that the improvements from last year regarding more teacher's feedback, study pace and the balance between individual- versus group work has yielded positive results.

In comparison to a number of other research-oriented courses at KTH, the present course has a higher degree of skill-based learning objectives. At the same time, the number of students is the largest or one of the largest in the master's programme Integrated Product Development. Size alone is factor that should be considered for the particular set-up of practical activity-based learning that the course is designed for. While size is less of an issue for more traditional courses, the more activity-based learning the course contains the more size becomes an issue.

Adding to the challenge of size, the students in the course are also the most heterogenous of the courses in the master's programme Integrated Product Development. Students come from two different programmes at KTH – the CDEPR programme and the CMAST programme and they attend the second term of two different master's programme tracks – the Industrial Design Engineering Track and the Innovation Management and Product Development Track. In addition, there are several students from other universities, both foreign and domestic. This heterogeneity makes the students have very different prior skills. For instance, one programme totally lacks knowledge of statistics and has a lesser focus on coding in their Bachelors.

The heterogeneity in prior student knowledge does result in the need to strike the right balance between the various needs of students. The feedback from students 2023 indicates that the level of teacher involvement regarding coding and the course pace is just right for some, but too little for others. Future improvement work needs to take this into consideration.

Changes of the course before this course offering

- The proposals for assignment descriptions and presentations will be adopted.
- Implement more teacher time and feedback on a voluntary basis.

Additional Comments

NA