

SANDHYA DHANASEKAR

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Behavioural Science researcher with experience practicing mixed-methods research, stakeholder engagement and programme evaluation across the UK and India. Skilled at translating qualitative and quantitative evidence into actionable insights that advance gender equity, foster inclusive workplaces and strengthen organisational learning.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Research Expertise: Focus Group Discussions, In-depth Interviews, Survey Design & Questionnaire Development, Desk Research, Literature Reviews, Programme evaluation, Behaviour Change Framework, Mixed-Methods Research, Evidence Synthesis, Report Writing, Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis, Stakeholder Engagement & Facilitation.

Technical skills: MS Excel, Python (NumPy, Pandas, Matplotlib, DataFrames and Dictionaries), SQL, Power BI

WORK EXPERIENCE

Department for Work and Pensions (UK)

Oct 2024 - Jan 2026

Universal Credit Work Coach - Civil Servant

Milton Keynes, UK

Applied behavioural science and evidence-informed approaches to reduce barriers to employment, collaborating with partner organisations to improve programme outcomes for individuals facing complex social and economic challenges.

- Managed a caseload of 230+ claimants (UK citizens) experiencing barriers including homelessness, disability, refugee resettlement and long-term unemployment, using behavioural nudges and in-depth interviews to identify underlying employment barriers and developed personalised action plans that supported progression into sustainable work.
- Applied behavioural science principles and person-centred coaching techniques to translate claimant observations into tailored interventions, increasing engagement with employment support services and improving access to programmes aligned with individuals' needs, aspirations and readiness for work.
- Designed and implemented an Excel-based operational monitoring dashboard that consolidated key programme indicators - including appointment attendance, employment programme participation, job search activities and Flexible Support Fund utilisation - providing managers with real-time insights to monitor engagement, prioritise interventions and improve operational oversight.
- Evaluated claimant engagement patterns and barriers to participation, using evidence to inform case management decisions, strengthen programme delivery and improve the effectiveness of employment support interventions.
- Developed practical learning guidances and decision making resources for team of 15 civil servants, by translating complex Flexible Support Fund policy into accessible procedures for colleagues, improving application quality, strengthening team capability and contributing to a 95% approval rate for eligible funding applications for claimants.
- Member of People Engagement Team, consisting 12 members representing Milton Keynes, where I analysed findings from the UK Civil Service People Survey, synthesised employee feedback into actionable insights and spearheaded workplace initiatives that strengthened organisational culture, employee engagement and communicated dept. policies.

1001 Stories, Management Consultancy

Jun 2022 – Aug 2022

Behavioural Science Researcher Trainee

Bangalore, India

Contributed to mixed-methods behavioural research projects, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand consumer behaviour and generate evidence-based recommendations for clients.

- Conducted secondary research and framed literature reviews to explore Indian household & Prosperity consumer behaviour, cultural practices and behavioural drivers, informing research design and hypotheses.
- Designed mixed-methods research instruments, including questionnaires, participant screening criteria and semi-structured interview guides, ensuring unbiased primary observation.
- Recruited 15 research participants and conducted focus group discussion to understand behavioural motivations, pain points and decision-making processes influencing grocery purchasing behaviour in Indian household.
- Analysed qualitative insights, survey findings using behavioural science frameworks, identifying key themes and translating evidence into actionable recommendations for the client.
- Synthesised insights and findings into impactful report and concise client presentations, communicating evidence clearly to multidisciplinary stakeholders and supporting strategic decision-making.

M Sukumar & Associates, Financial Services

Jan 2021 – Aug 2022

Audit Assistant

Chennai, India

Applied analytical and investigative approaches to assess financial records, validate evidence and support evidence-based reporting across client engagements.

- Designed and implemented an Excel-based operational dashboard to monitor audit engagement progress, accounting status, statutory compliance deadlines, tax filing schedules and monitoring billing, enabling proactive workload planning and improving visibility across multiple client engagements.
- Developed company-specific financial dashboards that consolidated key financial data into a single, accessible view, reducing time spent retrieving information and supporting more efficient financial analysis, reporting and decision-making.
- Analysed profit and loss, balance sheet of client companies using Excel and Tally ERP to identify discrepancies, evaluate compliance with statutory requirements and improve the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting.

EDUCATION

MSc Behavioural Economics and Data Science - Merit

Sep 2022 – Sep 2023

University of East Anglia

Norwich, UK

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism - Distinction

Jun 2017 – Apr 2020

University of Madras

Chennai, India

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

Women's Employability & Empowerment Programme

Department for Work and Pensions | 2025

Coordinated, monitored and evaluated the programme supporting refugee and migrant women to overcome barriers to employment through English language training, work experience and personalised employment support.

- Coordinated a 30-week learning and employability programme in partnership with local organisations, supporting 25 refugee and migrant women through participant onboarding, case management and insight analysis.
- Designed and implemented an evaluation framework to track programme outcomes using quantitative and qualitative indicators, including attendance and English language progression, building agency, job experience.
- Conducted in-depth participant interviews and synthesised qualitative insights to understand individual journeys, barriers and programme experiences, translating findings and observations into clear report with evidence that informed leadership team for future partnerships.
- Collaborated with training providers, employment partners and labour market team to strengthen participant support, address emerging challenges and improve programme effectiveness.
- Documented participant case studies and journeys for stakeholder reporting, demonstrating the programme's impact on employability, confidence and long-term social inclusion.