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REFLECTIVE ESSAY

ASSIGNMENT 2

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IUBA5002 CHANGEMAKERS: CREATIVITY AND VALUE CREATION

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As I begin the research journey specified in the first assignment, I find myself at a crossroads where reflection becomes a critical tool for personal and academic improvement. Because of the diverse nature of research, it frequently necessitates adaptation, learning, and continual development. As a result, this reflective activity provides an opportunity to examine the process of developing the research proposal, with a special emphasis on the selection of the research approach and methodology. I will use the Gibbs Reflective Cycle, a well-established framework for structured self-evaluation in academic and professional contexts, to guide this reflection. The decision to use the Gibbs Reflective Cycle is based on its ability to provide a systematic and comprehensive reflection process. This reflective framework, which originated in the field of nursing, has found use in a variety of academic and professional disciplines due to its organised approach to assessing experiences, behaviours, and consequences (Gibbs, 1988). It is divided into six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan, allowing for a comprehensive examination of a specific event or process (Gibbs, 1988). I hope to obtain a better knowledge of the research journey and the actions that were applied, particularly about the study approach and methodology, through this reflection process. This self-evaluation will aid in identifying the proposal's strengths and areas for growth, providing the groundwork for improved research skills and a more informed approach to future researches.

With its defined stages, the Gibbs Reflective Cycle offers a methodical approach to reflecting on past and present events. In the context of my research proposal for "Investigating the Impact of Online Reviews on Consumer Decision-Making in E-Commerce," I plan to apply this framework to three specific areas to acquire a better understanding of the research process. These categories include research methodology selection, research question formulation, and sampling method and sample size selection. By studying and reflecting on these major components of the research proposal, I want to acquire valuable insights into the decision-making process as well as potential improvements for future research efforts.

- ***The Research Approach:*** I picked a deductive research approach at the very first stage of the research proposal. The desire to test current theories about the impact of internet reviews on consumer decision-making in e-commerce inspired this decision. Deductive reasoning can be distinguished by hypothesis testing based on established ideas (Kumar, 2019). When I think back on this decision, I see its strength in giving a disciplined framework for the research and matching it with existing information. However, I recognise the possible

constraint of presuming that existing theories adequately encompass the complexities of consumer behaviour. In order to capture emergent patterns and nuances, future research could benefit from combining parts of inductive or abductive techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

- ***Forming the Research Question:*** To address the primary issue of online reviews' influence on customer behaviour, the research question "How do online reviews impact consumer decision-making in the realm of e-commerce?" was developed. It aims to add value by offering useful knowledge to both consumers and businesses. This question appears to be comprehensive and connected with the research's broad objectives. However, I must maintain focus to ensure that the study question effectively directs the research and does not become too wide or unfocused during the data collection and analysis phases (Kumar, 2019).
- ***Determining the sampling method and sampling size:*** The research proposal detailed an intended sampling approach for qualitative interviews and surveys, as well as a stratified random sample technique for quantitative analysis of online review data. These decisions were made in order to incorporate varied opinions and assure statistical accuracy. When I think about these methodologies, I realise how well they fit the study aims. However, in order to minimise potential biases in the qualitative sample and ensure that the quantitative sample size is appropriate for strong statistical analysis, I require extra caution in the execution (Bryman, 2016).

Using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle in this reflective analysis of the research proposal process enabled a deep exploration of critical decisions made in three key areas: the research approach, the formulation of the research question, and the determination of the sampling method and sample size. The cycle has shown useful in examining the decision-making process inside this research assignment. This reflective analysis has created a solid foundation for refining research skills and techniques in future academic and professional endeavours by recognising strengths and areas for improvement. It underscores the idea that research is an ever-changing process that necessitates flexibility and adaptability in order to navigate the complex landscape of knowledge generation.

The inspiration for this research study came from the ever-changing world of e-commerce. The initial curiosity was motivated by the ubiquitous influence of online reviews on consumer behaviour, something that can be experienced through personal encounters and

conversations. The convergence of technology and consumer psychology in the digital marketplace provided an intriguing area for research. One of the most difficult problems at this period was narrowing the study question. The initial concept was broad, encompassing many facets of online reviews and e-commerce. The difficulty was reducing the scope to a researchable issue that would provide useful results. The question evolved iteratively through literature studies and discussions, eventually crystallising into the formulation offered in the research proposal.

A wealth of current literature on the areas of online reviews, consumer decision-making, and e-commerce was used to support the research proposal. The wide range of scholarly material laid a solid foundation for understanding the subject's intricacies and influenced the formulation of hypotheses and research methods. Access to peer-reviewed articles and studies was made possible thanks to reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed. Furthermore, the advice of academic advisors and colleagues aided in the development of study goals. These data collected contributed in shaping the study's emphasis and ensuring alignment with current research trends. While there was a wealth of research on the general issues of online reviews and consumer behaviour, the precise crossover of these topics in the context of e-commerce provided a barrier. The research was entering a new and dynamic domain, which limited the availability of comprehensive academic materials that specifically addressed the research topic in question. Due to the scarcity of literature, unique approaches of gathering pertinent information were required, including a detailed analysis of industry reports, qualitative interviews, and surveys. The use of non-academic sources was a compromise made to address this limitation, but it also necessitated careful investigation to assure the credibility and dependability of the information. The process of ideation, problem identification, and research question creation proved to be a dynamic and hard phase. The initial concept was wide, therefore iterative refinement was required to generate a focused study question. The wealth of existing literature on related issues offered a solid foundation, however the lack of material at the exact junction of e-commerce and online reviews necessitated imaginative ways to information sourcing. This thought emphasises the significance of adaptability and resourcefulness in managing the complexity of contemporary field research.

The process of writing the study proposal has been an educational voyage with many dimensions, each of which has contributed to a better grasp of the research process. In this reflection, I discuss critical takeaways from the stages of establishing the research idea,

outlining the study approach, collecting data, and presenting the idea. The variety of research methodologies available, namely inductive, deductive, and abductive, was a great discovery. Initially drawn to the organised aspect of the deductive technique, I grew to recognise the significance of abductive and inductive approaches in looking into emerging events (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This discovery broadened my perspective, making me more adaptive in selecting the best strategy for various study circumstances. As for the qualitative and quantitative approaches, the mixed-methodologies approach of the proposal highlighted the richness of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods. While qualitative interviews provided detailed insights into customer perceptions (Bryman, 2016), quantitative surveys supplied useful statistical data. Balancing these two techniques enhanced the research and increased my understanding for methodological diversity. Moreover, the questionnaire analysis. Creating and deploying the questionnaire taught me the importance of a well-structured instrument for successful data gathering (Kumar, 2019). When I reviewed the results, I saw how well the questionnaire captured a diverse spectrum of consumer viewpoints. Some open-ended questions, on the other hand, may have been adjusted for more exact insights. This experience underscored the significance of iterative questionnaire design and adherence to the literature review.

Secondary research, also known as desk research, highlighted the importance of existing literature in grounding research in preexisting knowledge (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). The abundance of sources was both a boon and a curse. While there was a wealth of literature available, time limits prevented in-depth investigation. I learned how to efficiently traverse databases and use search algorithms to identify the most relevant information. Crafting and presenting an elevator pitch emphasised the need of straightforward and brief communication. Despite a well-structured pitch, the time crunch was obvious. This experience underlined the significance of condensing complex scientific concepts into bite-sized chunks. Preparation, including short notes, was crucial. The process was a valuable lesson in good communication. I do have to admit that, due to the limited time to present, I was indeed nervous and choked up at some point but managed to finish the pitch successfully. Definitely something I should improve in the future. The poster presentation allowed for the visual consolidation and presentation of study findings. The poster-making process demonstrated the significance of aesthetic hierarchy, legibility, and balanced content. Although the experience was interesting, I recognise the need for additional growth in generating captivating images and effectively engaging the audience.

In summary, the process of developing the research proposal has been enlightening, encouraging adaptability in research approaches, emphasising the importance of a well-structured questionnaire, emphasising the significance of existing literature, refining communication skills, and improving visual presentation abilities. The process of creating a research proposal, from conception to presentation, has been a life-changing event. It has not only broadened my awareness of the research process, but it has also provided me with vital skills and insights that will surely help me in future academic and professional endeavours. In this last perspective, I summarise the important points and suggest an action plan for continued research growth. Throughout this process, I've learnt to value the variety of research methodologies, including inductive, deductive, and abductive approaches, as well as the relevance of aligning them with the study context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I've realised the importance of mixing qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a more complete knowledge of complicated events (Bryman, 2016). My skills in building efficient data gathering instruments have improved as a result of the development and deployment of questionnaires (Kumar, 2019). Navigating the broad secondary research landscape has highlighted the importance of existing literature in grounding research (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). Making an elevator pitch has improved my ability to explain complicated ideas concisely, while poster presentations have improved my visual communication skills.

Action Plan: I plan to broaden my research methodologies by delving into the complexities of inductive, deductive, and abductive procedures in theoretical and practical situations. I will continue to refine my questionnaire design talents through regular practise to improve my methodological capabilities. I hope to establish a balance between qualitative and quantitative methodologies in future research projects, recognising their distinct contributions. Through rigorous literature reviews, staying current with the newest research trends and critically engaging with scholarly debate will be a priority. In addition, I will continue to work on enhancing my communication abilities, which include elevator pitches, academic writing, and presentations. In addition, I will concentrate on developing aesthetically appealing and instructive visuals for efficient visual communication in presentations and publications.

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