



Changemakers: Creativity and Value Creation

Izzati Nadhrah binti Al Malek (2244736)

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a reflection about the subject that I am taking for this summer which is Changemaker: Creativity and Value Creation. This module taught me on how to create my own research topic based on the course that I am taking which is International Business. Hence, a business technique that entails allowing an independent operator in a foreign market to employ a tested business model, international franchising has become increasingly popular in the globalised world (Bui et al, 2022). Franchising comes with special problems, especially when negotiating different cultural environments, even while it has many advantages, such quick expansion and brand awareness (Abdul Ghani et al, 2022). My research question was about “Why Do We Need to Understand Cultural Differences in Consumer Preferences Under International Franchising” and the reason I selected this research question for my aims will be covered in detail in this reflection. It goes over how important it is to comprehend cultural variances in the context of global franchising and how having this understanding may help businesses enter and excel in new markets. I will employ Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle, a framework that promotes critical analysis of events and learning to organise my reflection and Six steps make up this cycle. Referring to Figure 1.0 is a Gibbs Reflective Cycle.

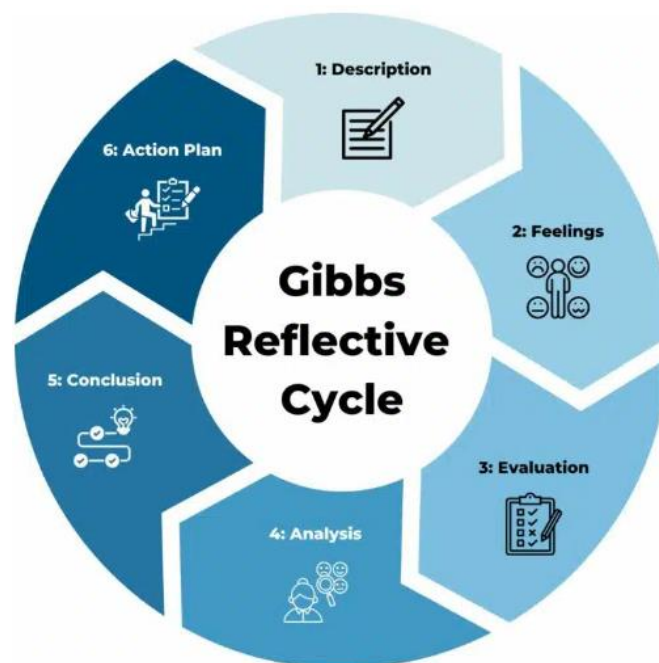


Figure 1.0: Gibbs’ Reflective Model

1.0 IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM

Identification of an issue, data collection, analysis of findings and conclusion-making are frequently steps in a linear research process (Bhandari, 2020). Nonetheless, reflective inquiry encourages to go beyond this sequential approach and considering a research journey from several angles. It pushes me to think about the presumptions that I can find, the biases that could colour the findings and the moral ramifications of the work I do. Hence, relating this to the research question that I chose and according to Gibbs' Reflective Model, I had only ever observed surface-level cultural differences in international franchising, such as linguistic barriers and variations in tastes. Nevertheless, the more I studied the topic, the more I saw how much cultural subtleties may influence the tastes and actions of consumers. Cultural norms, attitudes and practices, for example, might have an impact on customer service standards, marketing plans and product design. It is crucial to have a knowledge about the cultural values because it can help the company to avoid any uncertainty which is how much the consumer can get away with being unclear and vague (Al-Adwan & Yaseen, 2023). Because of this, more structure and assistance may be required from franchises in cultures with high levels of uncertainty avoidance.

2.0 SETTING A RESEARCH QUESTION

Relating it to the Gibbs Reflective Model under feelings, a multitude of emotions can be obtaining via contemplative inquiry during the period of looking for the suitable research question. Invigorating yet intimidating at the same time. While it can help discover fresh insights and viewpoints, introspection can also be a freeing experience. Conversely, though, facing my own prejudices and failings could be difficult. This module has taught me a lot on discovering the research question that can be helpful in the future which is related to the course that I am taking which is, international business. By choosing the research question which is "Why Do We Need to Understand the Cultural Differences On Consumer Preferences Under International Franchising", it leads to the intricacy of cultural variances and the possible difficulties that could be present for global franchising initially intimidated me. It seemed overwhelming to take into account the wide range of cultural influences. But as my knowledge of the topic increased, I started to feel excited and curious about it. It dawned on me that welcoming cultural variety could result in creative fixes and strengthen ties with regional industries. Not just that, I feel like international companies need to understand the cultural of

the country because it is important for them if their long term goal is to expand their business in other countries too without facing any problems and challenges. This is because, some company tend to overlook the differences in cultural which make them face the consequences that may make their company have a bad reputation from the people of the country. This will then make the company face bankruptcy in a matter of time which will make it harder for them to succeed in the future.

3.0 DECIDING ON THE RESEARCH APPROACH

I have chosen inductive and qualitative as my research approach and the reason to this was because, in my opinion, inductive can help me in gathering and analysing the data without having any biased theories (Streefkerk, 2023). This is because, I need to look at the bigger picture when I am analysing my own theory about the cultural differences before reading other journals that is also related to the same topic. It first aids in a more thorough comprehension of the theory of the research question. Hence, it is possible to find patterns, connections and insights that are not always obvious by closely analysing other people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Research that is more rigorous and objective can result from reflective inquiry's ability to confront the preconceptions and prejudices. In addition, the reason of choosing qualitative research is because it can help me collect more information from other researchers that are also identifying the cultural differences in consumer preferences in businesses. This is because, in qualitative, it helps me by coming up with my own understanding about cultural differences when I interviewed consumers and read journals. Furthermore, according to Nichols College (2023), critical thinking abilities are developed, which is helpful because they are necessary for assessing the facts and coming to well-informed decisions. By relating this to the research question, for a number of reasons, it is essential to comprehend cultural variations in international franchising. Avoiding cultural errors that can harm a brand's reputation is beneficial, to start with. To cater to the unique requirements and inclinations of regional customers, companies can customise their offerings. Moreover, it can also improve the market penetrations and long-term performance by strengthening linkages with regional partners and communities.

4.0 DATA COLLECTION

According to Gibbs' Reflective Model, I have already described my research question and processes including the method that I had used which are primary and secondary method such as interviews, focus groups and observations. From this, under primary method, I had interviewed 5 students from University of Malaya-Wales from different backgrounds and cultures and I had also outlined the research questions to the students that I had interviewed. After the interview sessions, I had made an evaluation which I identified each outcome from the students and I evaluated whether it is effective and relevant to the research questions or not. There would be some challenges that I faced during the evaluation process where I had encountered a similar answer from the students because of my questions which I asked the same thing to the 5 students. Mostly the students said it is very important for a franchise to have a very good communication skill with the consumers from the foreign country to make sure they can gain their trusts and loyalty. Not just that, it is also important for business to have a very effective marketing where they know how to market their products or services to another country by making sure they are more sensitive to the surroundings (Marketing Evolution, 2022). This is because, if a business sells a product that is known to be sensitive to another country, the people would not buy their products and in a worse scenario, they will boycott the products. However, I had also conducted a secondary method where I looked for more information regarding consumer preferences for luxury items. By combining the information that I gathered from reading through research and publications from other researchers.

5.0 PRESENTING THE IDEA

I had made a video where I explained about the research questions on why understanding cultural differences is very important in international market to gain feedbacks from the consumers regarding the video. In my opinion, from the feedback, it has helped me a lot where I can improve some parts which I can delve deeper into the understanding of the research question and I can analyse the outcome of the research question. This is because, I want to make sure that the people that are watching my video, would understand the cultural differences rather than they only know that the statement exist in businesses. However, I should have demonstrated how to know cultural differences can help businesses by including a more specific case studies. One way to approach this could be to talk about international franchising projects that have succeeded or failed and how culture affected them. Besides that, by relating

it to the Gibbs' Reflective Model under analyse, when I already presented my research question, I want to make sure that the question has the potential to add to the body of knowledge regarding a deeper understanding of how cultural aspects can affect customer behaviour in international franchising such as gap in the communication barrier. Franchise businesses that are looking to enter new markets and academics researching global marketing and business can both benefit from this information (Grewal et al, 2011). Lastly, after I am done with my research presentation, I feel even more passionate to completing the research topic because I had make a personal connection with the people that I interviewed because we had share our ideas on the same topic and I had gained an insightful information from them when they had answered my questions.

6.0 ANALYSING THE DATA

As part of my intention to integrate reflective inquiry into my own research practice, I had use a qualitative approach to analyse the research because I can gain more information since I need to investigate more and making sure that my knowledge of cultural differences is always up-to-date since it may vary in some countries. Because of this, I need to read, investigate and participate in cultural exchange programs to keep myself informed about the latest advancements and trends in many cultures. Hence, according to Gibbs' Reflective Model, it is crucial to analyse the data trends and patterns of the research question to make sure I can identify the differences of each data and come up with my own aftermath. As an example, there are a few cultural factors that need to be consider during a decision making which is a business need to look at the ways that social conventions and manners can influence the choices and actions of the consumers (Niosi, 2021). Not just that, the business also need to take into account the consumer interpretations of cultural symbols and imagery and how it can be use in advertising and marketing to make sure it does not offend any consumers. For example, avoid using red colour in China for advertising because for them, red symbolize danger. In addition, by analysing, I can also analyse case studies that is relate to franchises where I can compare which franchise can give success and failure. This is because, it is possible to determine the elements that contribute to the success or failure of worldwide franchise expansions by utilising case studies, which may offer insightful analyses of actual circumstances.

7.0 FORMULATING CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, a conclusion is important to challenge preconceptions, get a deeper understanding of a subject and enhance critical thinking abilities, I can benefit greatly from reflective inquiry. Because of this, an invaluable complement to any academic program is a course that teaches research questions. From this, the students can develop their minds by studying with this course, which teaches the students on how to create a compelling research topics. My feelings for this course would be I am excited because this course can help me delve deeper into the topics that I can use to develop in my research topic when I am taking business project during third year's semester. Additionally, I also feel very satisfied because I can develop my research question by interviewing 5 people and also I had read a lot to make sure I can understand more about my research question. The lecturer has also helped me in identifying the research question and taught me how to improve my report. However, although the course is generally well-designed, there are a few places that can be improved. Firstly, practical applications because the lecturer can include additional activities and case studies to assist the students in applying what they have learnt to actual research situations. Besides that, it is also very important to have a technology integration because by using technology to help with data analysis, sharing information and collaboration are needed (Explorance, 2023). Meanwhile, the positive of this would be the emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving in this course is among its best features. Students are given the tools to take charge of their education and cultivate their intellectual curiosity by learning how to create clearly stated and responsive research questions.

(2160 words)

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STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

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This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
	15	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
	25	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
	20	
4. Practical Application Skills		
	25	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
	15	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (40% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		