

University Of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Changemakers: Creativity and Value Creation

Reflection on Research Process Essay

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Executive summary

This reflective report was created by Mihaela Fodor, to present the process of researching effective customer targeting strategies for Permanent Makeup (PMU) businesses, by using Gibbs' Reflective Model as a framework.

The report critically evaluates the process, presenting areas of success and identifying improvements for future research. The conclusion emphasizes the research as a valuable learning experience, which not only contributed to creating a successful and useful report about the PMU industry but also contributed to my personal and professional growth.

In sum, the report encapsulates my learning journey, demonstrating my grasp of key concepts, ability to reflect on experience, and commitment to good academic practice. It highlights the importance of reflective practice in continuous learning and professional development.

Introduction

My name is Mihaela Fodor, a beauty artist with an intense focus on microblading, and through this essay I will examine the research process I undertook regarding PMU businesses. Starting from a pragmatic approach and guided by the Reflective Model (Gibbs, 1988), the research was initiated by two primary inquiries: identifying effective customer targeting strategies and understanding the social implications of PMU services. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, I managed to achieve a balance between the richness of qualitative data and the statistical validation of quantitative data, enhancing the reliability and validity of the research. This essay aims to recount my research journey, emphasizing not only the conclusions reached but also the learning experiences encountered throughout. I hope to underscore how the process enhanced my understanding of key concepts and honed my ability to devise plausible solutions to challenges in the PMU industry.

Description

I employed the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988), a trusted and effective model for structuring reflections on learning experiences. As a beauty artist specialising in microblading, I started my investigation, focusing on effective customer targeting strategies in the Permanent Makeup (PMU) industry and their social impact.

The initial step in the process involved problem identification. I observed a gap in the PMU sector's understanding of effective customer targeting strategies and the social implications of their services. This realisation led me to formulate a clear research question: 'How can PMU businesses effectively target their customers, and what is the social impact of their services?' By posing this question, I set a clear, concise aim that guided the remainder of my research (Saunders, et al., 2020).

Choosing the appropriate research approach followed. Due to the complexity of the topic, which required both numerical data and subjective insights, I decided on a mixed-methods approach, a method that amalgamates both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2017). This decision was very important, as it determined the course of data collection and interpretation.

Data collection entailed developing and distributing a questionnaire to a diverse demographic sample, enabling a variety of perspectives. This tool was meticulously designed to elicit precise responses pertinent to my research question. The questionnaire contained both open and closed-ended questions to capture an diverse range of insights and viewpoints.

In the analysis stage, I analysed the collected data meticulously. Patterns began to emerge, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies utilised in the PMU industry and their societal implications. This process required the use of appropriate statistical tools for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Formulating the conclusions was the final step in my research process. Here, the interpreted data and insights gained from the analysis were drawn together to provide a comprehensive answer to the research question. The findings illuminated new perspectives and proposed plausible solutions to the issues identified within the PMU industry.

Feelings

Looking back at my research journey, I felt a torrent of emotions. When I first identified the issue within the Permanent Makeup (PMU) industry, I felt the desire to explore it and find a solution led by curiosity and determination. I was eager to broaden my knowledge and contribute to this area of the beauty industry. The

formulation of the research question was challenging but also exciting. I was starting a quest for answers, and while I was aware of the effort it would require, I felt a deep motivation.

Choosing a mixed-methods approach, I felt anxious but confident. The anxiety was enhanced by the challenge of integrating qualitative and quantitative data - a task I knew to be complex. However, I was confident in the depth and richness this approach could offer to my research.

Distributing the questionnaires and awaiting responses brought a wave of anticipation, followed by relief as I started to gather the data. Analysing the data, I was filled with intrigue as patterns emerged and answers began to unravel. There was also a sense of gratification in knowing that the data I was analysing could contribute to my advancing in the field of the PMU industry.

The process of reflection and learning from feedback made me realise the importance of continuously seeking growth and development, not only as a researcher but as a professional in the beauty industry.

Formulating the conclusions provided a sense of accomplishment. Seeing the journey reach its conclusion and realising that I had navigated each step successfully brought an immense sense of satisfaction. However, it also made me understand that the process, in all its ups and downs, was as significant as the final product.

Evaluation

Reflecting on my research journey, I am conscious that it was a significant learning experience, not just in terms of the subject matter, but also in terms of honing my research skills and my understanding of the academic research process. This evaluation stage allows me to critically assess the methodology, data collection and data analysis process that I employed (Gibbs, 1988).

My decision to use a mixed-methods approach was based on the belief that it could provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question. I have come to appreciate the rich insights this method offers, as it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. However, I also acknowledge the complexities associated with this method. Managing, integrating, and interpreting different types of data required considerable effort and carefulness (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The data collection process was an eye-opener. While the process of distributing questionnaires was initially daunting, it turned out to be a fruitful exercise, yielding a wealth of data. However, in retrospect, I believe I could have considered other methods, like interviews or focus groups, to generate more in-depth insights.

Formulating the conclusions was challenging yet rewarding. Drawing meaningful insights from the data and tying them back to the research question was a meticulous task that tested my analytical skills. Looking back, I feel that I could have provided a more nuanced interpretation of the data.

Overall, the research process provided several learning opportunities. I learnt about the complexities of conducting research, the importance of feedback, and the critical role of data interpretation. More importantly, the process helped me develop as an academic researcher and reinforced the importance of reflective practice in continuous learning (Moon, 2004).

Analysis

The analysis phase of the Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) invites us to make sense of the situation and to scrutinize the decisions made during the research process.

Beginning with the identification of the problem, I leveraged my in-depth knowledge of the microblading industry to pinpoint an area in need of investigation. The challenge lay in articulating the

problem statement. Initially, the process of refining and focusing the problem statement seemed quite overwhelming. However, as I started the process, I found that it progressively improved the clarity and precision of my research focus. (Fink, 2010)

The setting of the research question necessitated a broad understanding of the field, as well as consideration of the feasibility and value of the research. A thorough literature review was key in this phase, informing the focus of my question and ensuring its relevance to both academia and industry. This process underscored the importance of a well-articulated research question in guiding a study (Bryman, et al., 2021).

In deciding on the research approach, my preference for a mixed-methods approach was based on my understanding of its comprehensive nature, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative data. Despite the complexity, the depth and breadth of insights gleaned justified the decision (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

During the data collection phase, the questionnaire allowed for efficient gathering of data. Nonetheless, I acknowledged that a more diversified data collection could offer more depth, potentially through interviews or observations (Creswell, 2009).

Presenting my idea and receiving feedback was an enlightening phase, underscoring the value of different perspectives in refining an academic work. The feedback influenced my subsequent actions and shaped the final form of my research.

The data analysis phase was intricate and challenging, yet essential to the success of my research. The process involved the painstaking task of synthesising and interpreting data, and served as a reminder of the complexities of translating raw data into coherent findings (Bazeley, 2013).

Finally, formulating conclusions presented another learning curve, requiring rigorous thought in linking the findings back to the research question and the existing literature.

In conclusion, this analysis has been a process of sense-making, shedding light on the intricacies of the research process and the numerous factors that influence its effectiveness. This stage in the reflective cycle reaffirms the importance of continual analysis and reflection to ensure the quality of research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, embarking on this research journey, guided by the Gibbs' Reflective Cycle has significantly shaped my growth as an academic and a practitioner in the field of Permanent Makeup (PMU). The process has been an enlightening exploration of the research process from identifying a problem, setting a research question, deciding on a research approach, to data collection, presenting my idea, analysing data, and formulating conclusions.

The challenges encountered during each stage tested my resilience and ability to adapt, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of academic research. Importantly, this process enabled me to reflect upon and appreciate the significance of a systematic, well-thought-out approach to research.

In retrospect, the development and execution of this research have enriched my understanding of the PMU industry. Through a pragmatic and mixed-methods approach, I was able to generate findings and recommendations that are of practical value for PMU businesses. Moreover, my ability to learn from feedback, refine my idea, and create a plausible solution to a problem within this field has been thoroughly enhanced.

Simultaneously, the reflective practice guided by Gibbs' model facilitated a deep dive into my learning experience, enabling me to understand how my initial thoughts and feelings evolved throughout the research

process. This practice has been invaluable in fostering critical thinking and enhancing my skills in research planning, execution, and analysis.

Overall, the reflective journey has not only been instrumental in realising the research objectives but has also fostered my professional growth. It has reinforced my belief in the value of continuous learning and reflection in achieving academic and professional excellence. This journey serves as a testament to the transformative power of reflective practice in bridging the gap between theory and practice, which will undeniably benefit my future endeavours in the academic and PMU industry.

Action Plan

As a reflection of this enriching process and considering the valuable insights gained, I, have devised an action plan for future research projects in the PMU industry and beyond.

- **Increased Stakeholder Involvement:** To ensure that the research is as comprehensive and applicable as possible, I plan to involve a broader range of stakeholders in future studies. This could include PMU product manufacturers, other beauty artists, or even policymakers. Their perspectives would add valuable insights to the research and could lead to more effective recommendations.
- **In-depth Data Analysis:** While the mixed-methods approach was useful, I noticed the potential for deeper data analysis. In future research, I aim to employ more advanced statistical tools and qualitative analysis methods. This would offer a more detailed understanding of the data, further enhancing the quality of the research findings.
- **Expanded Scope:** This research was focused on the social impact of PMU businesses' customer targeting strategies. In the future, I aim to expand the scope to also include the economic and environmental implications. This will provide a more holistic picture of the issue at hand, addressing the triple bottom line of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental factors.
- **Continuous Learning and Upgradation:** The academic research field is continuously evolving with new methodologies and tools being introduced. I intend to stay updated by attending seminars, workshops, and courses that can enhance my research skills further.
- **Consistent Reflective Practice:** Gibbs' Reflective Cycle proved to be an invaluable tool during this research process. I plan to integrate this model into my daily practice, not just for academic research, but also in my professional role as a beauty artist. This continuous reflective practice will facilitate personal and professional growth, helping me to refine my skills and approach.

The objective of this action plan is to harness the lessons from this research journey and pave the way for continuous improvement, reinforcing my commitment to quality research and reflective practice.

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