

How much impact does influencer marketing have on the younger generation of consumers? : An exploratory research of purchase behaviour impact on Gen Y and Z.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Al-Ababneh (2020, p.77) defines methodology as, “The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes”. In simpler terms, research methodology entails a plan of action for the collection and assessment of the data to be gathered. This process allows the study to define the scope and direction of the research. As such, the study can refrain from examining factors unrelated to the research question. The methodology also informs the readers about the primary research process and the assessment techniques utilised to synthesise and analyse the data gathered. To these ends, the study will utilise the research onion model as prescribed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2018) as depicted in Figure 1. The research methodology for the study is as follows:

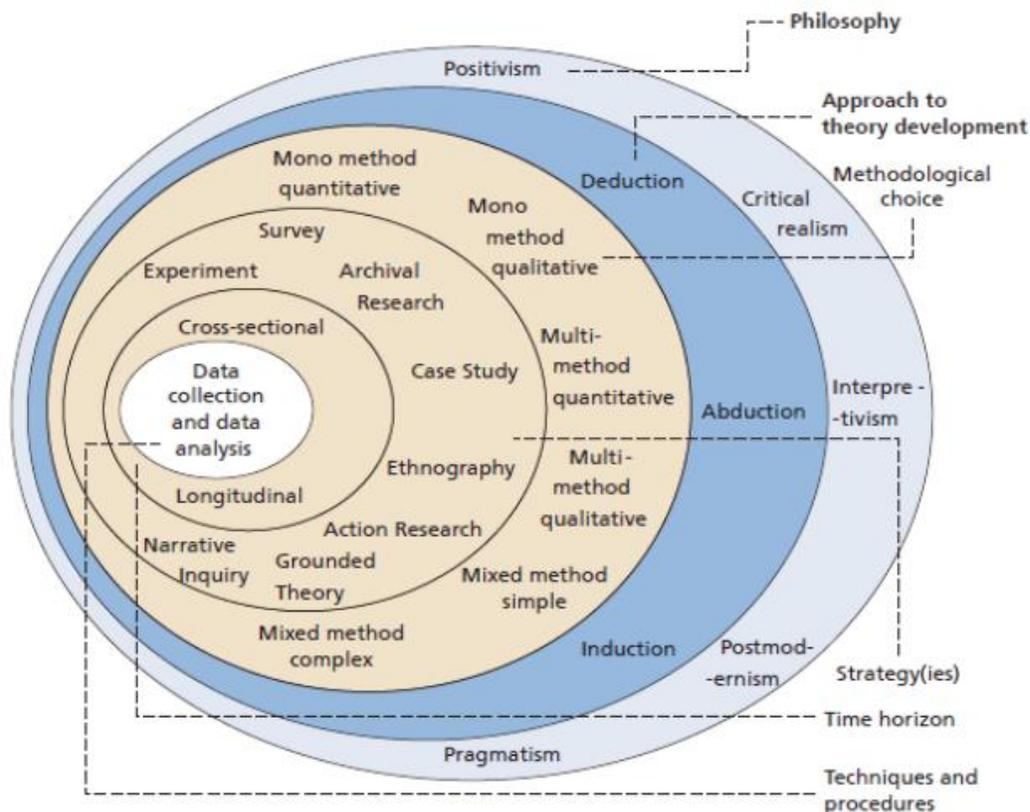


Fig. 1: Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2018, p. 130)

3.1. Research Philosophies

Research philosophy refers to the overarching perspective which defines the manner in which data is collected, synthesised and analysed (Mauthner, 2020). Selecting the proper research philosophy requires an understanding of the nature of the subject matter and that of the queries posed by the research. According to Al-Ababneh (2020, p. 80), “The Positivist philosophy adopts the philosophical stance of the natural scientist, and the results of this research philosophy can be law-like generalisations, similar to the results obtained by physical and natural scientists”. The epistemology for positivism as presented in Fig. 2, including data and scientific method based research, makes it best suited to answer such objective questions.

	Positivism	Constructivism/ Interpretivism	Transformative	Pragmatism
Ontology	The reality is objective , perceived, external, independent and ordered; Universal true reality for instance researchers reject or fail to reject hypotheses.	The reality is subjective , complex, and socially constructed through culture and language; Reality is socially or experimentally based, local, and specific in nature.	Reality as complex and nominal; Socially constructed through political power relations; The realities are dominated and silenced by others.	Reality as complex, external and it is the practical consequences of ideas; Pluralist
Epistemology	Data, evidence shape knowledge. For instance researcher objectively collects data on instruments based on measures completed by observations recorded, thus developing numeric measures of observations; Measurable facts Law that needs to be tested or verified and refined.	The knowledge consists of mental structures that are surrounded by the relative agreements; Theories and concepts too simplistic; Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations; New understandings and worldviews as contribution and collaboration (e.g researchers actively involve participants as collaborators).	Knowledge and truth is decided by dominant ideologies and intertwined with political agenda.	Focus on problems, practical applied research, integrating different perspectives to help interpret the data
Research methods	Deductive approach; Highly	Inductive approach; Small samples, in-	Deconstructive reading texts and realities	Range of methods: mixed,

Fig 2: Ontology and Epistemology of Research Philosophy Paradigms (Adapted from: Tharsika and Pratheepkanth, 2020, p.301)

This research applies a quantifiable objective in its topic and hypothesis; namely how much impact will this marketing technique have with no, low, medium and high impact as quantified options. Since this study requires the application of positive methods to obtain the answer, a positivist philosophy is appropriate for the purposes of this research. While the qualitative data will provide a better understanding of why the observed phenomena occur, the main interest of the study is to determine how much.

3.2. Research Approach

The research approach or ‘approach to theory creation’ is an essential aspect of any research project. This section examines the pattern of thought which permeates the analysis process. For instance this research requires proving four set hypotheses to illustrate the level of impact influencers have on the purchase behaviour of a young adult. Deductive reasoning is referred to as the process of thought that relies on objectivity and logic to determine causal or correlating phenomena (Melnikovas, 2018). According to Melnikovas (2018, p.34), “Deductive approach is applied for existing theory testing, while the inductive approach is commonly used in developing a theory or in fields with little researches on the topic”. This study requires an objective assessment of statistical data representing the correlation and regression patterns to determine the level of impact. As such, a deductive approach is most appropriate for the purposes of this research.

3.3. Research Choices

The research choice of data types to be collected is mostly informed by the research objectives, and questions. There are various types of research choices including observation study, experimentation, ethnographic study, surveys, interviews and questionnaires. The testing of the research hypothesis will require quantitative data but the disadvantage of the mono method quantitative choice is the lack of in depth understanding of the phenomena at hand (Tharsika and Pratheepkanth (2020). As such a mixed method will be applied for the purposes of the research. Jubaer et al. (2020, p. 209) state that mixed methodology, “includes gathering, breaking down, and in a few ways incorporating both quantitative and subjective information in a solitary undertaking”

3.4. Research Strategy

Research strategy refers to the specific apparatus being utilised for the data collection process Haydam and Steenkamp (2020). The research strategy for this study will include three distinct tools for qualitative and quantitative data collection. These tools are; in-depth interview (online), quantitative questionnaire (online), and archival research for secondary data collection.

3.5. Time Horizon

The research time horizon refers to the timeframe within which the research process was conducted. A longitudinal time horizon is highly informative and allows for expansive real time observations of the phenomena being examined (Melnikovas, 2018). However, this form of research requires a significant amount of time, resources and manpower to accomplish. As such, resources are not readily available this study will utilise a cross sectional time horizon. A cross sectional time horizon refers to primary research prose conducted at a specific time (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016.). Unlike longitudinal studies this kind of time horizon can only incorporate knowledge up to a point in time of the research process.

3.6. Techniques and Procedures

The sample size for the study is limited as it is an exploratory examination of the subject matter. As such, the participants will be selected from three different universities with bachelors and masters courses. The sample consists of 250 students selected utilising a snowball sampling method. The interview participants will consist of 30 marketing professionals within the same generational grouping. The quantitative data will utilise The IBM SPSS software for analysis and statistical calculations. By utilising descriptive statistics (examine) function along with cross tabulation and scatter graph, the data can be assessed for frequencies, skewness and indicate normalcy of data (Pallant, 2020). Correlation and regression analysis will represent the trends that the data suggests for the impact of such marketing techniques.

The study will utilise the AIDA model framework to construct the data collection process as well as to assess the synthesised data later. The SPSS outputs will represent the overall trend related to the impact of influencer marketing on younger generations of workers. The engagement with influencer content and purchase decisions; both positive and negative, are assessed through correlation models; either Persons or Spearman correlation based on a test of normality (Kulas,

Roji and Smith (2021). As such, both the qualitative and quantitative data will represent the impact of influencer marketing on the purchase decisions of younger working age demographics.

References

- Al-Ababneh, M., 2020. Linking ontology, epistemology and research methodology. *Science & Philosophy*, 8(1), pp.75-91.
- Haydam, N.E. and Steenkamp, P., 2020. A Methodological Blueprint for Social Sciences Research–The Social Sciences Research Methodology Framework. *EIRP Proceedings*, 15(1), pp. 304-325.
- Jubaer, S.M.O.F., Hoque, L., Oyes, I.B., Chowdhury, T.R. and Miah, M.S., 2021. Research Methodology and Methods: Theory and Practice. Innovative Technologica: *Methodical Research Journal*, 2(5), pp.202-227.
- Kulas, J.T., Roji, R.G.P.P. and Smith, A.M., 2021. *IBM SPSS Essentials: Managing and Analyzing Social Sciences Data*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mauthner, N.S., 2020. ‘Research philosophies and why they matter.’ In *How to Keep your Doctorate on Track*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Melnikovas, A., 2018. Towards an explicit research methodology: Adapting research onion model for futures studies. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 23(2), pp.29-44.
- Pallant, J., 2020. *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS*. London: Routledge.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2016. *Research Methods for Business Students*. 7th ed., Harlow: Pearson Education Limited
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2018. *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th ed., London: Pearson Education Limited
- Tharsika, K. and Pratheepkanth, P., 2020. A Review of Methodological Choice: Research Paradigm Underpins.3rd Research Conference on Business Studies (RCBS).