

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to offer a deeper and even a greater explanation to both consumers and businesses about why and how social media affects their buying choices by young Indian consumers. The research study continues with the issue description, and in this case, it relates to a strong understanding of how social media is influencing the purchasing decisions of the social media users in the city of “Hyderabad” because, in the name of migration across the nation, the city is ranked in the top position for its infrastructure, rapid growth of information technology, educational institutions, and collaborations of numerous people. The population of Hyderabad is 10 million, and about 1.5 million of its inhabitants are aged between 18 and 30 years (2001 census).

The future contribution of the Internet has been acknowledged by many researchers’ media networkers as publicity vehicles. Understanding the social media mentality of users is important because it helps to forecast the mindset, intent, and buying behavior of buyers.

Research onion was structured around the research methodology used to write the dissertation (Saunders et al., 2007). It is reliable to coordinate the research methodology efficiently by analyzing and applying the study across multiple layers of research onion using the Research Onion’s approach (Figure 4).

The research onion paradigm is to move from the outer layer to the inner layer of the research onion, recognizing the research onion by segregating it into layers. The outer layer (science philosophy) is a research principle that sets the stage for the experimental process and describes the procedure pursued as a second-level analysis methodology called a research approach. In the third layer (research strategies), the research method is implemented, and in the fourth layer, the time is calculated, which also says research time horizon. The point at which the technique for the collection of data is specified is layer five (research

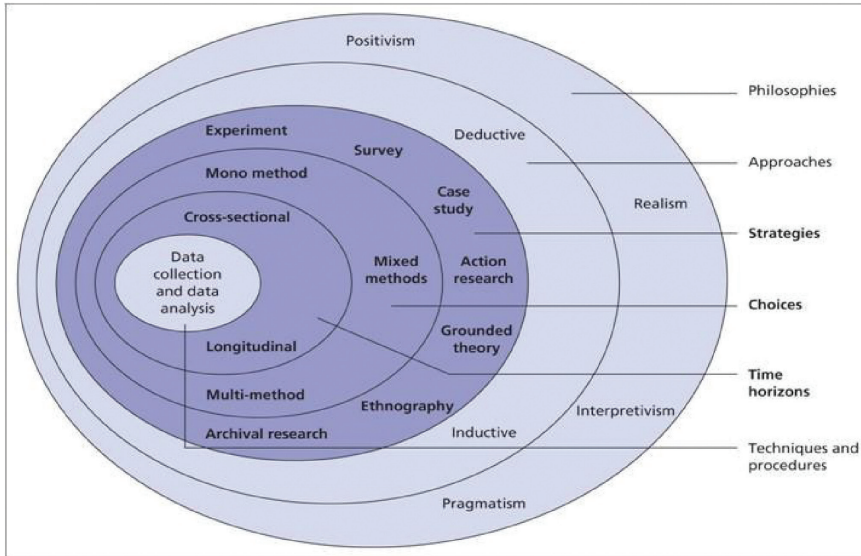


Figure 4. Layers of research onion.

Source: The Research “Onion” (Saunders et al., 2007).

choice). The advantages of the onion study are the development of a set of stages in which the different methods of data collection can be viewed and the steps in which a systematic analysis can be represented.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This research onion layer describes the three distinct ideologies that can be found within the market environment that was focused on (see Figure 4). The field of study in the research is the combination of positivism and interpretivism, and using two ideologies instead of one gives more consistency to the research.

Positivism states that the social body has no function and that only empirical awareness is accurate. It retains the generalization principle and describes that a fact can only be checked and extended. Objectivity shall be viewed as a question of subjectivity. The theory of positivism allows to gather data and create explanations of it. This approach is called deductive in nature and helps to test the conclusion formed by the quantitative research in the literature review (Saunders et al., 2008, p113–114).

The theory of interpretivism is focused on the study of the social world. It is assumed that individual convictions and ideals have an influence on the researcher’s work. Interpretivism theory is used where

the conclusions are based on conditions. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p106), in our tasks as social actors, carrying out research using interpretivism promotes our understanding of the differences between humans. The value of this hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that it is important to enter the social world of consumers in order to do research and attempt to perceive their lives from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2007, p116). This theory was well expanded to the world of social media, where it was important to understand the various degrees of control varying according to the individuals studied. It is essential to mention, however, that although the convergence of two theories of science helped to give the study a wider vision, the philosophy of positivism remained the one that was more important during the research.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACHES

This part of the analysis method is concerned with the reality of the examination and findings of the study of various acceptable designs. The research approach is mostly concerned with the exploration of the type of study and the manner in which it can be carried out to reach a conclusion. In order to do so, two research approaches are available, namely deductive and inductive research approaches. Two types of analysis methods that can be used were described by Saunders et al. (2007, p117): the deductive and inductive methods (see Figure 2). According to Saunders et al. (2007, p119), these two research methods can be perfectly merged within the same piece of research and indicate that doing so is often beneficial. During the analysis, as the thesis was articulated around two main players, buyers and marketers, it was found that using the deductive and inductive approaches during the analysis would be much more relevant.

3.3.1 Deductive Approach

The deductive approach to analysis would include the insights needed to shape opinions on the findings in order to fulfill the research objectives. This is achieved by undertaking primary research using a formal questionnaire to obtain an interpretation of research findings.

3.3.2 Inductive Approach

An alternative technique to this analysis is the inductive approach. Although inductive analysis is compatible with the theory of pragmatic

research, the preference was based on inductive research in the calculation of performance, taking into account the relation to an analytical method.

The deductive research approach is used in this study; the explanation behind the selection is that the predefined hypothesis related to the main purpose of the research is to understand “how social media influences the purchasing decisions of young Indian consumers?” The quantitative analysis was planned to test the media hypothesis and evaluate the findings of the research.

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGIES

The third layer of the onion analysis involves the process in which a researcher plans to collect data. Experiments, polls, case studies, action analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival studies may provide such data collection approaches. For exploratory, informative, and explanatory analysis, each approach may be used. The survey strategy refers to the deductive approach used in the analysis methodology. This technique proved to be well tailored to the testing field and helped to accumulate a vast volume of data in a highly economical manner (Saunders et al., 2007, p138).

In addition, the use of polls has allowed me to meet a large number of users, gather and evaluate a vast volume of data from a large community free of charge, and learn about Internet technologies and networks. Saunders et al. (2007, p138) clarified that these results are consistent and thus convenient to compare. Furthermore, numerous closed and open-ended questions are framed in the questionnaire, and the responses of the respondents (users of social media) are compiled and evaluated for hypotheses.

3.5 RESEARCH CHOICES

For conducting the research, mixed methods were selected to do the analysis (see Figure 2). Questionnaires were conducted by self-administration for the purpose of data collection. The self-administrated questionnaire was, as said earlier, conducted through the Internet. On various social platforms, the questionnaire was exchanged, and individuals were asked to respond and share it with their own networks. In predictive analysis, sampling approaches are used to collect data from current and prospective consumers and send online polls, Internet voting, questionnaires, etc., whose findings can be interpreted in numerical form. The thesis is mainly performed in the social sciences using the statistical

techniques used above to derive objective evidence from the study sample. Logical, statistical, and conclusive are the conclusions obtained by this form of study. The selection of data took place using a systematic approach and was carried out on large surveys to represent the whole population. Quantitative research is data-oriented analysis. There are two ways to perform quantitative analysis: primary data collection and secondary data collection.

To segregate the sample group from the entire population, causal-comparative research is the best method for determining the equation of cause and effect between two or more variables, where one variable depends on the other independent variable. A casual-comparative study is not limited to the mathematical analysis of two variables but refers to the analysis of how, under the effect of the same changes, separate factors or classes change. This analysis is undertaken independently of the sort of interaction between two or more variables that occurs.

3.6 RESEARCH TIME HORIZON

The time horizon represents the time taken for the research work to be done. Two types of time horizons are defined in the onion analysis: cross-sectional and longitudinal (Bryman, 2012). The time horizon of the cross-section is the one by which the data need to be obtained, and is already defined. This is used where the inquiry entails the study of a particular event at a given time. The longitudinal data collection time frame refers to the collection of data continuously over a longer period of time and is seen as an important research consideration when changes are measured over time (Goddard and Melville, 2004).

The cross-selection is unique to the planned research project between these two kinds of time horizons. This is the case in a research that examines the rising effect of social media on consumers' buying choices. An analysis is a snapshot taken at a single moment and does not seek to analyze the survival and efficiency of this effect over time.

3.7 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

The final layer of the analysis onion is proof collection and explanation. It is important to identify decisions in this study relating to sample forms, questionnaire content, interview questions, and ethics in this particular section. In the field of analysis, both primary and secondary data were used. The secondary data include the collection and study of academic literature, scholarly papers, and press releases. A standardized survey was developed for primary data collection, and the respondents

provided their responses to the questionnaire given. There were a few variables identified in this research that seem interesting. Through this study, it is exciting to find out about the effect of various types of social media users and, in particular, their impact on shopping decisions. It is also interesting to find out how this affects their personal traits on post-purchase behavior. In this research study, a descriptive research design is used because it involves the study of direct observation and the examination and explanation of phenomena, as free as possible from unjustified conclusions aimed at full logical representations. According to Saunders and Thornhill (2009), the descriptive method is used to record the phenomena of the analysis and its practical truth, without the involvement of the researcher to classify and explain the characteristics and relationships of the study group.

3.7.1 Sampling Technique

The time and budget drawbacks limited the processing of data. Moreover, collecting data from the whole population was not possible because the social media community is much too large. The total desired population in Hyderabad for the research is 14,65,176, with a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, followed by a population proportion of 50% to the sample size. We used Solvin's formula, $n = N/(1 + Ne^2)$, where "n" is the number of samples, "N" is the number of population, and "e" is the margin of error. Solvin's formula is used when nothing about the behavior of a population is known. Implementing Solvin's formula, 385 or more responses are needed to have a confidence interval of 95% that the real value is within $\pm 5\%$ of the surveyed value. It gives an accurate result by collecting data from the sample population. Nonprobability sampling is where samples are created using the knowledge and experience of the researcher. Because of the presence of the interviewer, not all the participants in a target group have an equal chance of being picked to be a part of a survey. To gain insight into the impact of social media on purchase decisions and the level of usage of SNS, descriptive research is used for the approach of comfort sampling as a form of sampling, indicating a sampling of nonprobability.

3.7.2 Data Selection and Collection

In order to gather information and insight into various subjects of interest, a survey is described as a polling instrument used to collect data from a predefined group of respondents. The ease of delivery of surveys

and the vast number of individuals that can be accessed, depending on the time of survey and the research purpose, make it one of the most relevant facts of quantitative testing outcome. This research is carried out through primary data collection, including the collection of original evidence through by field studies. For making questionnaires, Google Forms are used, and this seems to me to be the easiest way to build a questionnaire, considering that Google Forms are free to access and have no limitations. In the research area, using the channels and resources of social media as a means to gather data was very useful because it helped to spread the survey easily by sharing feeds on social networks and sending messages to invite them to spread the survey with their own contacts.

With the use of social media platforms and resources (such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn) to manage the survey, the primary collection of quantitative data helped test the idea. Respondents were asked to open the link, fill the questionnaire, and then submit it online. In this scenario, the information was obtained directly from the 385 respondents from over 14,65,176 desired population residing in the city of Hyderabad by using the Solvin's formula via the Internet from the age group of 18–35 years between September and November 2020, and the data collection is quantitative.

Even if the execution of the questionnaire was only carried out electronically, the administration of the survey was therefore electronic. One of the factors in the study was the time of use and effect of social media channels and resources on the decision-making process of their clients. Nationality was also an important consideration in the study, specifically assessing whether the influence of social media has cultural ramifications.

A structured approach to the purchase of a particular stage would have engaged in a potential business exchange during, before, and after the purchase, as illustrated by the analytical portion about the steps and components of the consumer's decision-making process. In contrast, it also described the meaning of social media marketing, which highlighted the developments in the dynamics of today's marketing strategy and its effect on buying decisions.

3.7.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating each part of the data obtained or supplied systematically using rational and analytical reasoning. It is also one of the key steps taken while undertaking a research analysis.

Information is gathered from many sources unique to the subject of study. When the evidence is obtained, it is then interpreted and evaluated in order to infer or generate some kind of outcome.

In addition to applications such as Microsoft Excel that provide significant performance, much of the work has to be completed manually. In addition, Google Docs has since been used to develop the questionnaire and gather data, and the research graph software developed by Google has also been used. In the analysis of the data, graphic representations were useful as they helped see and then interpret the results in a simple way. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is a statistical software produced by the IBM Corporation and is widely used by scholars and academics worldwide. This statistical package is very user-friendly, and it is easy to run numerous statistical tests that use this software. This statistical application performs comparative and correlational statistical analyses using both parametric and nonparametric statistical methods within the meaning of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. Saunders et al. (2009, p415) have developed personal computer-based analysis tools with regard to quantitative data processing. The research used SPSS (statistical kit for social sciences) software to analyze the findings, because the survey would have different measurement thresholds for categorical and ordinal (such as Likert scale) responses.

3.7.4 Ethics and Bias

There are ethical concerns that may have relevance during testing, according to Saunders et al. (2009, p187). During the processing of data, situations may experience certain legal problems with respect to the sensitivity of questions that may be posted on social media users' personal questions. During the study, the most important ethical questions were storage.

Data keeping. Protection of data is important in order to avoid them from being used by other individuals and, in particular, for commercial purposes. In order to do so, the data gathered were stored and analyzed in a secret location that a third party could not find. In order to protect the responses of our respondents, the security of such data is important, and therefore appears to be a very important question.

3.7.5 Limitations of Research

The time restrictions and the budget constraints were major constraints. For academic purposes, the dissertation had to be completed in a short

period. The period of time that will be turned over began in January 2021. This brief amount of time reduced the time available for deeper secondary analysis to be performed and lowered the time devoted to primary research. With respect to data collection, it is important to note that, since the study was performed through my own network of contacts, there have been certain variations in the nationalities of the respondents. In the survey outcomes, the proportion of Indian respondents is the most significant. When taking conclusions from the findings, something needs to be recalled.

Another limitation was the pandemic condition that existed in 2019 with COVID-19 that has reached every corner of the world, and there was no personal contact with the supervisor due to the government pandemic orders. The lack of knowledge from the literature about the region was the last and one of the most significant limitations. Indeed, the advent of social media is very new, and sometimes I have experienced some problems finding a lot of useful and reliable knowledge about the related research.