Reflective Statement

Word count: 1012

This statement is a reflection of my personal experience of critically evaluating a multichannel retailer, the challenges faced while writing the report and the steps taken to overcome the challenges. The reflection has been drafted using Kolb's Learning cycle (Kolb, D.;1985) starting with reflective observation followed by abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation and finally concludes with concrete experience.

At first, it was quite daunting for me to write a critical analysis on a fashion brand as this was my first attempt to write a report. I had limited experience in writing and analysing business reports as I come from a design background with two years experience in buying. But over the first semester I had been able to learn more than I expected. The lectures, seminars, key note speakers, language classes and personal tutorials guided me to think independently and justify my thoughts. As quoted by Morgan, A.P.(1997), " Critical thinking may be defined as a form of intelligent criticism which helps people to reach independent and justifiable conclusions about their experiences." It took me two weeks to complete the assignment. The study involved both primary and secondary research. The secondary research was done in India during Christmas break and the primary research was done in U.K. after the feedback from my 1st Tutorial in January, 2016.

After getting an idea of the deliverables, I had to choose a multichannel retailer for the project. I spent a couple of days reading about several fashion brands and then found an article on Lululemon Atletica, a Canadian athlesure sportswear brand which caught my interest. The article was on Business of fashion website and was about the dismissed lawsuit over the brands see through yoga pants. The brand was completely new to me as it is not present in India. It was challenging to write a report on a brand which I was was not aquatinted with, so I started to read more about the brand. I identified major gaps in their retail strategies and learned new things about the brand's performance. I finally decided to choose Lululemon Athletica for the critical analysis. The reason being it would give me an opportunity to learn about a new brand , analyse their business model and provide logical recommendations for the brand. I have always believed in the thought, " I am always doing which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.", Pablo Picasso.

I started the project by revising the theories, models and frameworks discussed during retail management lectures in semester one. I referred to the core retail management text books by Goworek, H.,McGoldric, P.(2015) and Berman, B, R., Evans, J.R. (2013) while using the business models and theories. My secondary research included business reports from Market Realist, Business Insider U.K., Mintel, Verdict, etc and also referred to various articles from Business of fashion, Drapers, Fortune, Maildaily, Mckinsey, etc. One of the difficulty I faced initially during secondary research was picking relevant information. Lululemon Athletica is a listed company and there is abundant information available on internet about the brand. To overcome this challenge I first scanned all the information I though was important and then filtered the relevant ones after referring to the sample report of a previous retail management student uploaded on Moodle. The second challenge that I faced was that I had to make several changes in the report before the submission date. This was because the first draft was done during the second week of December, 2015 and by January,2016 the company report got updated on the business reports websites I had referred to. Never the less it did not take much time to make the changes as I had to only update the brand's earning preview and rest of the information remained same in the report. Much to my surprise I was able to link key business models to Lululemon Athletica's business stategy from the theories I read.

However, the deliverable also required the students to perform a primary research on the brand which I found to be challenging. Formerly, I did an online survey keeping in mind the guidelines discussed during quantitative research methods lecture. The survey was designed to get customer insight about the brand. I received only 24 responses which was not sufficient to analyse

consumers perception about a brand. Moreover, majority of the respondents were not aware of the brand which made difficult to draw a conclusion from the analysis. Therefore, I decided to visit a Lululemon store in London to get more feedbacks from the brands direct consumers. I was anxious to interview the customers as I was not sure about their willingness to share their feedback. I was also aware of the ethical considerations that had to be kept in mind while interviewing the customers. But to my surprise Lululemon's staffs were very friendly and supportive. They allowed me to interview their customers and take pictures. Further with the permission of the customers I was able to interview 6 customers. They were happy to share their experiences with Lululemon which enabled me to collect the information I needed for my study. One of the Lululemon staff also talked about their yoga community and various promotional activities they conduct every week. The response from the store staff and customers was overwhelming.

After the completing the assignment I feel much more confident about critically analysing and writing a report on any brand inspite of the fact the brand being know or relatively new to my knowledge. However, there are a couple of things I do feel I lack in such as interacting with new people and asking questions to my tutors. This is because I feel that the questions I might ask could be irrelevant or I may not be able to represent my thoughts clearly. I hope to be more outgoing and spontaneous about interacting with people and discussing my queries with the tutors by not being hesitant. This will make me more confident and impart me with the knowledge that I could be missing.