FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE TO SHOP ONLINE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

By

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY

in the department of

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: DR C. WAGNER

2008

Abstract

As the Internet and online shopping is growing at a very fast pace worldwide, investigating this phenomenon within a South African context is crucial considering that it is a relatively new trend in this country. Typical of new trends and phenomena is the absence of research already conducted, resulting in a lack of existing literature. Very few studies have examined the factors and reasons that entice South Africans to utilise this modern shopping channel, and even less have used an in-depth, qualitative approach. To assist in filling this void, this research study examines people's reasons for taking up or not taking up online shopping, from a South African perspective. A snowball sampling method was used to identify participants fitting the predetermined sample criteria and in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with all participants. The theoretical approach used in the analysis was social constructionism. Findings are presented by means of constructions identified during the data analysis, and these indicated that saving time, the convenience of products being increasingly available and accessible, and being able to make price comparisons easily are the main advantages of online shopping. Main disadvantages were not being able to touch and feel products, and the absence of a salesperson. Limitations of the research are discussed, along with recommendations for online retailers and future research.

Key terms

Online shopping, offline shopping, South Africa, Internet, social constructionism, qualitative research design, constructions, advantages of online shopping, site recommendation, regularity of online shopping, products purchased most online, products least purchased online, reasons for shopping online, aspects influencing online shopping.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one describes the process of developing the idea for the dissertation and the reasons for doing the study. The research problem and question are formulated. Finally the research design, methodology and an outline of the remainder of the dissertation are presented.

1.1   Aim of the Research Study

Online shopping has been a growing phenomenon around the world, especially in countries where well-developed infrastructure exists for marketing activities over the Internet (Kau, Tang & Ghose, 2003). Hawkins, Best and Coney (2001) state that although Internet shopping presented a small portion of retail sales in South Africa, it will increase drastically in the future.

Although authors and research companies predict growing sales through the Internet in the future, the question lingers: Why do many consumers still prefer other shopping outlets to the Internet? BMI (2000) conducted a study that found the following reasons for South African Internet users not shopping, or intending to shop, online:

- Security concerns;
- Users being comfortable with current shopping and banking methods; and
- Privacy concerns.

In a study conducted by Webcheck (1999) regarding factors influencing South African consumers to purchase online, the results indicated the following (in order of importance):

- Security;
- Reliability;
- Convenience;

- The ease of finding the product;

- Online speed of Internet access;

- Price of the item;

- Ability to make more informed purchases; and

- No pressure from a salesperson.

These results illustrate that South African patrons are for the most part concerned about Internet security and reliability with regard to online shopping. Interestingly, the importance of the price of products is near the end of the list of factors influencing them to shop online. Traditionally, the price of an item plays a more substantial role should those items be purchased in brick-and-mortar stores.

The majority of South African studies done on this topic have applied quantitative methodologies during the research process. This research study will contribute meaningfully to this area of research, in particular in light of the fact that very little literature on the subject matter using a qualitative perspective is available within the South African context.

The aim of the research is to explore ways in which people converse about and make meaning of online shopping and how this entices them to shop online in a South African context. I aim to investigate people's motives for preferring to shop online, as well as their reasons for doing so.

1.2 Research problem and objectives

The research objectives are concerned with determining contributing factors that motivate people to take up online shopping or to continue using this modern shopping channel. The research question is *"What are the meanings that people construct about online shopping that entice them to use or not to use this shopping channel?"*

As evident in the literature review, research conducted to date has been mostly quantitative and few in-depth studies provide insight into people's preferences for using the Internet as a shopping

channel. Moreover, very few South African studies have been done to date. Therefore an in-depth study was conducted, identifying constructions from participants' responses during interviews. Elements of the phenomenon that were investigated include:

- Aspects most and least enjoyed while using the online shopping facility;

- Regularity of online shopping;

- Products purchased most and least online;

- Reasons and motivations for not shopping online;

- Information security;

- Personal concerns regarding online shopping;

- Internet hackings;

- What the Internet is mainly used for;

- Factors influencing online shopping; and

- Website recommendations.

Because the Internet is a fast-changing environment, and consumers' attitudes and behaviour will likewise change, it is with caution that factors influencing the preference to shop online are identified among online shoppers. Updating of differences in terms of online shopping sites, and consumers' stances and behaviour towards this phenomenon, will continually need to be done.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable information to any company or institution that currently offers online shopping or that might make use of this facility in the future. Therefore this study contributes towards the consumer psychology paradigm in general, and more specifically towards knowledge concerning factors influencing the preference to shop online in a South African context. According to Dittmar (1996) it is important to develop a social psychology of the people as economic actors and consumers since our economic and consumer activities are

interlinked with our attitudes, beliefs and shared understanding. She further states that we negotiate our sense of identity, well-being and relationships with others in part through money and material goods. This research study examines factors influencing individuals to shop online or not utilising social constructionism as a theoretical basis. This research falls within the psychology discipline as it taps into people's reasons for doing online shopping and their motivations behind their actions. This includes factors identified in the form of constructions affecting Internet purchasing behaviour.

Key concepts used throughout the study are defined in the section that follows:

1.3   Key Concepts

This section covers key concepts that are used throughout the research, including:

1.3.1.   Brick-and-mortar stores as a shopping channel

This concept refers to traditional physical shopping stores and outlets (North, Mostert & Du Plessis, 2003).

1.3.2.   Click-and-mortar stores as a shopping channel

This concept refers to virtual online shopping stores and outlets (North et al., 2003).

1.3.3.   Internet

According to Forouzan (2003), the "Internet" can be defined as a collaboration of more than hundreds of thousands of interconnected networks. More specifically, the Internet is a collection of local, regional and national computer networks that are linked together to exchange data and distribute processing tasks through common language and protocols (Jordaan et al., 2004).

1.3.4.   Internet Shopping

Internet shopping refers to any form of shopping that takes place via the Internet where electronic

means are used to make purchases at virtual stores, that is, shopping sites that exist on the Internet.

1.3.5. Information Security

For the purpose of this research, the term "information security" refers to the securing of any personal information that online shoppers make available on the Internet during online shopping.

1.3.6. Internet Privacy

Internet privacy does not only include the disclosure of sensitive information in itself, but also that on condition that the customer gives that information voluntarily and is made fully aware as to how it is going to be used, their privacy is not being violated. According to Prabhaker (2000), there is a significant concern when sensitive information is merged with several other databases owned by companies other than the one they are doing business with, as the consumer loses control over how that information is being used.

1.3.7. Trust

According to Prabhaker (2000) the bond of trust, especially in the depersonalised setting of the Internet, is very fragile. If that trust is broken, no matter how or who is responsible for that break, the sale will not be realized and no online purchases will be made. Thus, as long as customers are uncomfortable about businesses knowing too much about them, it will be difficult for the Internet to reach its full potential in terms of online shopping.

1.4   Structure of the dissertation

In this chapter the aim of the research study was stated and supported by existing literature. Also, the research problem, objectives and question were discussed. Aspects of the phenomenon that were investigated were listed, along with key concepts used throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 2 comprises the literature review, addressing key issues relating to the South African Internet user market, trends in online shopping from a South African perspective, as well as South African Internet banking. Research conducted in other countries is discussed, as well as the contribution that this research will make towards knowledge in the domain of online shopping.

Chapter 3 explores social constructionism as the theoretical approach for this study. Social constructionist assumptions, as well as main differences between traditional psychology and social constructionism are highlighted. The role and importance of language in social constructionism are investigated, followed by an explanation of data collection methods generally used in social constructionism. Furthermore, the use of interviews as the data collection method in this research project is discussed.

Chapter 4 presents a discussion on the research design and methodology. The aim of the research is stated, as well as the research problem and objectives. The research design is described, followed by a discussion on the research methods, sampling methods and methods used for assessing the data and controlling for reliability and validity. Finally data capturing, data editing and data analysis is discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the results and a discussion thereof. Sample profiles are presented along with main trends and patterns that emerged from the data. Social constructions identified during the data analysis process are described, followed by concluding interpretations.

The final chapter sets out the interpretation of the results by means of integrating the results, theory and literature. The limitations of the research study, recommendations for future research studies and conclusions are outlined.

1.5 Conclusion

E-commerce and online shopping is growing around the world as technology improves and people are able to access the Internet not only from their computers, but also from Web TVs, PalmPilots and mobile phones. Research focused on online shopping and the factors influencing the preference to shop online in a South African context is limited, especially that which uses social constructionism as a theoretical basis. On a practical level, the results of this research will be valuable to online traders who want to accentuate the positive aspects of buying online, while reducing or removing the negative factors, as perceived by consumers.

2. Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter contains the literature covered during the review. The latter indicates the importance of the researcher's contribution to the production and interpretation of knowledge in a domain (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The purpose of the literature study is to look at past work in order to develop meaningful insights into the research area that is being examined. It is furthermore used to contextualise the research study at hand in order to argue a case (Henning et al., 2004). A thorough literature review lays the foundation for the present research and enables the researcher to put forward a valid argument, providing evidence of what has already been done in the subject area.

The literature review explores issues relating to the South African Internet user market, trends in online shopping from a South African perspective, and South African Internet banking. It also draws on research done in other countries. The contribution that the research will make towards knowledge in the domain of online shopping is stated.

The following section outlines the compilation of the literature review for this study, focussing on the existing body of literature.

2.2. Literature Review

This section includes a review of available literature and information regarding the Internet, and particularly about online shopping. Main issues and topics that are discussed are:

- An overview of the South African Internet User Market that states the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping, and background information on the Internet and its history in South Africa. Reasons for pessimistic views during 2000 regarding Internet access in South Africa in the future and reasons for not shopping online are also

discussed. Products that are most and least purchased online are listed, as well as factors influencing South African consumers to purchase online.

- Trends in online shopping from a South African perspective offer profiles of online shoppers. Insight is given into how many Black South Africans are estimated to have Internet access, and the total number of South African Internet users by access method is stated. A focus on Black South Africans is necessary as this is a new emerging group in terms of online shopping in the South African context.

- South African Internet banking seems to be the ideal product for the Internet, although the use of this service is increasing at a slow rate. Barriers to Internet banking are listed and criteria for future use of online banking facilities that have been suggested by consumers are also specified.

- Research findings on Internet shopping from an international perspective most often concur with South African studies. This section provides some reasons for not shopping online. The apparent lack of confidence in online security and perceived risk associated with online shopping are investigated. Differences between shoppers and non-shoppers in terms of purchasing online travel products are listed. Cross-channel shopping is discussed and researched with the results stated below.

2.2.1. The South African Internet User Market: An Overview

In the 21st century consumers have more brands and products to choose and purchase from than ever before. These products are sold from various outlets, including the traditional brick-and-mortar stores, in-home shopping sources such as direct mail and catalogues, and online buying via the Internet (North et al., 2003). One major advantage of the Internet for cybershoppers is the relatively easy access to an abundance of free information. The search for information is reduced to a few effortless keystrokes, whereas gathering the same information by traditional means would require considerably more time and energy. Other advantages of the Internet

include the availability of a wealth of information from various sources on product features, quality of products and reliability of different suppliers. Also, the prices of products are available from various outlets and can be compared in real time at various online price comparison sites. One of the biggest disadvantages of online shopping is that the prospective consumer has no chance to feel and touch the product before purchasing it (North et al., 2003).

According to Media Africa.com (cited in North et al., 2003) the Internet was introduced in South Africa during the late 1980s. During 1993 the first Internet Service Provider (ISP) emerged, offering services to corporate clients. Internet services were first offered to private consumers in 1994. Aggressive marketing campaigns by several newcomers to the ISP market resulted in the Internet reaching a critical mass of consumers in South Africa in the next few years. This process was marked by rapid growth during the period October 1997 to December 1998. The next year (1999) was considered to be the maturity phase for the Internet in South Africa, followed by the year of consolidation (2000) during which time some of the biggest ISP and Web-hosting companies merged. According to Internet Technology Magazine (2000), players in the ISP and hosting sector are bigger and fewer now than in the 1990s as acquisitions continue to extend their reach and service offerings. For instance, the second biggest consumer ISP, EarthLink, merged with the third biggest ISP, MindSpring, to form a new company called EarthLink.

According to BMI (2000), at this time there was a relative pessimistic view of Internet access in the future in South Africa. The reasons given were that:

- The telecommunications monopoly (Telkom was the only fixed line network provider);

- The population was distributed over a relatively large geographical area; and,

- There was economic dichotomy due to the presence of both first and third world economies in South Africa.

However, the prediction was that Internet usage would increase in South Africa. North et al.

(2003) stated that this would transpire as education levels increased and the younger generation was exposed to information technology in schools, and as the use of the Internet in the working environment rose.

According to research conducted by North et al. (2003), there are certain reasons why people do not shop online. These reasons are listed in the table below and are categorised by gender.

Table 1: Reasons for not shopping on the Internet

Reasons for not shopping	Percentage of total participants who cited each reason	
	Male %	Female %
Security concerns	70	73
Lack of "touch"	45	54
Unfamiliar merchants	41	37
Too difficult	21	26

Drawing from this research, it is clear that participants were mainly concerned about security aspects related to online shopping, as 70% of all male and 73% of all female participants were distressed regarding online shopping security. Almost half of the male participants and just over half of the female participants also stated that a lack of "touch" was their main reason for not shopping online. To a lesser extent participants indicated that it was too difficult for them to shop online and to use online shopping facilities.

According to Hoffman, Novak and Peralta (1999) the main reason people have yet to shop online or even provide information to Internet providers in exchange for access to information, is the fundamental lack of faith between most businesses and consumers on the Web today. Thus, consumers simply do not trust the majority of Web providers enough to engage in exchanges

involving money and personal information.

According to Barnard and Wesson (2003) customers may be prepared to visit and browse a site, even utilising it for information gathering purposes, but do not have adequate trust in the site to actually complete an online purchase. Trust involves more than a secure connection or the promise of a secure transaction. It includes issues such as customer support and perceived trust – can the site deliver what it promises, when it promises and will there be after sales service and support, if needed? They claim that trust is thus one of the foremost critical success factors for survival for virtual organisations on the Internet.

North et al.'s (2003) study also specified the following product and service categories from which the majority of participants had purchased before: (Please note that multiple responses were allowed and therefore the percentages shown add up to more than 100.):

- Books and magazines (64% of participants);

- Music CDs (41% of participants);

- Computer Software (39% of participants);

- Movie or event tickets (35% of participants);

- Airline tickets (27% of participants); and,

- Hotel reservations (25% of participants).

In the same study, the product and service categories *least* purchased from included:

- Interior decorating / renovations (1.47% of participants); and,

- Property (1.29 % of participants).

A Webcheck survey (2003) revealed that airline ticket sales were increasing online shopping

figures. Webcheck reported that in 2001 the number of South African Web users that shopped online was 26%, which increased to 30% in 2002 and to 37% in 2003. Further analysis indicated that the only product that showed a substantial increase in purchases in both 2002 and 2003 was airline tickets. In 2001 only 12% of shoppers purchased airline tickets online, with 30% and 35% of shoppers doing the same in 2002 and 2003 respectively. The majority of people (71%) who purchased online airline tickets, bought from kulula.com. The next most popular airline website for purchasing tickets was FlySaa.co.za, which was used by 35% of participants.

With regard to participants' future intentions to buy online, the results of the research study conducted by North et al. (2003) indicated that eight percent of participants specified that they had purchased clothing items before and 18% of participants were considering this option. Whereas nine percent had bought food and grocery items in the past, 29% were considering buying these items online in the near future. Only two percent had purchased household appliances in the past, yet almost 17% intended to buy these items online in the future. North et al. (2003) state that there is a notable increase in planned future purchases from the product and service categories investigated in their study.

In terms of factors that online shoppers take into account when considering to purchase online, North et al. (2003) specified that the four most important factors considered by South African online shoppers were:

- Credibility of the seller;

- Implications of providing credit card details;

- How secure Internet payment methods are; and,

- Availability of prices on Internet sites.

On the contrary, the four least important considerations for online shoppers were:

- Do not have a credit card;

- Importance of "touching and feeling" products prior to purchase;

- Safety of purchasing from home; and,

- Personal attention from sales staff.

2.2.2. Trends in Online Shopping: A South African Perspective

Project SA Web User is a tracking study that has been conducted annually for three years. According to Webcheck (2001), the following figures regarding the profiles of online shoppers are from their research study conducted in November 2001. From a random sample of names from the telephone directory, a total of 400 SA Web users were chosen and interviewed. All participants had to be over the age of 18 and had to access the Web at least once a month in order to participate in the study. Quota controls were exercised in terms of geographical area, which included the major metropolitan areas of Gauteng, Cape Town and Durban only.

The profile of online shoppers was as follows:

- In the previous three years (1999, 2000 and 2001), more online shoppers were male. The gap between male and female shoppers, however, was closing.

- During 1999 and 2000, the 18-24 year olds were the least likely group to purchase online. During 1999 and 2001, participants between the ages of 25-34 tended to purchase more online than the other age groups.

- Online shoppers were predominantly English-speaking.

- Online shoppers tended to have household incomes of R20 000 and more per month.

- Most shoppers had University degrees.

- People that were self-employed tended to purchase more online than full-time or part-time workers and those not working.

- Business owners and professionals tended to buy more online than other occupation

groups.

From this it is clear that online buyers in 2001 fitted the profile of an educated and professional group of South African Web users. Research results further showed that purchasing online increased with the time that people were connected to the Internet. Almost half of the Web users who had been connected to the Internet for three years or more had shopped online (Webcheck, 2001).

According to Webcheck (2000), the two biggest advantages of buying online in a South African context were:

- It is a convenient buying method; and,

- It is easy to purchase online.

The same study specified the following two main reasons why people were not shopping online yet:

- They had not got around to it yet; and,

- Preference was given to the physical shopping experience.

Another study conducted by Webcheck (1999) determined what percentage of black South Africans had Web access. The findings indicated that black South Africans were not benefiting from the "information revolution" created by the World Wide Web, which pointed to the fact that personal computers and the Internet had not yet begun to make inroads into this market.

- Only 5 out of 4000 black women interviewed had Web access at home (0.1 %) and only 24 out of 4000 had Web access at work (0.6 %).

- Only 2 out of 2000 black men interviewed had Web access at home (0.1 %) and only 24 out of the 2000 had Web access at work (1.2 %).

In addition, Webcheck (1999) found that those with access at work were more likely to be aged between 25 and 34 years of age, earn more than R4 000 per month and live in Gauteng in a formal dwelling.

This brings us to the question of how many South Africans have Internet access. Table 2 illustrates the number of South Africans who have Internet access as found by North et al. (2003). The table specifies information for type of user from 1994-2004 and also indicates the percentage of year-on-year growth experienced in total Internet users.

Table 2: South African Internet Users by Access Method

Year	Corporate Users	Academic Users	Dial-up subscribers	Total	Percentage Growth
1994	25 000	60 000	15 000	100 000	
1995	65 000	100 000	33 600	198 600	98
1996	150 000	125 000	79 700	354 700	78
1997	350 000	150 000	196 620	696 620	96
1998	700 000	200 000	366 235	1 266 235	81
1999	980 000	280 000	560 000	1 820 000	44
2000	1 274 000	360 000	782 000	2 416 000	33
2001	1 555 000	425 000	1 040 000	3 020 000	25
2002	1 788 000	470 000	1 300 000	3 558 000	18
2003	2 056 000	510 000	1 560 000	4 126 000	16
2004	2 467 000	540 000	2 028 000	5 035 000	22

As shown in Table 2, corporate, academic and dial-up subscribing grew considerably between 1994 and 1998 and was still increasing each year up to 2004. It is expected that the number of people who have access to the Internet will continue increasing into the future, and therefore that online shopping will also increase in the future.

2.2.3. South African Internet Banking

A research report by Singh (2004) stated that only 22.6 percent of participants in one study banked online in 2001. Yet, it seems that banking services are suited perfectly to the Internet. Reasons for this statement include the following: there is no physical product to be delivered, time spent in queues is eliminated, customers can bank at their leisure, they can obtain detailed information about products and services without being hurried by customers waiting in line to speak to a consultant, there is no compulsion to purchase investments and insurance you do not need, and there is no chance of being caught in the crossfire during a bank robbery.

Singh (2004) further reveals that Internet banking in South Africa started in 1996, and although its use increased fairly slowly, consumers were nevertheless attracted to the convenience, physical safety and low costs of online banking. Results from other research (Goldstuck, 2004) indicated a steady growth in the number of Internet banking consumers despite prevalent media reports of a few security breaches at the time. A research study conducted by Singh (2001) indicated that Internet customers tended to be predominantly male, and that Internet bankers were well educated. Buys and Brown (2004) found that Internet Banking customers in South Africa tend to be from the more affluent and educated sector of society. Their study indicates that Internet banking users are typically in the upper income bracket of an already prosperous group. A Webcheck survey (2002a) concluded that Internet bankers fell into the broad range of 25-49 years of age.

Webcheck (as cited in Singh, 2004) identified barriers to Internet banking in South Africa, including lack of personal attention, poor information and unreliable service. Those customers not banking online were also concerned with the perceived lack of security of online transactions. In terms of user-friendliness of sites, Internet bankers in Singh's (2004) study were critical of their institution's online banking facilities. Only Nedbank's customers were pleased with their institution's site, with 60% favouring the site for its user friendliness. Singh (2004) further

specified that slow Internet sites in the South African context are problematic. Furthermore, users with poor eyesight have difficulty in reading cluttered sites and as a result it may be difficult for them to find relevant content.

Participants in Singh's (2004) research study offered the following reasons for not banking online:

- Transactions unsafe (47% of participants);

- Do not have the knowledge to bank online (33% of participants);

- Time consuming (10% of participants); and,

- More costly (10% of participants).

Participants who did not make use of the online banking facilities were all willing to bank online if the following criteria were met:

- Guaranteed safety;

- Loyalty rewards;

- Free training; and,

- Lower costs.

2.2.4. Research findings from abroad

A research study carried out by the National Consumer Council (NCC) in the United Kingdom revealed that a lack of confidence in online security was hindering the expansion of Internet shopping (News report, 2000). *Computer Weekly* reported that according to the NCC, only 3% of the British public shopped online in 2000. The report found that customers were concerned about revealing credit card details online, the lack of opportunity to check goods before paying, as well as the risk of fraudulent suppliers. The report also noted that Internet users are more worried about shopping online than those who do not use the Internet.

Another research study conducted by Thompson and Yon Ding (2003) assessed the consumer decision process in the context of the online shopping environment in Singapore. Their findings indicated that consumers' overall evaluation of their purchase had a negative relationship with perceived risk, and a positive relationship with consumers' willingness to buy online. Research carried out by Chiang and Dholakia (2003) examined factors driving consumer intention to shop online. Their study focused on three essential variables which were likely to influence consumer intentions: 1) convenience characteristic of shopping channels, 2) product type characteristics and 3) perceived price of product. Their results indicated that convenience and product type influenced consumers' intentions to engage in online shopping.

Also, Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004) examined how men and women differ in both their perceptions of the risks associated with shopping online and the effect of receiving a site recommendation from a friend. Their first study examined differences between men and women in terms of their perceptions of the probability of a negative outcome, as well as the severity of a negative outcome should it occur. Five risks associated with buying online were investigated: credit card misuse, fraudulent sites, loss of privacy, shipping problems, and product failure. Their second study examined gender differences in perceptions of online purchase risk after receiving a recommendation from a friend. Their third study, using an experimental design, tested whether women would be more willing to purchase online if they received a site recommendation from a friend, compared to men. Their results suggested that, even when controlling for differences in Internet usage, women perceived a higher level of risk in online purchasing than men did. In addition, their results indicated that having a site recommended by a friend led to both a greater reduction in perceived risk and a bigger increase in willingness to buy online among women than among men.

Another research study conducted by Prabhaker (2000) focused on consumer marketing and behaviour, the Internet, disclosure and privacy. The goal of this research was to identify the strategic and tactical opportunities created by online consumers' privacy concerns. Prabhaker

also suggested approaches to treating privacy concerns as a source of competitive advantage, since the issue of consumer privacy could be a defining component in the battle for more online customers and consumers.

Differences between online shoppers and non-shoppers regarding travel products were researched by Card, Chen and Cole (2003). They found that: 80.9% of the participants in the sample had more than three years of Internet experience; ages varied little with the 40 to 49 age group having the most online shoppers;, more than 80% of shoppers and non-shoppers held at least a bachelor's degree; and more than half of the participants were in professional positions (53.8% of shoppers and 66.7% of non-shoppers), yet shoppers' incomes were higher than non-shoppers. Furthermore, airline tickets (82.4%) and accommodations (63.5%) were purchased more often than other travel products. Table 3 indicates the frequency and percentage of travel products purchased online.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Travel Products Purchased Online (N=252)

Travel Product	n	%
Airline tickets	207	82.4
Accommodations	160	63.5
Travel information	155	61.5
Car rentals	127	50.4
Tickets for events	111	44.1
Tickets for rail / bus	39	15.5
Package tours	35	13.9

Their research study also identified six personal characteristics among online shoppers and non-shoppers. Shoppers and non-shoppers often try new products (*innovativeness*). While shoppers make purchases at home, they also tell their friends about new products (*opinion leaders*), and seek information (*involvement*). Online shoppers were more inclined to shop at home (*home shopping prone*) and sometimes shopped at the office (*office shopping prone*), and were more high-tech orientated than non-shoppers (*high-tech prone*), whereas non-shoppers seldom shopped electronically, seldom made purchases at home, and never shopped at the office.

Kau et al. (2003) examined the online buying behaviour among a group of Internet users, specifically exploring information-seeking patterns as well as the participants' motivations and concerns for online shopping. The results of the research study are set out in terms of six clusters of online surfers and shoppers, as described below:

- *On-off shopper* - those who like to surf the Internet and collect online information yet prefer to shop offline in traditional brick-and-mortar stores. They take pleasure in looking for advertisements, frequently use bookmarks and use the same search engine on a regular basis. They tend to be experienced in surfing and often look out for the best deals.

- *Comparison shopper* - they are those who compare product features, prices and brands prior to making any purchase decisions. They also actively look out for promotional offers.

- *Traditional shopper* - those who buy from traditional brick-and-mortar stores. They do not surf the Internet to obtain comparative information, neither do they look for bargains over the Internet.

- *Dual shopper* - they are more likely to be male, single and in the younger age group of 15-24 years. They are fond of comparing brands and product features, and rely on the Internet for information gathering. Nevertheless, they are not particularly deal prone.

- *E-Laggard* - they are more likely to be female and 35 years of age and older. They also have a lower interest to seek information from the Internet and do not acquire a high level of navigation expertise.

- *Information surfer* - they are likely to be married and enjoy banner ads. They are on the look out for promotional offers, have good navigation skills and a fair amount of online shopping experience.

According to Kau et al. (2003), there is a combination of factors driving e-commerce, such as access to information, the ability to easily compare and the convenience of not physically needing to go out to a shop to purchase an item. These positives are complemented by a set of negative factors, such as concerns about privacy, security issues such as credit card fraud and the inability to touch and feel the goods.

ClickZ.com is a network solution for marketers that contains information on both online and offline shopping. On this website, Kerner (2004) reports on a research study conducted by Forrester Research. The results indicated that the majority of US consumers did research online but bought offline. Forrester Research termed this phenomenon "cross-channel shopping". They further indicated that cross-channel shoppers actually comprise the majority of all online consumers, with 65% in 2004. This phenomenon has a huge advantage for retailers, as cross-channel shoppers spend an average of $458 on products they research online and buy offline. Once these shoppers are in a store, 47% of them end up spending an average of $154 on additional products. Table 4 indicates the extent to which cross-channel shoppers spend offline.

Table 4: Offline Spending Statistics for Cross-channel Shoppers (Kerner, 2004)

Products	Cross-channel Transactions per year (millions)	Average Transaction Size	Cross-channel Shopper Spend per year (millions)
Consumer Electronics	50	$430	$21,573
Appliances	25	$516	$12,870
Hardware / Software	19	$423	$7,979

Home Goods	22	$314	$7,053
Apparel / Accessories	38	$91	$3,492
Books/Music/DVD/Video Games	64	$50	$3,203
Other	86	$400	$34,501
Total	**305**		**$90,670**
Additional in-store spending			$11,972
GRAND TOTAL			**$102,643**

Further research conducted by Forrester Research, as cited in Kerner (2004), showed that active cross-channel shoppers are younger and wealthier than other online consumers. Table 5 compares online shoppers that have never cross-channel shopped before to other groups that have cross-channel shopped.

Table 5: Active Cross-Channel Shoppers versus Online Consumers (Kerner, 2004)

Characteristics	Have never cross-channel Shopped	Cross-channel shopped for less than 5 years	Cross-channel shopped for 5 years or more
Age	48	44	42
Household income (US$)	$56,476	$58,818	$73,669
Married or partnered	72%	81%	77%
Household size	2.60	2.92	2.65

Has college degree	26%	28%	48%
Has broadband at home	21%	30%	43%
Made purchase online in the past three months	40%	61%	76%

The results in Table 5 indicates that cross-channel shoppers earned on average 22% more than non cross-channel shoppers and were five years younger. One reason for buying offline, cited by 48% of cross-channel shoppers, was the desire to see the item prior to purchasing it. The least stated reason for buying offline was the need to talk to a salesperson before buying, as noted by only 16% of participants.

Drawing on the data discussed thus far, it is clear that there are shortcomings in the research conducted to date. While quantitative data and statistics are available, few studies have investigated online shopping and the reasons for doing so in depth. This study will address the gap in the literature by conducting in-depth, qualitative face-to-face interviews, using a social constructionist approach.

2.3. Conclusion

Although Internet shopping at present represents a relatively small portion of retail sales, it is expected to increase dramatically in the future. This will become more apparent as education levels increase and schools increasingly expose learners to information technology. Advantages of online shopping include the availability of masses of information on product features and the quality of products, as well as the reliability of different merchants. Disadvantages of online shopping include the inability to feel and touch the product prior to purchasing it. Some of the reasons given for South African consumers not utilising online shopping facilities widely are due

to security concerns, users being more comfortable with their current shopping and banking methods, and privacy concerns. Furthermore, people are reluctant to use online banking facilities in South Africa as they are concerned about unsafe transactions, they have limited knowledge of online banking services, and online banking is relatively time-consuming and costly.

Overall, the products that are purchased most often by online shoppers include books and magazines, music CDs and computer software. Airline ticket sales have also increased online shopping figures. Property is one of the least purchased items over the Internet. The most important factors that South Africans consider prior to buying online include the credibility of the seller, implications of providing credit card details, security in terms of Internet payment methods and the availability of prices on Internet sites. The profile of a typical South African online shopper would be: male (although female shoppers are increasing every year), 25-34 years old, English-speaking and well educated, with a household income of at least R20 000 per month.

The results from international research studies concur with some of the South African research results. For instance, it was found that a lack of assurance and confidence in online shopping is hindering the expansion of Internet shopping internationally. One research study also reported that online customers were apprehensive about revealing credit card details online. Consumers regarded the lack of opportunity to inspect the product prior to making the purchase and the risk of dealing with fraudulent merchants and suppliers as major drawbacks to online shopping. According to the literature, females perceive a higher level of risk in online purchasing than males do. Also, women were more willing to purchase online if a friend recommended a site to them. Differences between online shoppers and non-shoppers of travel products were researched and results indicated that more than 80% of shoppers and non-shoppers held at least a bachelor's degree. More than half of the participants were in professional positions. Interestingly, shoppers' incomes were higher than non-shoppers, even though the majority of both groups were in professional positions. Furthermore, online airline tickets (82.4%) and accommodations (63.5%) were purchased more than other travel products. With regard to cross-channel shopping,

research has shown that millions of dollars are being spent doing cross-channel shopping, and that active cross-channel shoppers are indeed wealthier, younger and more experienced online shoppers than shoppers who research and buy online.

The next chapter explores social constructionism as a theoretical approach for the research study. Key social constructionist assumptions, as well as the main differences between traditional psychology and social constructionism will be outlined. The role and importance of language in social constructionism will be explored, followed by data collection methods used by social constructionists, with a particular focus on interviews as relevant for this study.

3. Chapter 3: Social Constructionism as a theoretical approach

3.1. Introduction

In order to give a broad introduction to social constructionism, I will use an example from Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999). When Diana Spencer, the Princess of Wales, died in August 1997 in a car crash, the world witnessed an inundation of public grief. Television networks worldwide covered the story over a number of weeks. Not surprisingly, millions of people who were moved by her death and perhaps still feel a deep sense of loss, knew her only from the media. The resources from which people constructed their grief included news footage of Diana visiting landmine victims in Africa, interviews in which she spoke openly about her psychological problems, newspaper articles, many books written about her life and so on. The majority of people got to know her and build a "relationship" with her only through images, signs and meanings as presented in the media and in society, which effectively structured people's experiences of and beliefs about Diana.

"*She was the people's princess, that's how she will stay, how she will remain in our hearts forever…*" (Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister).

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), social constructionism is a research approach that seeks to analyse how signs and images have powers to create particular representations of people and objects that underlie our experiences of these people and objects. Social constructionist methods are most often qualitative, interpretive and concerned with meaning. Researchers working within the interpretive domain focus mainly on the subjective understandings and experiences of individuals or groups. Those working from a social constructionist approach attempt to illustrate how such understandings and experiences are

derived from, and feed into, larger discourses. In essence, social constructionism views people's thoughts, feelings and experiences as products of systems of meaning that exist at a social rather than an individual level.

This section introduces the theoretical framework used for the research. A theoretical framework is important as it positions your research in the discipline or subject in which you are working and enables you to theorise about your research (Henning et al., 2004). Furthermore, it reflects the stance the researcher adopts in her research. Social constructionism is briefly introduced using examples, followed by a discussion on social constructionism as a theoretical approach in which key social constructionist assumptions are highlighted. Ways in which social constructionism differs from traditional psychology are also explored. Furthermore, the history of social constructionism is briefly outlined, followed by a discussion of the importance of language in a social constructionist approach. Data collection methods most commonly used by social constructionist researchers are indicated, subsequent to a discussion on interviews as data collection methods. Finally the aim of the research is outlined at the end of this chapter.

3.2. Social Constructionism

At this point one may ask about the origins of social constructionism. According to Burr (1995), social constructionism broke into British and North American psychology along with social psychology, and neither can be traced back to a single source. Stead (2004) maintains that social constructionism has its origins in structuralism, post-structuralism, hermeneutics and other traditions.

There is no single feature that could identify a social constructionist position (Burr, 1995). Instead, any approach which has at its foundation one or more of the following key assumptions, might be considered a social constructionist approach: 1) A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; 2) Historical and cultural specificity; 3) That knowledge is sustained by social

processes, and 4) That knowledge and action go together (Gergen, 1985).

Following is a brief discussion of these key assumptions:

- *A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge:* It is necessary for us to take a critical stance towards taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves. We need to be critical of the notion that through our observations of the world, it yields its nature to us in an uncomplicated manner. Social constructionism invites us to challenge the idea that conventional knowledge is based upon unbiased, objective observation of the world. In terms of traditional science, it is directly opposed to positivism and empiricism, assuming that the nature of the world can be exposed through observation and that what exists is what we *perceive* to exist. Thus, a social constructionist approach vigilantly urges us to be suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be.

- *Historical and cultural specificity:* The ways in which the world is commonly understood by us, including the concepts and categories that we use, are historically and culturally specific. The way in which one understands the world directly depends upon where and when in the world one lives. Gergen (1985) argues, therefore, that the particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are artefacts of it, implying that one should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better or nearer to the truth.

- *Knowledge is sustained by social processes:* The social constructionist approach proposes that our knowledge of the world and our common ways of understanding the world is indeed constructed between people and is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is. Our versions of knowledge become fabricated through the daily interactions between people during the course of social life. Therefore, all kinds of social interaction, and particularly language, is of utmost importance to social constructionists.

Our current accepted ways of understanding the world are a product of social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other. Thus, *objective observations* of the world do not determine our contemporary accepted ways of understanding the world.

- *Knowledge and action go together:* Different social constructions bring with them different kinds of action from human beings. The example of being an alcoholic is used by Burr (1995) to demonstrate this point. She states that prior to the Temperance Movement, drunks were held responsible for their actions and behaviour and even faced imprisonment. However, there has been a paradigm shift from seeing drunkenness as a crime, towards a way of thinking of it as an addiction or a disease. A common way of understanding this addiction or disease would be to offer medical and psychological treatment, not incarceration. Therefore, constructions or descriptions of the world sustain several patterns of social action and exclude others.

Social constructionism differs from traditional psychology in the following ways (Burr, 1995): 1) It embraces anti-essentialism, 2) it subscribes to anti-realism, 3) it claims historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, 4) it posits that language is a pre-condition for thought and that, 5) language is a form of social action, 6) it focuses on interaction and social practices, and 7) it maintains a focus on processes. The next section discusses each of these points.

3.2.1. Anti-essentialism

Burr (1995) claims that things or people do not have any "essences" inside them to make them what they are. Some traditional psychologies would agree with this claim, for example Behaviourism, whereas Psychoanalysis for example, is based on the notion of some pre-given "content" within the person. Essentialist views maintain that a person has a definable and discoverable nature, whether provided by the environment or through biology. Such views cannot be called social constructionist. Stead (2004) argues that social constructionism posits that

people are the product of social processes and are not assumed to have a predetermined nature, whether it is provided by nature or the environment.

3.2.2. Anti-realism

Social constructionism differs from traditional psychology as it rejects the notion that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality. Rather, we construct our own versions of reality among ourselves as a culture or a society. According to the social constructionist view, there is no such thing as an objective fact.

3.2.3. Historically and culturally specific

Historical and cultural specificity relate to the manner in which we commonly understand the world. The categories and concepts we use are historically and culturally specific, in other words, our ways of understanding are not only specific to particular cultures and periods of history, they are viewed as products of that culture and history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time. Social constructionism proposes that through daily interactions between people, our versions of knowledge become fabricated in the course of social life. As Burr (1995) suggests: "The goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed" (p.4). Furthermore, she states that these "negotiated" understandings of the world can take a variety of forms, and therefore, we can talk of numerous possible "social constructions" of the world. Each different construction also brings forth, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings.

3.2.4. Language as a pre-condition

Language as a pre-condition for thought implies that our ways of understanding the world are not produced from objective reality, but from other people, both past and present. People are born into a world where already existing conceptual frameworks and categories are used by people in

a culture. All people acquire these concepts and categories as they develop the use of language. Thus, all individuals who share a culture and a language reproduce these concepts and categories every day. The way in which we think, and the very concepts and categories that provide a framework of meaning, are provided in language.

3.2.5. Language as social action

Language as a form of social action refers to much more than the ways we use to express ourselves. It also includes the daily interactions between people in which forms of knowledge are produced along with their associated social phenomena. As people talk to each other, the world gets constructed. Traditional psychology has distinctively regarded language as the passive medium for our thoughts and emotions.

3.2.6. Focussing on interaction and social practices

Social constructionism regards interaction and the social practices engaged in by people as the proper focal point of enquiry. Traditional psychology offers differing explanations of social phenomena inside the person, for example by theorising about the existence of attitudes, cognitions and motivations. Ultimately these entities are held responsible for what we do and say, including for wider social phenomena such as prejudice and delinquency. Sociology has also traditionally opposed this view, arguing that social structures, for instance the economy or major institutions such as marriage or the family, give rise to the social phenomena that we observe.

3.2.7. Focussing on processes

Social constructionists tend to offer explanations in terms of the dynamics of social interaction, therefore the emphasis is more on *processes* than on structures. In terms of traditional psychology and sociology, explanations are mostly put forward as static entities, for example personality traits, economic structures, models of memory and so forth. The aim of social inquiry is moving beyond questions regarding the nature of people or society and towards a reflection of *how* certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction. Social

constructionism aims to re-examine received or mainstream viewpoints, to produce new interpretations or meanings, and to disrupt "the oppressive and exploitative effects associated with institutionalised discourses and forms of life" (Durrheim, 1997, p.181).

3.3   Social constructionism and language

The social constructionist approach views language from a fundamentally different perspective to the interpretive approach. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) both positivism and interpretive research approaches use language only as a window onto some other reality. These approaches privilege objective facts or objective experiences over language itself. On the contrary, social constructionism embraces that the human life-world is fundamentally constituted *in* language, and therefore language itself should be the object of study. Thus, for social constructionist researchers, language helps to *construct* reality; it is not viewed as neutral and transparent or as a way to determine underlying realities.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that linguistic experts are mainly concerned with the highly technical aspects of language use and structure, whereas constructionism focuses more on the broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language. The derivation of social constructionism can nonetheless be traced to, amongst others, Ferdinand de Saussure, a key figure in modern linguistics. He introduced a fundamental distinction between *langue* (the system of language) and *parole* (its use in actual situations). Although we can *use* language *(parole)* to mean particular things, we are at all times constrained in what we say by the cosmos of potential meanings presented to us *by* language *(langue).* This notion can be compared to a chess game: just as there are many possible moves at any time in a chess game, each move is controlled by the rules of chess.

It is important to note that constructionist research is not primarily about language *per se,* but rather about interpreting the social world as a system of meanings and practices that construct

reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Social constructionists maintain that representations of reality (such as news stories and a map of a country), practices (such as marriage proposals or university attendance) and physical arrangements (family sleeping arrangements and courts) are indeed structured like a language, or a system of signs. As an outcome, they *construct* meticulous versions of the world. This is accomplished by offering a framework or system through which objects and practices can be understood, over and above understanding ourselves and what we ought to do in relation to these systems. Furthermore, the way in which individuals engage with the world, in terms of what we can do or cannot do, is structured according to the ways in which the world is constructed.

3.4   The researcher's orientation

The way in which the researcher interprets the shape of the social world will also determine the preferred methodology for her work. Miles and Huberman (1994) are of the opinion that social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world, and that certain lawful and reasonably stable relationships exist among such social phenomena.

The fact that most of the constructs put forward by social constructionism are invisible to the human eye does not make them invalid or unsound. Researchers working within the qualitative paradigm quite often have to contend with institutions, structures, practices and conventions that people reproduce and transform. Human meanings and objectives are worked out within the frameworks of these invisible social structures. Thus, social phenomena such as language, decisions, differences and hierarchies exist objectively in the world and exercise strong influences over human activities, since people interpret them in common ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.5   Implications for this research

The above-stated key assumptions of social constructionism and the main differences between it and traditional psychology will guide my interpretation of the results of this study, and ultimately

the findings will be stated from within a social constructionist orientation. The research aims to show that the participants' ways of understanding the online shopping phenomenon are historically and culturally specific to a South African context in 2007. Another aim of the research is to show that ways of understanding are dependent upon particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in a South African culture at the time of the research. The research will indicate that participants' versions of knowledge about online shopping are constructed and fabricated through their daily interactions and discourses. It is also proposed that participants' current accepted ways of understanding the world with regards to online shopping, is not a product of objective observation of the world, but rather of the social processes and interactions in which the participants are constantly engaged with other people. Further, participants' descriptions or constructions of the world, in particular online shopping, sustain certain patterns of social action and exclude others. Therefore, social constructions regarding online shopping might prompt individuals to take up online shopping or to exclude this action from their lives. An attempt will be made to illustrate how language used by the participants is a pre-condition for their thoughts regarding online shopping and traditional shopping. Finally, the research will focus on interaction and social practices engaged in by the participants.

3.6   *Social constructionism and research methodology*

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that constructionist analysis, as with interpretive methods, usually employs unstructured, open-ended qualitative materials. In terms of data collection, social constructionists value gathering data in context with as little disturbance to the natural setting as possible. Yet, as the objective in constructionist analysis is specifically to uncover the ways in which the social world is constructed to *appear* real and natural, it can be extremely challenging to recognise a setting as "natural" and to know when it has been overly "disturbed". Social constructionist researchers resist enforcing preconceived categories and measuring instruments on the subject matter at hand, and they are sceptical of claims that some kinds of data are necessarily more authentic than others. For example, interpretive approaches might privilege first-hand accounts of actual experiences, while constructionist research would

use such sources as well as "inauthentic" second-hand opinions.

3.6.1. Interviews as a data collection method

Almost certainly, the most frequently used method for data collection in constructionist research is interviews, as with interpretive research (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Yet, constructionist research and interpretive research have different views on how the interview is seen. These differences are outlined in the table below.

Table 6: Views on interviews as data collection method (adapted from Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999)

Constructionist Research	Interpretive Research
Views the interview as a showground within which particular linguistic patterns, such as typical phrases, metaphors, arguments and stories, can come to the fore.	Views the interview as a means to an end, thus try to determine how people really feel about or experience certain things.
Doubtful of the idea that the interviewer can play a purely facilitative role in an attempt to allow the interviewee to express his feelings and experiences.	Aims to create an environment of openness and trust within which the interviewee is able to genuinely express herself.

Furthermore, the constructionist approach claims that whatever meanings are created during the interview are treated as co-constructed between the interviewer and the interviewee. These meanings are also products of a larger social system for which these individuals operate as relays, and are not merely constructed by the two people involved in the interview (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

3.6.2 *Social constructionism and data analysis*

According to Burr (1995) a social constructionist theoretical position does not necessarily mean that the researcher must make use of a discourse analytic approach in his research. The same applies to researchers using a discourse analytic approach, as it would not automatically mean that they must be social constructionists. Social constructionism, as a loose compilation of theoretical perspectives, and discourse analysis, as an approach to undertaking social research, do not map onto each other in a one-to-one fashion. Social constructionists may validly use other qualitative or even quantitative methods in their research. Discourse analysis as an approach to doing social research, and more specifically data analysis, is not used in this research study. Rather, data analysis will comprise of identifying constructions in the data and deriving themes. The latter is explained in detail in the next chapter.

3.7. Conclusion

Social constructionism is introduced and elaborated upon in this chapter. A short description of the history of social constructionism is provided, although social constructionist work cannot be traced back to a single source. The key assumptions of social constructionism, and the implications thereof for this study, are outlined. Research methods, in particular the use of interviews, and the way in which social constructionists and interpretive researchers view language and the use of interviews differently, are also discussed. In this study, knowledge about key motivators and influencing factors regarding online shopping will be investigated as something that people *do* together, in terms of talking about online shopping, rather than something a person has or does not have. Ultimately the theoretical constructions of the phenomenon of online shopping will be identified and explored.

The next chapter offers information regarding the research design and methodology used in my research study. More specifically, the aim of the research is stated, as well as the research problem and objectives. The research design, research methods, sampling methods, ways of assessing the data and controlling for reliability and validity are discussed. Lastly, data capturing,

data editing and data analysis are explained.

4. Chapter 4: Research design

A short introduction to qualitative data is presented, highlighting several recurring features. The research design is explained, followed by research and sampling methods used, including the ways in which the data were accessed. Methods to establish and measure control for reliability and validity are presented. Ways in which the data were captured, edited and analysed form the final part of the chapter.

4.1. Qualitative data: An overview

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions, explanations and accounts of processes in identifiable local contexts and frameworks. Owing to the depth of qualitative data, the researcher can preserve chronological flow, derive exactly which events led to which consequences and obtain rewarding explanations. Ultimately, qualitative data assist researchers to move beyond initial conceptions and to create or adjust conceptual frameworks.

Yet, there are still some persistent issues concerning qualitative methodology as indicated by Miles and Huberman (1994). These issues are listed below:

- The labour-intensiveness of data collection;

- Frequent data overload;

- The distinct possibility of researcher bias;

- The time demands of data processing and coding;

- The adequacy of sampling when only a few cases are included;

- The generalisability of findings;

- The credibility and quality of conclusions; and,

- The value and usefulness of conclusions in terms of policy-making and action-taking.

Above and beyond all the issues mentioned above, however, a deep, dark question about qualitative studies still looms:

"The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative data, there are clear conventions the researcher can use. But the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions to scientific or policy-making audiences. How can we be sure that an "earthy", "undeniable", "serendipitous" finding is not, in fact, wrong?" (Miles, 1979, p.591).

Ideas about qualitative research have changed somewhat since 1979 and the shared techniques of qualitative analysis have advanced. For example, matrix and network displays are no longer uncommon. Also, as Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, although phenomenology has often been labelled as "a method without techniques", its practitioners have begun to elucidate their procedures.

4.2. *Recurring features of qualitative research*

Miles and Huberman (1994) listed some features that frequently occur in qualitative inquiry, and are indicated as follows:

- Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or long-lasting contact with a "field" or a life situation. These situations are typically ordinary ones, reflecting the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organisations.

- The researcher's role pertains to gaining a holistic and encompassing overview of the subject under study. This includes the logic, arrangements and implicit and explicit rules of the subject under study.

- Data capturing includes the perceptions of local actors through a process of profound attentiveness, empathetic understanding, and of deferring preconceptions regarding the topics under discussion.

- Certain themes and expressions may be isolated by the researcher for further review with informants, yet should be maintained in their original forms right through the study.

- The main chore pertains to explicating the ways people in particular situations and settings come to comprehend, account for, take action or else manage their day-to-day situations.

- Some interpretations of the material are more compelling for theoretical reasons or on grounds of internal consistency than others.

- The researcher is effectively the main "measurement device" in the research study as rather little standardized instrumentation is used.

- The majority of analysis is done with words. Words can be organised to allow the researcher to contrast, compare, analyse, and identify and provide patterns. Furthermore, words can be assembled, sub-clustered and broken into semiotic segments.

4.3. Research design

The research design uses a qualitative framework. The qualitative research orientation differs from that of quantitative research in a number of ways, including approaches to data, reliance on nonpositivist perspectives to science, greater use of logic in practice, and a more cyclical research path. A qualitative approach to data will subsequently take into account that the researcher's main concerns will include matters such as the accessibility of other cultures or sub-

cultures, the relativity to the actor's account of their social worlds, and the relation between sociological descriptions and actors' conceptions of their actions. The data collection methods for this research study pertain to recordings of what people say, including words, gestures and tones, observing specific behaviours and studying written documents.

Seeing research as a social construction does not only highlight text and discourse, but language itself, recognising both its mediating and its formative power (Punch, 1998). According to Neuman (1997) when following a non-positivist perspective, the researcher mainly focuses on subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of specific cases. Thus, the researcher will attempt to capture aspects of the social world. This leads the research study to a transcendent perspective that fits more closely with the interpretive and critical approaches. Hereby, the research questions originate from the standpoint of the people being studied. The goal of the research is to remove false beliefs by those being studied, and to create people as compassionate living beings, and not as objects. In terms of a research path, it is evident from literature that qualitative research tends to be more non-linear and cyclical. A cyclical research path enables the researcher with each cycle or repetition to collect new data and gain new insights.

Characteristics of qualitative research include the importance of the social context for understanding the social world. Therefore a social event, social action, or a conversation cannot be removed from the social context in which it appears as this will lead to the social meaning and significance being distorted (Neuman, 1997). Constant awareness of the context in which the research study is taking place is imperative. Thus, the researcher immerses himself in the data, which provides him with an intimate familiarity with the participants' lives and culture. This is accomplished by searching for patterns in the lives, actions, and words of people in the context of the complete case as a whole.

Following is the issue of the researcher's integrity and interpretations. According to Neuman (1997), the researcher must at all times be honest and participants must be able to trust the researcher. Readers of qualitative research usually place more trust in the researcher's integrity and interpretations. One way of ensuring that the research accurately reflects the evidence is to apply some degree of quality control to the evidence. This is done by examining for a second time what you have done to date. The researcher interprets the data by giving meaning, translating them or making the data understandable. It is crucial that the researcher understands the meaning of the data for the participants, as people have personal reasons or motives for their actions.

Punch (1998) states that interviewing is a very good way of assessing people's perceptions, meanings and definitions of situations, and constructions of reality, as this method can be used for various purposes. Interviews can be used for marketing purposes or to produce data for academic analysis. Furthermore, interviews can be used to glean individual or group perspectives. In this research study, face-to-face interviews were used to gain a better understanding of an individual perspective on online shopping. As indicated in the previous chapter, interviews are a preferred data collection method amongst social constructionist researchers and one advantage of face-to-face interviews pertains to very high response rates.

4.3.1. Research method(s)

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. The questions were formulated in such a way that key concepts were addressed. The interviewer did ask the participants a series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories, but the majority of questions were open-ended. The open-ended questions provided room for variation in responses. For consistency, the interviewer had a basic script for guidance, so that the same topics were covered in each interview. The interview started with pre-planned questions and probes until no new relevant information was forthcoming. The interview time ranged between 45 and 60 minutes.

According to Neuman (1997), interviewer bias is greatest in face-to-face interviews. The appearance, tone of voice, question wording, and so forth of the interviewer may affect the participant. Being aware of this, I incorporated the above-mentioned issues into a reflexive process. This was done by means of an equal status of the researcher and the participants, as well as of the accounts offered by each party, within the analysis. My reflections on actions, observations, impressions and so on become data in their own right, and were interpreted along with the rest of the data. Reflexivity is one of the most distinctive features of qualitative research. It is an attempt to make explicit the process by which the material and analysis are produced (Tindall, 1990).

4.3.2. Selection of cases

A snowball-sampling technique was implemented for selecting a sample of online shoppers. According to Neuman (1997), snowball sampling is used often by researchers who are interested in an interconnected network of people or organizations. The crucial feature is that each person is connected to another through a direct or indirect linkage. In this light, snowball sampling was adequate for selecting cases for the research study, and more importantly, as a sample of online shoppers introduced the researcher to other online shoppers, the research sample grew. Thus finding an adequate sample was simplified, and this method ensured that cases selected were indeed online shoppers. Once current online shoppers referred other online shoppers to me, these individuals were contacted directly. I explained the research study and asked for permission to interview each newly identified online shopper.

Limiting the sample size did not only rely on the number of participants that could be accessed, but also depended on when data / theoretical saturation had been reached. That is when new data are not showing new theoretical elements, but rather confirming what has already been found (Punch, 1998).

I aimed to include participants from various cultural and racial groups into the sample in order to represent the demographics of the South African population, as well as an equal number of males and females and participants above 18 years of age. The age of each participant was important as the majority of online shopping payments are done by means of a credit card. Children under the age of 18 years do not have their own credit cards. In terms of geographic location, people living in Gauteng were targeted.

4.3.3. Obtaining the data

Once appointments had been made with each participant, the interviews were conducted. I started the interview by requesting the participant's permission to audiotape the conversation. Techniques can be varied to meet various situations, and varying one's technique is known as employing tactics. According to the traditional interviewing technique, the researcher is involved in an informal conversation with the participant, begins with more general questions and moves on to more specific ones, and should avoid getting involved in a 'real' conversation where she answers the questions or gives her opinions. This makes the interview more honest, morally sound and reliable as it treats the participant as an equal (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The use of language and specific terms is very important for creating a 'sharedness of meanings' in which both the interviewer and the participant understand the contextual nature of the interview. In order to achieve this, I carefully explained the aim of the research study and the contextual nature of the interview. Thereafter, the interview data cannot merely be a report on external reality, but a reality constructed by both parties (Punch, 1998). Non-verbal elements are also important in interviewing as additional information is provided to the researcher without the participant conversing.

4.3.3.1. Reliability and validity in qualitative research and social constructionism

Establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research studies is not done in the same way as it is for quantitative research studies. However, terms such as credibility, transferability,

dependability and conformability are used similarly to establish reliability and validity in qualitative research. Forthcoming from this is the issue of trustworthiness of the research. The following quote offers a modest viewpoint in terms of the trustworthiness of the research: "All research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.143). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have developed four precise criteria for qualitative inquiry that parallel the quantitative terminology:

- Credibility (internal validity): Indicates how truthful particular findings are.

- Transferability (external validity): Indicates how applicable the research findings are to other settings or groups.

- Dependability (reliability): Indicates if the results are consistent and reproducible.

- Conformability (objectivity): Determines how neutral the findings are in terms of whether they are reflective of the informants and the inquiry, and not a product of the researcher's biases and prejudices.

Triangulation is the utilisation of different types of measures or data collection techniques, or the use of different vantage points, using multiple standpoints in order to examine the same variable. Apart from triangulation, there are other techniques that contribute to the enhancement of the trustworthiness of qualitative analysis, such as testing rival explanations, looking for negative or a-typical cases, and keeping methods and data in context.

Burr (2003) states that reliability and validity are terms well-known to social scientists and researchers working within the positivist, empiricist paradigm and are the foundation of justifiable research in that paradigm. Reliability can be defined as the requirement that the research findings are replicable and not simply a product of localised, transitory events. Validity is the requirement that the scientist's description of the world is equivalent of what is really there, sovereign of our ideas and conversations about it.

Yet, according to Burr (2003), social constructionist research is not about recognizing objective facts or creating truth claims. Reality may be inaccessible or indivisible from our discourse about it as there can be no final and absolute description of the world. After all, social constructionism puts forward the idea that all knowledge is conditional, temporary and contestable, and accounts are local and historically and culturally specific. Therefore the usual understanding of the concepts of reliability and validity are unsuitable for evaluating the quality of social constructionist work and research.

4.3.4. Data capturing

The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and saved electronically. I also took detailed field-notes. All transcriptions and fieldnotes were captured in a database in Microsoft Excel.

4.3.5. Data editing

Data were edited and cleaned by crosschecking for duplicate records and verifying selections of the transcription records with the data entered into the database.

4.3.6. Data analysis

According to Silverman (2000), there are three very practical and complementary ways in which the researcher can "kick-start" his data analysis. First, the researcher can analyse data already in the public sphere; secondly, the researcher can beg or borrow other people's data; and finally, the researcher should analyse his own data as it is gathered. Data already in the public sphere include newspapers, the Internet, products of the broadcast media, radio, television programmes, phone-ins, and news broadcasts. This implies that the researcher must be aware of what is going on in the public sphere regarding online shopping and other shopping alternatives. It is possible that the research interests cannot be accommodated by data in the public sphere. A preliminary literature review assisted the researcher to obtain other people's data in order to access other relevant data. The researcher must always keep in mind ethical or other reasons why such access might not be possible.

4.4. Analytic methods

Although Miles and Huberman (1994) identified different approaches to qualitative data analysis such as interpretivism, social anthropology and collaborative social research, they also listed some common features occurring in analytic methods. The following is a fairly classic set of analytic steps presented in sequence:

- Codes are affixed to a set of field notes obtained from observations or interviews;

- Reflections or any other remarks are noted in the margins;

- The researcher sorts and sifts through these materials in order to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, themes, patterns, distinct differences and common sequences;

- The researcher will isolate these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, upon which these will be taken out to the field during the next set of data collection;

- Gradually the researcher will elaborate a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies detected in the database;

- Finally those generalizations are dealt with by means of a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs and theories.

4.5. Qualitative analysis activities

Miles and Huberman (1994) define *analysis* as comprising of three concurrent flows of activity. These include data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. Each activity is discussed in more detail.

4.5.1. Data reduction

Data reduction encompasses the process of selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions. This process occurs continuously from the very beginning to the conclusion of any qualitative orientated project. Even

prior to the actual data collection, anticipatory data reduction is occurring as the researcher decides which conceptual framework, cases, research questions and data collection approaches to choose. This often happens without the researcher being fully aware of doing so. As data collection continues, additional incidents of data reduction transpire as the researcher writes summaries, codes, banters out themes, creates clusters and partitions and writes memos. The data reduction process continues subsequent to fieldwork until the final report is completed.

Data reduction forms an integral part of analysis and should not be viewed as a separate entity. The researcher constantly makes decisions, such as which data batches to use for identifying constructions, which patterns best summarise a number of data batches, which evolving story to tell and so on. These are all analytic choices and components of data analysis. Data reduction is in fact a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a manner that absolute conclusions can be drawn and verified. There are many ways in which qualitative data can be reduced and transformed, such as through selection, through summary or paraphrase, through being included in a larger pattern and so forth. Daley (2004) states that one of the advantages of using concept maps in qualitative research are that it permits the researcher to reduce the data in a meaningful way.

4.5.2. Data display

The second major part of an analysis activity is data display. Generally, a display can be defined as an organised, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action taking. Displays helps us realize and understand what is happening, along with either doing further analysis, taking action or not taking action, based on our understanding. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the most frequent form of display in the past has been extended text. An example of extended text would be that of 3700 pages of fieldnotes, which undoubtedly is cumbersome. In utilizing only extended text the researcher is at risk of simply jumping to swift, partial and unfounded conclusions. Another downfall of extended text is that it easily overloads humans' information-processing capabilities and preys on our inclinations to find simplifying

patterns. Therefore, it is suggested that better, more organised displays are a major avenue to valid qualitative analysis. Displays should be designed to gather organised information into an instantaneously accessible, compact form. This is done in order for the analyst or researcher to perceive what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis that the display might suggest as useful. For example, by using maps as a display tool it is possible to present an average 20 page interview transcript on a single page (Daley, 2004).

As with data reduction, the creation and use of display forms part of the analysis process and should not be viewed as separate from the analysis. For instance, when the researcher designs the display, it includes deciding on the rows and columns of a matrix along which qualitative data will be entered. This activity indeed forms part of analytic activities.

4.5.3. Conclusion drawing or verification

Conclusion drawing and verification is the third element of the analysis activity. From the beginning of data collection, the qualitative researcher is starting to give meaning to things. Regularities are noted, patterns are identified, explanations given, possible configurations are made, as well as causal flows and propositions. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the knowledgeable researcher will preserve an openness and scepticism, examining the vague conclusions first and noting as they increasingly become more explicit and grounded. Conclusions are verified as the analysis process proceeds. Verification can be a quick process or a lengthy, elaborated task. The researcher can take a swift glance at the field notes again, or engage in thorough discussions or reviews with colleagues in order to develop "inter-subjective consensus", or aim to replicate a finding in another set of data. What follows this is the testing of the meanings derived from the data. Meanings are tested for their plausibility, robustness and validity.

The three streams of data analysis, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification occur simultaneously, during and after data collection in equivalent forms. Jointly they form the general process called "analysis", illustrated in Figure 1. The diagram shows

that the three types of analysis activity and the activity of data collection itself form an interactive cyclical process.
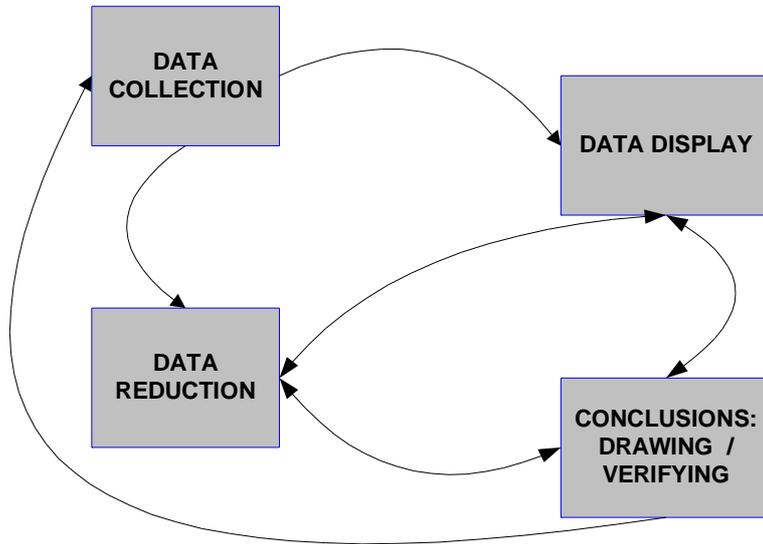
Figure 1: Components of Data Analysis - Interactive Model (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

4.6.   *Steps in data analysis*

According to Neuman (1997) coding qualitative data is an integral part of data analysis. In a nutshell, the researcher organises the raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts, which are then used to analyse the data. This construction-building process is guided by the research question and leads to new questions. Identifying structures in the data liberates the researcher from entanglement in the details of the raw data and simultaneously promotes higher level thinking about the constructs. This process also assists the researcher in moving towards a theory and generalisations.

4.6.1. Codes and coding

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), coding is analysis. Analysis consists of reviewing a set of field notes, whether transcribed or synthesised, and dissecting them meaningfully while

keeping the associations between the different parts intact. The researcher must combine and differentiate the retrieved data, and reflect on this information. Neuman (1997) states that the researcher organises the raw data into conceptual categories, where after themes or concepts are created. These themes or concepts are in turn used to analyse the data. Codes can be defined as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information complied during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). These codes are generally attached to data of varying size such as words, phrases, sentences, or even whole paragraphs, and can be connected or unconnected to a specific setting. Codes can also manifest in different forms, for instance a straightforward category label, or a more complex form such a metaphor. It is important to note that it is not the words themselves but their meaning that matters.

4.6.2. Analytic memo writing

Memoing or analytic memo writing can be defined as follows: "A memo is a theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding… it can be a sentence, a paragraph or a few pages… it exhausts the analyst's momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration" (Glaser, 1978, p. 83-84). Memos are significant as they do not simply report data, but are primarily conceptual in intent. Different pieces of data are tied into a recognisable cluster of data, often indicating that those data are instances of a broader concept. Moreover, memos are personal, methodological and significant (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Memos can contain the reflections of the researcher regarding the data and the researcher's thoughts about the data and the coding thereof (Neuman, 1997). Memos can be added to as the researcher moves through the data with each stage of coding. Each researcher develops their own style or method for analytic memo writing. Neuman (1997) proposes the following suggestions for analytic memo writing:

- After data collection begins, memo writing should follow promptly, continuing until the final research report is completed.

- The researcher will be able to notice the progress and development of thinking by means of indicating the date on memo entries. The latter is useful since memos are periodically being modified and added to.

- To write a good memo, it is often necessary to interrupt coding or data recording in order not to let a new insight grow fainter.

- Read and compare memos at regular intervals on similar codes to determine whether they can be combined, or differences between them can be made clearer.

- Each concept or theme should have a separate file for memos, properly named with a label of the theme or code in order to locate it without hassle.

- As analytic memos and data notes have different purposes, they should be kept separately. Data notes consist of evidence. Analytic memos focus more on concept- and theory building, and not on data reporting. The purpose of analytic memos is to indicate how clusters of data form instances of general concepts or themes.

- An analytic memo should comprise of other concepts, such as similarities to, differences between, or causal relationships with other concepts.

- The researcher must aim to keep each dissimilar concept or theme in a separate memo and file.

- Once the research has reached a point of data saturation it should be indicated in the memo.

- In order to be able to see all the memos at once, it is advisable to keep a list of labels or codes for the memos.

Figure 2 illustrates how analytic memo writing builds a link between the raw data or evidence and more conceptual, theoretical thinking.
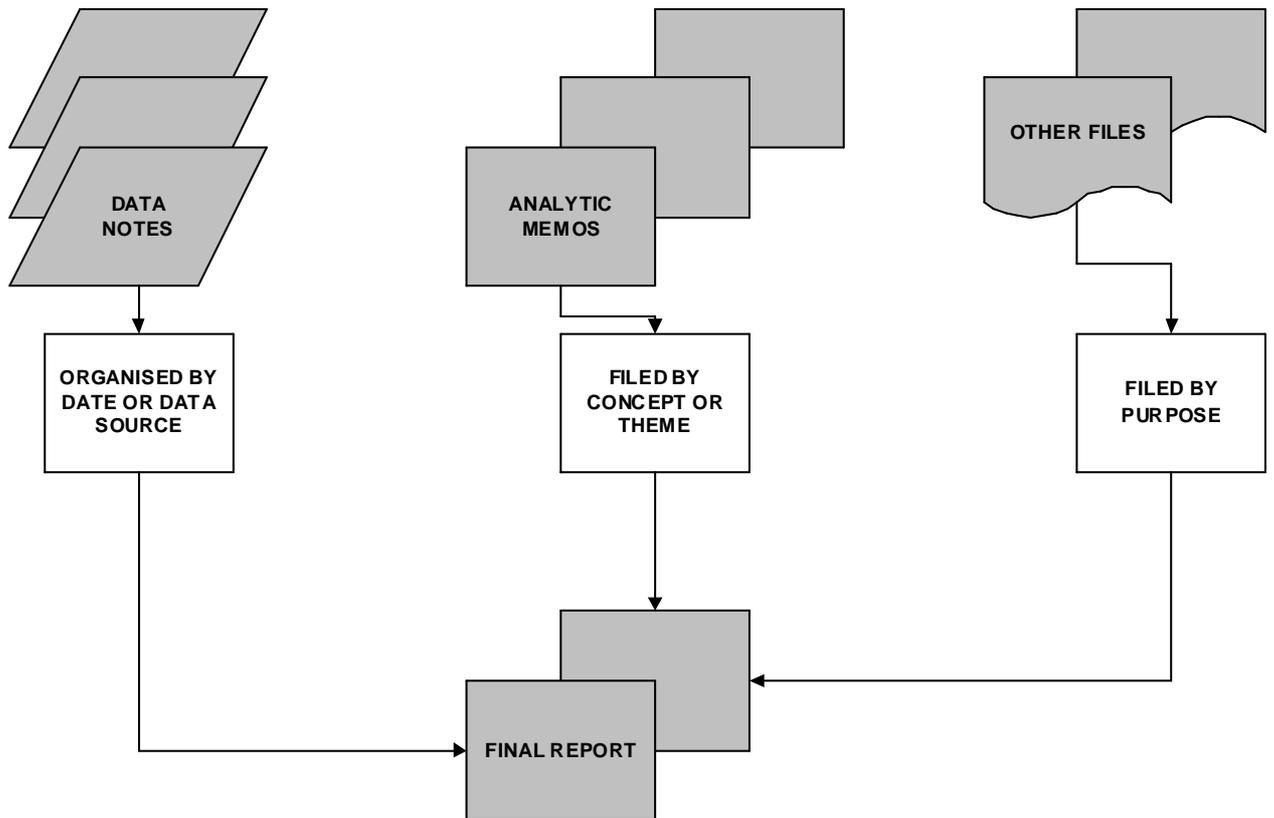
Figure 2: Links Between Memos, Raw Data and Theoretical Thinking (Neuman, 1997)

The coding and analytic memo writing techniques discussed above are generic and can be used in most types of analyses (Neuman, 1997). Therefore, after the coding process is completed, along with the memo writing, a final statement will be compiled indicating the results of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

During the data analysis process, I started out with the transcribed field notes as they appeared in the Excel database. The process of data reduction assisted me in selecting, simplifying and transforming the data. This was done by means of various categories being inserted into the database according to the interview guide's chronological flow of questions asked during the interviews. In fact, the process of data reduction started prior to the actual data collection. Choosing social constructionism as a conceptual framework for the research study, the choice of

snowball-sampling as sampling method, the actual questions in the interview guide and selecting in-depth face-to-face interviewing as the data collection method, all formed part of this first step in data analysis. Data reduction is a continuous process throughout the entire research study and consequently occurred until this final report was produced. From the transcribed field notes in the Excel database, I identified constructs, followed by patterns being summarised and ultimately telling a story regarding the key motivating factors influencing people to take up or not take up online shopping. Therefore, the data reduction process enabled me to sort and organise the data in such a manner that fixed conclusions could be reached and verified with current literature on the subject matter.

Data display was the second major step in the analysis process of this research study. Coding is specified as part of the analysis process, where codes are identified as tags or labels used to assign meanings to the information gathered during the data collection process, in this case, face-to-face interviews. However, for the purpose of this research study which was conducted according to a social constructionist framework, constructs rather than codes were assigned. I displayed the data as an assortment of forms of constructs in tables. This enabled me to organise the compressed gathering of information as displayed in the database into the tables as outlined in the next chapter. One advantage of displaying the data is that the patterns in the data become evident to the researcher, enabling the researcher to determine whether additional analysis is necessary or whether data saturation has been reached. Because data displays should be designed to gather organised information into an instantaneously accessible, compact form, I decided to display the data in tables.

The previous two steps of the data analysis process, namely data reduction and data display, ultimately lead the researcher to conclusion drawing or verification, the third element of the analysis process. This process commenced from the beginning of data collection while interviews were being conducted, as I started then already to give meaning to certain things. My

aim was to identify regularities and patterns emerging from the data. Conclusions were then drawn and verified. These will be discussed in the next chapter. Finally, I tested the meanings derived from the data for reliability and validity, which are more specifically discussed in the following chapter.

4.7. *Conclusion*

In terms of the research design, a qualitative methodology was proposed. Qualitative data provides the researcher with well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in certain contexts and frameworks. Recurring features of qualitative research were stipulated and discussed, mainly stating that the research was conducted through intense and lengthy contact with the participants or the situation. The mainstream of analysis was done with words which are organised in order for the researcher to be able to contrast, compare, analyse, identify and provide patterns. Of importance in qualitative research, the social context in terms of understanding the social world was highlighted. In-depth face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data, and these were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Cases were selected through snowball-sampling techniques, implying that all participants of the study are connected with one another through a direct or indirect link. Control for reliability and credibility will be established by utilising terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and comfortability.

Furthermore this chapter focussed on data analysis and data analysis techniques used in the research study. The researcher's orientation and assimilation towards the research in general influences the process of data analysis. Traditionally, discourse analysis is the preferred method of data analysis when working from a social constructionist theoretical position. However, it is noted that a discourse analytic approach does not necessarily have to be the data analysis method of choice when working within a social constructionist approach. I decided on an analytic approach comprising of three concurrent flows of activity, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification.

Chapter five presents the results followed by a discussion thereof. Sample profiles are presented along with main trends and patterns that emerged from the data. Finally, concluding interpretations are provided.

5. Chapter 5: Results

Discussions in this chapter pertain to the characteristics of the participants, including various constructions identified from the responses of the participants during the in-depth interviews. Overall results are presented and discussed by means of coding, labelling, identifying themes, main trends and patterns in the data with reference to the research questions.

5.1 Description of participants

The interview guide (refer to Appendix A) comprised of an introductory section in which participants were asked to complete their personal details. These questions related to participants' biographical information. This was done in an attempt to contextualise the data. Table 7 illustrates the biographical information gathered from the in-depth interviews and provides a summary of the profiles of the research participants at the time of the data gathering.

Table 7: Biographical Information of Participants

Age at time of data gathering	Race	Gender	Home language	Suburb	Qualifications	Salary bracket (gross)
29	White	Male	Dutch	Pretoria	BCom Financial Management, HONS Financial Management	Above R18216
22	White	Male	Afrikaans	Hatfield – Pretoria	B(IS) Multimedia	Above R3960
24	White	Female	Afrikaans	Equestria - Pretoria	BCom Hons Communication Management	Above R6189
22	White	Male	Afrikaans	Centurion - Pretoria	Undergraduate - B(IS)Multimedia	Student – Pocket money

24	White	Female	English	Lynnwood, Pretoria	MCSD, B(IS)Multimedia	Student – Pocket money
28	White	Female	Dutch	Faerie Glen - Pretoria	Student in Photography	Student – Pocket money
23	White	Male	English	Equestria - Pretoria	Matric	Student – Pocket money
29	Indian (broad black)	Female	English	Mulbarton - Johannesburg	MA (Research Psychology)	Above R8522

All the participants fell within the qualifying criteria of the sample. Only one broad black participant was identified through the snowball sampling. Every participant was older than 18 years of age, lived in Gauteng, South Africa, at the time of data gathering, and was an Internet user and online shopper. All participants were between 22 and 29 years of age at the time of data gathering. In terms of gender, four participants were male and four female. After conducting eight interviews, data saturation emerged.

5.2. *Findings*

As previously stated, social constructions regarding online shopping might prompt individuals to take up online shopping or to exclude this action from their lives. The constructions identified below reflect the participants' knowledge of the world, their common ways of understanding the world and, more specifically, key aspects relating to online shopping. These meanings were constructed between people, including participants and non-participants in the research study, and not derived from the nature of the world as it really is. Following is an outline of the various interview categories in order to identify social constructions during the data analysis process.

5.2.1. Constructions of the advantages of online shopping

Participants were asked which aspects they enjoyed most about online shopping. Social constructions identified are indicated in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Constructions of the advantages of online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. Online shopping saves time	• "…and it saves you time when you cannot physically go to a shop." • "But, above all, I will say the time-saving aspect is what I enjoy most with shopping on the Internet." • "It is easier to browse or search an online catalogue than to look generally for the same product or item in a traditional store manually. It saves time and patience."
2. It is an extremely convenient shopping experience	• "The convenience. It is easier to browse or search an online catalogue than to look generally for the same product or item in a traditional store manually. It saves time and patience. It is a good feeling to be able to shop online and not to be left behind in the era of IT excellence." • "Convenience - You do not need to leave your home to purchase something, you can choose it online and this makes it easier for me, as I have lots to do within the day." • "Secondly, availability, you can shop at twelve in the night it is so convenient." • "It is very convenient and the delivery of your goods is also convenient."
3. Products are easily available and accessible	• "That you are able to find products that are not available locally - so you can order it over the Internet." • "Items are also easier accessible as quite often you can choose from a website what items you want to buy." • "Secondly, availability, you can shop at twelve in the night it is so convenient."
4. Online shopping enables price comparisons	• "Shopping for bargains, doing price comparisons between different shops, the variety available and the ease of shopping from home." • "Search for the cheapest products, I mean at the lowest prices." • "To be able to compare prices especially with

	the more expensive items such as computers, this way you can get the best value for your money."

As illustrated in Table 8, participants have socially constructed the time saving benefit in a world where time is increasingly becoming more sought after. Furthermore, the convenience of shopping from your home at any given time of the day or night was highlighted, interlinking with products and services being available and accessible. Finally, price comparisons in cyber-space is more time efficient as the consumer can browse many online stores in a short period of time rather than physically walking from shop to shop.

5.2.2   Constructions of the limitations of online shopping

In this section participants were asked what aspects they enjoyed least about online shopping. The following main constructions were identified from their responses:

Table 9: Constructions of the limitations of online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. Misleading advertisements / incomplete information limits online shopping	• "Not being able to see the product before buying it (pictures can sometimes be misleading), a too huge variety can also make it difficult to decide what you want." • "You have to phone the supplier back later to get extra information that is not available on the website, for example how big the product is. There is also an information shortage." • "A lot of images at these online retailers have very poor quality and not knowing how the product exactly looks like inside and out does cause me to rather go look for the same product elsewhere."

2. There is no touch and feel aspect	• "There is no personal touch or the support of a salesperson." • "And I can't feel and touch the products or you can't fit the clothes on that you buy." • "I cannot touch and feel the products." • "If I want to buy clothes online, it is difficult to actually try them on and see whether they look good, so this becomes a challenge."
3. Personal assistants' availability is lacking	• "There is no personal touch or the support of a salesperson." • "The lack of a direct assistance does sometimes hinder the shopping process." • "Specifically when communicating via e-mail there aren't always enough people to help out with each e-mail query you might have and then the product gets shipped before the assistant can read your e-mail and get back to you."
4. Technological incompatibilities hinders online shopping	• "Aspects least enjoyed is most definitely a slow internet connection..." • "A slow landline or rather Internet connection, that is really frustrating." • "First of all, my ISP (Internet Service Provider) is unreliable, the server gets disconnected a few times during a task and then for most online, secure sites, I will need to go back and start from scratch again."

Drawing from the analysis above, four major constructions emerged. Firstly, participants indicated that misleading and incomplete product information and advertisements acted as a limiting factor in terms of online shopping and influenced them into purchasing less online. Secondly, participants prefer to be able to touch and feel the products they intend to purchase. In particular, participants prefer to fit clothing items prior to purchasing them. Interestingly, participants also stated that the lack of a salesperson limited their online shopping activities. The final construction identified is that of technological incompatibilities on the consumer's behalf. In order to shop online and experience a satisfying shopping experience, a fast and reliable Internet connection is imperative. Participants indicated that their slow and unreliable Internet connections acted as a drawback when attempting to shop online.

5.2.3 Constructions of the regularity of online shopping

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they shopped online. Their reasons for shopping regularly are stated below.

Table 10: Constructions of the regularity of online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. Regularity of online shopping is related to individual needs and consumptions needs	• "The goods I need to buy online are not needed very often, so generally it is only when there is a need for such a product." • "I buy online and normally according to what I need." • "Yes, since I do enjoy shopping in stores, I tend to shop online when I need something and I cannot make it to go out, then online shopping becomes more convenient. Therefore I do online shopping if I really have to." • "Frequency of shopping is determined by my consumption needs (for example CDs and DVDs)."
2. Credit card availability influences regularity of online shopping	• "When I get a credit card I will buy more online." • "I buy less overseas as I do not have a credit card yet." • "I only shop about once a month online because I do not have my own credit card, otherwise I would have used the online shopping facility more often. I use my mother's credit card to book shows and things like that."
3. Local availability of products determines the regularity of online shopping	• "Also, most products that I buy I can also get locally in shops." • "It is more convenient when you need groceries to go down to your local store."

The regularity of online shopping is clearly determined by and related to individual shopping and consumptions needs. Participants stated that they tend to shop online more frequently for goods which they need rather than purchasing for enjoyment or other reasons. The unavailability of a credit card is another reason for shopping less online, yet participants are willing to shop more should they acquire a credit card. The availability of products in local brick-and-mortar stores also play a role concerning the regularity of online shopping as participants would rather

purchase their goods at the local shop.

5.2.4 Constructions of products purchased online

Participants were asked which products they generally shop for online. The table below indicates the constructions identified from the data analysis.

Table 11: Constructions of products purchased online

Constructions	Quotes
1. Tickets	• "Usually I book and buy ticket shows and Computicket tickets once a month. I love ballet and usually book shows for that or then movie tickets online. It is much more convenient that standing in a queue somewhere." • "Other products that I have purchased in the past include airline tickets and car rental bookings, but to a lesser extent, I'll say only twice a year for holidays." • "UK Lotto tickets" • "…airline tickets and book holiday accommodation."
2. Compact discs	• "When buying CDs for example, I will sometimes buy the cheapest available, and sometimes a more expensive but dependable brand. I only buy CDs, games (PC games) and DVDs online." • "I buy CDs." • "I also buy CDs, books, DVDs" • "I have bought music, books, games"
3. Appliances and computer equipment	• "I buy CDs, computers..." • "Computer products, stationery, ink cartridges, paper, scanners, printers, computers, once a camera and batteries and all the camera accessories such as the lenses and so on."
4. Educational products	• "Also, web templates and software to aid in my education and career." • "Educational goodies such as textbooks."

The constructions listed above show that participants shop for computer equipment, CDs, DVDs, tickets, computer games and books the most. Reasons for mainly purchasing these products

online is the convenience of being able to purchase at any time of the day, and that once a favourite shop had been acquired, it is easier to order from it all the time. User-friendly online service and colourful catalogue display made the selections easier. The main reasons for purchasing these items online are availability, and ease of booking and buying.

5.2.5 Constructions of products least purchased online

The next section in the interview guide urged participants to state which products were least purchased online. Responses mostly varied between expensive products and products that had a "touch and feel aspect". These factors are illustrated below with supporting quotes from the interviews.

Table 12: Constructions of products least purchased online

Constructions	Quotes
1. Expensive products are least purchased online	• "... and garden products (pots and big plants and trees). Because these are capital intensive products, I only buy these say once in 3 years." • "It is the more expensive items that I buy least online and you want those expensive items immediately so it is better to go to the shops and just get it. You do not want to wait for it to get delivered." • "Also, my camera as it is a more expensive item."
2. The lacking touch & feel aspect contributes to products being purchased less online	• "Sometimes buying these products at a shop is easier than online, because you need to see it to decide if you want it." • "Gifts are more personal and you want to feel and touch them and put more effort into it to give it a special touch." • "Clothes. As I stated earlier, I prefer to try the clothes on, before buying them, so I can decide whether I'd like to buy them for myself." • "Music. The South African online retailers do not have audio streaming which enables you to listen to the music before you buy it."

Participants were generally concerned about purchasing expensive and capital intensive items. The reason given for not purchasing expensive items online related to availability, that is, the participant wanted it available immediately and did not want to wait for it to be delivered. Participants appeared to be more cautious in terms of buying items of higher monetary value online. In addition, the touch and feel aspect emerged again as participants expressed their need to see and feel the fabric of the item, be it clothes or gifts, or even to listen to a particular music track.

Participants were prompted to indicate their reasons for buying certain products in traditional stores rather than online. Responses included that participants required the service of a sales consultant and that perishable products with expiry dates such as groceries were preferably bought in traditional stores. Other participants indicated that they were concerned that products bought online might reach the customer late or damaged, or in some instances the consumer might receive the wrong order.

5.2.6 Constructions of products not purchased online

Participants were asked to name products they would not buy online at all and give their reasons for not doing so. The constructions listed below were identified in this section.

Table 13: Constructions of products not purchased online

Constructions	Quotes
1. Clothes & furniture are not purchased online	"Clothing and furniture. Clothing needs to be fitted before buying it, and furniture needs to be tested before buying it." "I won't buy cars or clothes or homes online. Generally, I prefer to personally choose and inspect personal items, like clothes, to ensure a perfect fit and not a waste of time and money." "I will never buy a couch, furniture or clothes online. You want to be able to see the quality of the material or be able to see the size of the couch. You want to be able to fit the clothes and see how it looks on you." "I do not believe I would buy clothes online. The chances of buying something that won't fit are

	too big."
2. Expensive items are rather purchased in brick-and-mortar stores	• "Cars and homes are probably two of the biggest investments any person will ever buy. I do not think it is sound judgment to view a product description and just to click away." • "More expensive items - because you need to see the product or item first. You know, look at the quality and such things. Also, very expensive items might break or get damaged during shipping and then by the time the product reaches the consumer it is damaged." • "Also a car or similar expensive items."

Clothes and furniture were mainly identified as products which participants would never purchase online. This section supports statements in the previous section where the touch and feel aspect of items was highlighted. Participants expressed their need to fit clothes and test furniture before purchasing them. These products rank as personal items according to participants and therefore need to be selected and inspected by the buyer herself. Once again, expensive items such as cars and property are considered best purchased in traditional stores. Participants indicted that they are not willing to take the chance of purchasing an expensive item before personally inspecting the product.

5.2.7   Constructions of information security

In this section of the interview guide participants were asked what they understood by the term "information security". Responses are illustrated below.

Table 14: Constructions of definitions of Information Security

Constructions	Quotes
1. Information security means protection of information	• "This means to protect information from unauthorised access." • "Your credit card details will not be given out and is privately and securely kept at the right organisations - such as banks. It is all about keeping your details private." • "That your information that is put on the Internet will be safe, such as your personal and banking details." • "This means that my banking details cannot be

	viewed by anyone. Most companies who sell their products online go through a great ordeal to ensure the client of the transactions' safety."
	• "It is when you give your details and credit card details and it will not be available on the Internet, it won't be published on the Internet."
	• "Information Security is the ability and process (in terms of online shopping) of enabling a customer to buy products in a safe environment."
	• "Information security could mean that any information that is provided by me online is secured or confidential within a particular site."
2. Advanced Technology and Internet Security form part of Information Security	• "All my personal information and banking details are safe and encrypted."
	• "Generally, they will have certain security software, of which the lock logo must be displayed on the site. They also ask for the last three digits of the credit card, which most fraudsters do not have."

The main construction identified in terms of information security pertains to the protection of confidential information such as personal and banking details. Awareness of the term "information security" seems to be a contributing factor to the trustworthiness of the Internet as a shopping channel. Computer software programmes and advanced technology such as Internet security also forms part of the "information security" definition according to the participants. Only one participant referred to the risk involved in online shopping and subsequently indicated that once you purchase with your credit card online, it allows thieves to acquire access to personal information in an attempt to steal money.

5.2.8 Constructions of concern regarding personal information on the Internet

This section comprised of the following question: "How do you feel about your personal details being available on the Internet?" The following constructions were identified in the responses.

Table 15: Constructions of personal details on the Internet

Constructions	Quotes

1. Not concerned – Personal details on the Internet is secured	• "As long as my personal particulars are safely protected, I do not have a problem with it being available to authorised persons. It is a concern to me, but secure and reputable sites such as Kalahari.net or Standard Bank is reliable. I will not give my information to a fly-by-night online shop / site." • "It is not a concern for me at all. It is very safe." • "Otherwise it is not a big concern as most online shops that I use have security certificates (SSL - secure shopping link) that protects your information with a guaranteed acknowledgement that your information will not be available to any third parties." • "It is not such a big issue. I do not worry too much about online shopping. A lot of online retailers allow the customer to purchase the product by making a bank deposit. Another facility that allows us to shop online safely is to encrypt the data that is being sent from the customer to the business. This data is safe depending on the encryption level and the integrity of the company."
2. There is concern over personal details on the Internet	• "It is a concern. There are lots of marketers that will try and market their products that you are not interested in. People try and obtain your personal information all the time. It is scary." • "Sometimes, it makes me very uncomfortable, thinking that my personal information may be floating somewhere in cyberspace, and with all the fraudulent activities going on it might be thrown into the wrong hands."

Generally participants construct the Internet as secure regarding their personal particulars being available on the Internet. This socially constructed security is also site dependent, as secure and reputable sites are trusted. On the contrary, the minority of participants were concerned about marketers obtaining their personal information and even being victims of fraudulent activities.

5.2.9   Constructions of Internet hacking

Participants were asked first what they understood by the phrase "people hacking into the Internet", and secondly whether it affected their choice whether or not to shop online.   The following constructions were identified in the data.

Table 16: Constructions of definitions of Internet Hacking

Constructions	Quotes
1. Internet hacking entails personal information being stolen	• "Hackers are people that steal information and do harm. They steal the information for criminal purposes. It does influence me because it can be a concern." • "I still believe it is safer to shop online than shopping elsewhere. I strongly believe that there are people engaging in these fraudulent activities, and it does make me weary when shopping online. However I have continued to do online shopping in spite of this concern."
2. No prior victimisation or concerns reduces the threat of Internet hacking	• "I know about it but luckily it has never happened to me before, and therefore does not affect my choice to do online shopping. Once I am a victim of hackings or things like that then I will reconsider doing online shopping." • "It hasn't happened to me yet, I mean hacking, so I'm not that worried about it." • "It does not affect my choice to do online shopping as the sites guarantee the security of your information." • "Hacking does not bother me with regard to online shopping. I think hackers are busy with other stuff that is more important. They are more busy with big banks."
3. It is the consumer's responsibility to steer clear of Internet hacking	• "We have a lot of safety programmes and firewalls. I know that we are well protected against such things. I understand how it is done and I know that the chances of being affected by being a victim is very low. The chances of being robbed is usually because of the customer not protecting his computer (by means of anti-virus software etc.) against possible hack/intrusion attacks." • "When choosing a online shop, I seldom see if it is risky or not. I try and limit my risk be delaying my payment until receipt of goods, or by paying cash or by paying by way of an electronic transfer."

Participants constructed hacking as stealing personal information in order to take part in fraudulent online activities. This perception might very well stem from prevalent beliefs that crime is very much a reality, especially in South Africa. Those who have not yet experienced prior

victimisation are not particularly concerned about hackers. Another socially constructed perception is that hackers are mostly targeting big, corporate organisations such as banks, and are not focussing on mere individuals. Furthermore, some participants shifted the responsibility to the consumer, emphasising the importance of ensuring that the correct software is used to ensure safety, and paying by means of cash or an electronic fund transfer.

5.2.10 Constructions of Internet utilisation

In this section of the interview, participants were asked what they usually use the Internet for. The following main constructions were identified as illustrated below.

Table 17: Constructions of Internet utilisation

Constructions	Quotes
1. The Internet is mainly used as an information gathering tool	• "Gathering information…. Browse for articles, reading the news, downloading music videos, to check my e-mail and just to surf." • "… and to do searches. For example searches on the Bridal Registry and so on." • "To obtain information that you need." • "Research, entertainment and to download MP3s." • "…to maintain my administrative correspondence with the University, to save time in checking availability of library books, to obtain information for research projects, and to ultimately do the nerve-wrecking duty as to check exam results (university exam results)." • "…to see which shows are showing when, then I also read the news and reviews. For the photography-society I go and chat online and also get models for projects." • "… it is to get information." • "… and research for purchasing a property."
2. E-mail and communication are facilitated through the Internet	• "…and e-mail." • "Mainly e-mails…" • "… e-mail…" • "Check my e-mail…" • "To check my e-mail as well."
3. The Internet is used for	• "Research for my studies…"

educational purposes	• "Studies and work. I'm always connected to the internet and spend up to 10 hours a day using it for work or recreation." • "Research for academic purposes…"
4. Online shopping is done through the Internet	• "Purchasing gifts and banking."

The constructions identified in the table above clearly indicate that the participants mainly used the Internet as an information gathering tool for research, obtaining information on a specific subject matter, reading the news, investigating social events (such as movie show times), and so forth. The Internet is also used for e-mail purposes and as an educational tool. Online shopping was not listed as a main Internet activity.

5.2.11 Constructions of aspects influencing online shopping

It is imperative to identify certain factors which might influence online shopping. Participants were asked how the following issues influenced their attitude towards online shopping:

- The high crime rate in South Africa;

- Familiarity with the Internet;

- Trust in the Internet as a shopping channel;

- Risk-taking in online shopping; and

- Credibility of online shopping.

Each of these issues will be discussed in turn.

5.2.11.1 Constructions of the high South African crime rate

Table 18: Constructions of the South African crime rate

Constructions	Quotes
1. The crime rate does not affect online shopping	• "The high SA crime rate influences me negatively in general - but does not affect my attitude towards online shopping. It is not really applicable as crime is the same everywhere." • "It does not influence my attitude towards online

	shopping in any way." • "No, the crime rate does not influence my attitude towards online shopping at all." • "Not at all, the crime rate does not influence my online shopping." • "It does not influence me at all in terms of online shopping or my choices between traditional stores and online stores." • "Our Internet/digital crime rate is one of the lowest in the world and the chances of something happening to you when surfing/using the net are marginal than what could happen in everyday society."
2. Online shopping is minimally affected	• "Yes the crime rate very much so influences my choice to do online shopping. I was held at gun point in an armed robbery scenario in Spar and would rather do online shopping." • "The South African crime rate concerns me occasionally whether businesses are authentic or not on the Internet, and if you provide bank details. I'm also concerned if I will really get the product that I purchased."

Overall, the participants indicated that the crime rate does not influence their attitude towards online shopping. Some participants argued that crime is everywhere, and that South Africa has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. Those participants who were concerned have been involved in violent crimes or questioned the authenticity and legitimacy of certain online shopping stores and retailers.

5.2.11.2 Constructions of familiarity with the Internet

Table 19: Constructions of familiarity with the Internet

Constructions	Quotes
1. Familiarity with the Internet builds confidence	• Yes, it influences me in a positive manner as familiarity with the Internet gives me more confidence to shop online." • "Yes, the more you do on the Internet the more familiar you get with the Internet. It gets easier to use." • "I've been using the internet for 9 years now. I feel comfortable in knowing how and why things

	are working the way they are." • "I find the internet a familiar place since I work with it every day. I believe that I am quite familiar with the Internet." • "I can find my way around easily."
2. A positive influence towards online shopping is apparent	• "You are influenced in a positive manner." • It influences me in a positive way regarding online shopping. The more familiar you get with the Internet the more you tend to shop online. It definitely influences you."
3. Age plays a role in the familiarity with the Internet	• "Older people struggle more but it is easier for younger people. It influences me in a positive manner." • "I am very familiar with the Internet due to exposure at a very young age and my field of study."

Familiarity with the Internet can be listed as a contributing factor in terms of taking up or continuing with online shopping. Participants stated that their familiarity with the Internet assisted in building their confidence regarding online shopping, subsequently leading to an increased amount of online activities.   Familiarity with the Internet did influence participants positively towards online shopping but to a lesser extent. Results showed that younger people use the Internet with greater ease due to exposure at very young ages and therefore are more familiar with the Internet in general.

5.2.11.3 Constructions of the role of trust in the Internet as shopping channel

Table 20: Constructions of trust in the Internet as shopping channel

Constructions	Quotes
1. Technology ensures trust in the Internet as shopping channel	• "I have trust in reputable online sites and shops and it influences me in a positive manner." • "There is trust as you are the person who must key in the particulars and ensure that the transaction goes through. I would say trust in the Internet influences me in a positive manner." • "I trust almost everything on the Internet but I

	always look to see if a site is secure or not. For example I look for the Pop-up Cop with an icon in the corner indicating that it is a trusted secure site. We update Norton Antivirus weekly on our computer and we have very good firewalls. It influences me in a positive manner and I feel safe to do online shopping."
2. Trust in the Internet as shopping channel due to no fraudulent activities to date	• "I definitely trust the Internet as there is a guarantee and up until now no fraud has occurred. It also encourages me to do more online shopping." • "Yes, I trust the Internet, as long as nothing bad happens and your goodies get delivered."
3. The more frequent you shop online the more you trust the Internet for online shopping purposes	• "Once you do online shopping more than once you gain trust in it. The more you do it the better and the more you trust online shopping as a shopping alternative." • "I trust the Internet as I do it quite often and shop more and more online." • "My trust in the Internet in general is increasing therefore online shopping is increasing. Influences me in a positive manner."
4. Trust in the Internet as shopping channel will soar in the future	• "I fully believe that the online shopping possibilities will increase over time and I believe that a lot of our every day shopping would be more convenient when purchasing products online." • "With the escalation of online retailers and need for further improving on current security standards, shopping online will become a more logical and safer alternative to or current shopping habits."

Overall, participants trust the Internet as an alternative shopping channel. They talked about reputable sites and software technology as aspects positively influencing their choice to take up online shopping. Others stated that they trust the Internet as they were not exposed to fraudulent activities to date. The frequency of online shopping was also constructed as an aspect positively influencing participants towards online shopping. As participants more regularly utilised the Internet to do online shopping, their trust in the Internet as a mechanism increased. In addition, it was thought that online shopping will increase in the future.

5.2.11.4 Constructions of risk-taking in online shopping

Table 21: Constructions of risk-taking in online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. Risk-taking has a negative influence in online shopping	• "There is a risk - this influences me in a negative way. I am still limiting the risk-taking part to the minimum when possible." • "It is an influence and if I feel it is risky then I won't use the online facility." • "I think it is a risk buying online especially with all the fraudulent activities going on. I mean like people hacking into databases' of banks and certain online shops and so on."
2. A limited risk is perceived in online shopping	• "Any shopping is a risk - online shopping is not different from traditional shopping in terms of risk-taking." • "E-bucks is safe because they just subtract the amount from your account so risk-taking doesn't really influence my decision to shop online as I feel there is not much of a risk with E-bucks shopping. But I won't buy with a credit card online. That is just too big a risk." • "I do not perceive it as a risk and I will only buy from acclaimed companies." • "Yes, in the end it is a gamble. But it won't influence me to shop less online, on the contrary. There is more of a risk while shopping normally than shopping online."

Interestingly, participants trust the Internet as an alternative shopping channel as illustrated in the previous section, yet there are a fair number of responses indicating that online shopping is still perceived as a risk. However, this risk does not limit or negatively influence participants to do online shopping. Relatively safe alternatives are practised, such as shopping on trustworthy sites and not paying by means of credit card. An overall awareness of the risk involved in online shopping is evident, nonetheless it does not influence attitudes towards online shopping negatively.

Table 22: Constructions of the credibility of online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. The credibility of online shopping is site dependent	• "Yes, it is credible. Sites has to be in business for a long time to be credible. These sites influences me positively as well as my attitude towards online shopping." • "The Internet is credible depending on what sites you use, I will use certain sites again and again such as Computicket where I always get my tickets." • "Yes it is very credible as long as you shop on sites where you are familiar with the site or if someone recommends a site." • "Credibility can be established by certification programs. There are also a lot of online retailers which is well known locally and trust can be based on the service already received offline."
2. Online shopping is credible due to limited previous victimisation	• "The credibility of the Internet has only influenced me positively so far, I never had a bad experience before." • "Very credible, I never endured any problems. Overall, online shopping has influenced me in a positive manner."
3. Increased exposure will enhance the credibility of online shopping	• "Online shopping must still grow in South Africa. It is not big enough. I mean it needs more exposure still and more people need to get into it." • "As stated earlier, I am still concerned with certain security issues and the credibility of some online shopping channels. However, I think that online shopping does provide a convenient and less time-consuming approach to purchasing things that may be needed urgently."

Drawing from the analysis, the credibility of online shopping is dependant on three major aspects. It depends on the website where one does online shopping, on whether previous victimisation was experienced, and on increased future exposure in general. Previously used and trusted sites increased the credibility of the Internet and online shopping to a positive extent. Increased exposure in the near future will result in more people shopping online, consequently increasing

the credibility of online shopping. In general, the existing credibility of online shopping positively influenced the participants of this research study.

5.2.12 Constructions of site recommendation to participants

Sites recommended by other people were used more regularly as indicated by the reasons listed below.

Table 23: Constructions of site recommendation by others

Constructions	Quotes
1. Site recommendations increased quality and trust	• "Yes, because the more you find quality sites through connections and friends, the better the shopping experience." • "Yes, because I also recommended that sites to other people. Rather use a well-known site that you can trust." • "Definitely because it is recommended and it is really a good site." • "Yes, I do use this site often, it is a banking site and allows purchases online. Therefore I am able to have my bank details and credit history on hand when purchasing an item."

Overall, participants utilised recommended websites to a greater extent than sites never used before. The main reasons given by participants were those of trust and increased quality. Usually safe and quality loaded sites are recommended, enhancing the shopping experience.

5.2.13 Constructions of site recommendation by participants

Participants were asked whether they have ever recommended a site to friends and their reasons for doing so. Table 24 illustrates the emerging constructions from the data analysis.

Table 24: Constructions of site recommendation by participants

Constructions	Quotes
1. Sites were recommended due to the money saving component	• "Yes, cheap telecommunication services because it saves a lot of money." • "Yes, it is site where you can buy computer related technology products. Shops are listed

	and you can compare prices for both online and brick shops."
2. Entertainment and information availability augment site recommendation	• "Yes. Kalahari.net for entertainment. Kalahari.net also hosts Amazon which is very credible." • "Yes, the Bridal Registries, as I said it is better to use a well-known site."
3. User friendly sites are recommended	• "Yes, FNB has an extra portal where you can shop at a portal, I told my mom it is easy and she must try it." • "Yes, FlashKits and Flash components due to my field of study. It is a very reliable resource and also credible. It offers vast amounts of information and is user-friendly." • "Yes, one's which service was outstanding and quick."
4. Sites where gifts are purchased are recommended	• "Yes, it was online shopping to purchase a gift for a friend's loved one."

Once again the construction of comparing prices and a money saving component were identified as reasons for recommending sites to others. Sites were also recommended for entertainment and information gathering purposes. User friendly websites which are considered reliable and rapid were also recommended to others, including, but to a lesser extent, online shopping facilities.

5.2.14 Constructions of key motivators for online shopping

The final question of the interview guide prompted participants to indicate their main reasons for shopping online. Responses are outlined below.

Table 25: Constructions of key motivators for online shopping

Constructions	Quotes
1. Lower prices and the possibility of making price comparisons are key motivators for online shopping	• "Ease of use, bargains to be found, including comparisons between products, quality of service and variety available." • "The prices online are much cheaper than offline since no big fees are charged for having your shop/premises in a mall (which over charges) thus a lot less income needs to get

	generated."
2. Convenience and saving time motivate individuals to take up online shopping	• "Convenience, saves you time, can order from overseas, it is easier and quicker with a credit card in your own house, and some products are not locally available but through the Internet they are." • "Convenience and time-saving." • "Time-saving, you get the best prices and it is convenient." • "Convenience, saving time, piece of mind in knowing that your parcel will arrive due to the suppliers' guaranteed stock availability unlike e.g. Van Schaiks that will order your book and then you will receive it only after several months." • "Because it is so convenient. I can do it any time and do not have to wait for opening hours." • "The freedom to look around for a product over an extended period of time." • "Convenience in knowing that if the product isn't in stock that I'll receive it as soon as it is in stock." • "Online shopping has assisted me in buying things, especially when I did not have the time to go to the store. It has therefore saved me time and has made it convenient for me to purchase things. Also, it is a technologically advanced way to be part of this new process while not being left behind."
3. Variety encourages online shopping	• "There is a big variety to choose from at your fingertips. Shopping online allows me to look around for prices much easier." • "Sheer quantities of products available to browse make it easier to find the specific product you want (mp3 player, size, price range etc."

In this final overall question, participants specified the key motivators for taking up online shopping. Drawing from the data analysis and emerging constructions in Table 25 it is evident that price comparisons and lower product prices play a definite role in the decision-making of doing online shopping. The convenience and time saving construction is also perceived by these participants as key motivators, as well as the variety of products readily available.

5.3 Establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability

As previously indicated by Burr (1995), when evaluating the quality of the research findings as put forward in this study, using social constructionism as theoretical approach, the typical understanding of reliability and validity is inappropriate. Yet, four precise criteria for measuring reliability and validity in qualitative research were developed by other researchers (Lincoln et al., 1985). *Credibility* indicates how truthful particular findings are, which in this specific research study is difficult to establish as social constructionist research is not concerned with creating truth claims or distinguishing objective facts. *Transferability* indicates how applicable the research findings are to other settings or groups. Although the purpose of this study is not to generalise results from a random sample to the population it represents, some concurrence of the results with research findings abroad (as indicated in the literature review) is evident. *Dependability* determines if the results are consistent and reproducible. The results of this study are replicable and not a mere production of restricted, short-lived events as online shopping continues to increase worldwide, including in South Africa. Finally, *conformability* determines how neutral the findings are in terms of whether they are reflective of the informants and the inquiry, and not a product of the researcher's biases and prejudices.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the social constructions that were identified during the data analysis process. Rich data had been obtained from in-depth interviews conducted with eight participants, after which data saturation occurred. The advantages of online shopping mainly related to time savings, effort savings, convenience, accessibility and the possibility of price comparisons. On the contrary, the limitations of the online shopping phenomenon were constructed as misleading and incomplete product information, the inability to touch and feel products, and the unavailability of a sales assistant. Individual and consumption needs were the main motivators determining the regularity of online shopping. Shopping was done less regularly as a result of credit card unavailability and local product availability in traditional shops. Tickets, CDs, computer-related

equipment and books were listed as products mainly purchased online, with expensive products, such as property, and those products requiring a touch and feel aspect, such as clothes, being purchased least. Information security and Internet hacking were constructed as aspects relating to the protection of personal information and the attempt to engage in fraudulent activities once this information is obtained. Prior victimisation was constructed as a main reason for fearing Internet hackers.

The use of the Internet was mainly constructed as being for information gathering, communication, and as an educational tool. Online shopping was minimally affected by the high South African crime rate, as this factor did not necessarily motivate people to take up online shopping. Age and familiarity with the Internet simultaneously contributed to building confidence in the Internet as shopping channel. Overall, the credibility of online shops and retailers were constructed as being site dependant. Site attributes, for example being in business for a substantial amount of time, familiarity with a site, recommendation of a site, certification programmes and good service already received from companies offline contributed to the identification of meaning about site dependency. An increased in the latter in turn positively influenced the willingness of participants to recommend sites, which increased trust and the overall shopping experience. The construction of comparing prices and saving money were given as main reasons for recommending sites to others. Control for reliability and validity were obtained by measuring transferability, dependability and conformability.

The next chapter presents the interpretation of the results which is put forward by means of integrating the results, theory and literature. Finally, the limitations of the research study are outlined, followed by recommendations for future research studies and conclusions.

6.   Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

6.1   Introduction

In this final chapter, salient points are summarised and discussed by means of an interpretation of the results in terms of theory and literature. Furthermore, an indication is given to what extent the results in this research study concur with or contradicts previous research studies. Limitations of the research study are outlined. The broader significance of the results is made explicit and recommendations for future research are proposed.

In the following section the main findings of the research study are explored and integrated with the literature and the theoretical approach of social constructionism. The results are discussed by means of reviewing the main aspects investigated, namely: aspects most and least enjoyed while utilising the online shopping facility, the regularity of online shopping, products purchased most and least online, motivations and reasons for not shopping online, definitions and understanding of the term "information security", personal concerns regarding online shopping, the socially constructed meanings of "Internet hacking", the Internet as a role player, various aspects influencing online shopping, and finally web site recommendations. The research indicates that the participants' ways of understanding the online shopping phenomenon are historically and culturally specific to a South African context. More specifically, the ways of understanding are dependent upon particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in a South African culture at the time of the research.

6.2   The meaning of online shopping as constructed by participants

6.2.1   Constructions of enjoyment while shopping online

Enjoyment of online shopping was constructed by participants as that of saving the consumer time, and making the shopping experience more convenient by products being increasingly

available and accessible. The Webcheck (2000) research study listed the convenience of the online buying method as one of the biggest advantages of online shopping in a South African context, as did Chiang et al. (2003), based on their research findings from abroad. Furthermore, this finding has been more recently confirmed by statistics from the Welsh Consumer Council (Richards, 2005). Being able to make price comparisons was also constructed as an advantage of online shopping. This concurs with results from a research study conducted by North et al. (2003), as does the disadvantage of not being able to touch and feel products. The above-mentioned constructs were identified within a South African context by means of assessing participants' conversations, especially focussing on language used. Participants constructed these advantages and disadvantages (indicated below), by means of the knowledge they have regarding aspects most and least enjoyed whilst doing online shopping. According to social constructionism, this knowledge is followed by action, as knowledge and action go together. The action arising out of the knowledge in this case is increased online shopping activities or, on the contrary, limited, or no online shopping, depending on the meaning participants constructed from their knowledge and experiences.

6.2.2 Constructions of aspects least enjoyed whilst shopping online

In terms of the disadvantages of online shopping, four major constructions were identified. The first relates to deceptive and incomplete product information, the inability to touch and feel the products, and the absence of a salesperson. A clear social component emerges, which indicates that human beings prefer social interaction with other human beings, subsequently constructing the lack of social interaction as a limitation of online shopping. This lack of social interaction is experienced as there are no personal assistants and no communication with a sales assistant or online seller while doing online shopping. These descriptions or constructions of online shopping sustain certain patterns of social action. Therefore, meanings regarding the absence of the touch and feel aspect of online shopping and of a sales consultant, might prompt individuals to take up online shopping or to exclude this action from their lives. Yet, the results obtained by Wolfinbarger (2001) indicate that the absence of retail workers is appreciated when salespeople are perceived

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as being unhelpful, uninformed and pressuring or obligating buyers. Technological incompatibilities such as a slow and unreliable Internet connection were also constructed as a disadvantage.

6.2.3 Constructions of the regularity of online shopping

The *regularity of online shopping* is determined by individual and consumption needs, the unavailability of a credit card, along with the availability of products at local brick-and-mortar stores. Kerner (2004) illustrated that the majority of US consumers do product research online yet purchase offline. They termed this phenomenon "cross-channel shopping". In terms of aspects influencing South Africans to do online shopping or not, "cross-channel shopping" is very much constructed by the participants as information seeking and price comparisons were indicated as main advantages of online shopping. Some participants indicated their preference to rather purchase a product at a local brick-and-mortar store, depending on the availability of the product. Kau et al. (2003) termed this phenomenon the "on-off shopper".

6.2.4 Constructions of products purchased most online

The results from this study indicated *that products purchased most online* include tickets, CDs, appliances and computer equipment, as well as educational products such as textbooks etc. North et al.'s (2003) study listed books, music CDs, computer software, movie or event tickets and airline tickets as products most purchased. Card et al. (2003) researched online travel products, reporting that online air tickets were purchased more than other travel products. Reasons constructed by the participants for mainly purchasing these products online pertain to availability, and ease of booking and buying. Once again, the action of booking and buying online is constructed by the participants' knowledge pertaining to online shopping.

6.2.5 Constructions of products purchased less online

In contrast, more expensive *products were purchased less online*, along with items where the touch and feel aspect ranked high, for example clothes and gifts. Clothes, furniture and more expensive items such as cars and property are rarely bought online as illustrated by the results of

this study. In the same study by North et al. (2003), property was indicated as an item least purchased via the Internet shopping channel. The fear of loss is evident, be it a financial loss or a product loss. Fear of financial loss narrowly links with purchasing expensive items prior to inspection of such products, ultimately creating the feeling of money being wasted should the customer be disappointed in the product or the product not living up to the expectations of the consumer. Product loss emerges when the consumer purchases an expensive product such as clothes or furniture yet never receives the product. The risk of shipping problems and product failure was also noted by Garbarino (2004).

6.2.6 Constructions of the reasons for not shopping online

Reasons for rather shopping in traditional brick-and-mortar stores varied between positive aspects such as a sales consultant being present in the traditional store, and negative aspects of online shopping such as not receiving your goods or receiving perishable products late. The construction of lacking social interaction emerged again, along with the construction of not receiving already paid-for products. Participants tend to engage in certain social practices, such as rather buying perishable products in traditional stores.

6.2.7 Constructions of information security

As indicated earlier on in this study, the term "information security" refers to the securing of any personal information that online shoppers make available on the Internet during online shopping. *Information security* is mainly associated with the protection of personal and confidential information such as personal and banking details.

6.2.8 Constructions regarding concern about personal particulars

Participants are in general not *concerned about their personal particulars* being available on the Internet. This sense of security is strengthened by the existence of advanced technology as participants talked about security certificates and data encryption levels increasing their trust of reputable websites. Concerns about personal particulars being available on the Internet were

constructed by the participants through gaining knowledge via sustained social processes such as conversing with other online and offline shoppers about security-related aspects when considering online shopping.

6.2.9   Constructions of Internet hackings

In this section of the results, participants constructed *Internet hackings* as an activity during which personal information is stolen. Due to the fact that none of the participants had been targeted by hackers at the time of data gathering, they did not express much concern about Internet hackings. Again, the participants' knowledge of Internet hackings is gained through sustained social processes, that of non-victimisation, leading to the social construction of not being concerned with Internet hackings. Other participants mentioned that it was the responsibility of the consumer to try and avoid this negative aspect of online shopping. However, Singh (2004) provided reasons why South African online banking services would be ideal on the Internet, one of which was that there is no chance of being caught in the crossfire during a bank robbery. It appears that South Africans in general are concerned with crime and safety, regardless of the above-mentioned constructions where participants appeared unconcerned with Internet hackings due to non-victimisation.

6.2.10   Constructions of the utilisation of the Internet

Participants did not converse about online shopping as a main Internet activity. *The Internet* is constructed as a place for collecting information, e-mailing and communicating, and as an education tool. According to Hawkins et al. (2001), access to free information was listed as a main advantage for cybershoppers.   Thus, the participants' current accepted ways of understanding the world with regards to online shopping and the Internet as a whole is not a product of objective observation of the world, but rather of the social processes and interactions in which the participants are constantly engaged with other people, be it shopping online or merely communicating via e-mails.

6.2.11 Constructions of aspects influencing online shopping

The way in which participants spoke did not overall construct *the high South African crime rate* as influencing their online shopping behaviour. If it did influence their behaviour, it did so to a minimal extent. Thus, there is no perceived connection between online shopping and safety in terms of crime, as the online shopping facility is not necessarily perceived as a safer purchasing alternative compared to traditional shopping. This conclusion coincides with North et al.'s (2003) results where the relative safety of purchasing from home was indicated as one of the least important considerations for online shoppers. *Familiarity with the Internet* aided in participants' confidence to buy online, even positively influencing some participants towards online shopping. *Trust in the Internet as a shopping channel* highlighted interesting constructions, among which advanced technology, no fraudulent activities to date and frequent online shopping all contributed to the Internet being constructed as a trustworthy shopping channel. In terms of *risk-taking in online shopping*, participants believe this aspect to have a negative influence on online shopping, yet attitudes towards online shopping were seen not to be negatively influenced. The credibility of online shopping at the time of data gathering influenced participants in a positive manner. The credibility of the seller was also listed by North et al. (2003) as one of the most important factors considered by South African online shoppers. Drawing from the results, the credibility of online shopping in general proved to be site dependent, and participants stated that sites had to be in business for some time in order to be credible. This statement was further supported by the reputation of online retailers which is well known locally, and where trust can be based on the service already received offline, such as the case with Computicket, for example. Another participant argued that credibility can be established through certification programmes, along with site recommendations. Furthermore, online shopping was perceived to be credible due to limited previous victimisation.

6.2.12 Constructions of site recommendation

Safety and quality were listed as the main aspects contributing to *sites being recommended*. These advantages are constructed in a manner that they contribute to increased shopping

experiences. Participants constructed the benefits of price comparisons, savings in terms of monetary value, reliability and user friendliness as their main reasons for recommending web sites to others. The construction identified in this section interlinks narrowly with the advantages of online shopping pertaining mainly to the time saving factor, convenience, availability, accessibility and the ability to do price comparisons. The act of recommending websites to others involves communication with them. It can thus be concluded that participants' versions of knowledge pertaining to online shopping are constructed and fabricated through their daily interactions and talk with others about what constitutes a good website. This statement is supported by a key assumption of social constructionism, namely that knowledge and action to hand in hand: in this case, the act of recommending websites is socially constructed by means of knowledge (knowledge of a safe web site), followed by action (visiting the recommended web site).

The research question "*What are the meanings that people construct about online shopping that entice them to make use of this shopping channel or not?*" was studied using a social constructionist approach. The findings identify constructions within a South African perspective and are listed below:

- Enjoyment of online shopping because it saves the consumer time, the possibility of making price comparisons, and a more convenient shopping experience is had as products are increasingly available and accessible.

- Constructions of aspects least enjoyed while shopping online include the inability of consumers to touch and feel products prior to purchase, misleading and incomplete product information, and a lack of sales personnel.

- Constructions of the regularity of online shopping are determined by individual and consumption needs, the unavailability of a credit card and the fact that products are available at local brick-and-mortar stores.

- Products purchased most online due to availability, and ease of booking and buying include tickets, CDs, appliances and computer equipment, as well as educational

products such as textbooks.

- More expensive products such as cars and property are purchased less online, along with clothes and gifts where the desire to touch and feel products is evident.

- Reasons for rather shopping in traditional brick-and-mortar stores gave rise to the construction of a lack of social interaction, along with the construction of not receiving already paid-for products.

- Constructions regarding concern about personal particulars being available on the Internet indicated that participants are in general not concerned about this matter.

- Internet hackings are constructed as an activity during which personal information is stolen, yet participants are not truly concerned about this matter due to non-victimisation at the time of data gathering.

- The Internet as such was constructed as a place for collecting information, exchanging e-mails, communicating and carrying out educational work, and not as much identified as a tool for online shopping.

- No perceived connection between online shopping and safety in terms of crime emerged.

- Familiarity with the Internet aided in participants' confidence to buy online, even positively influencing some participants towards online shopping.

- Constructions which contributed positively towards trust in the Internet as shopping channel included technology, no fraudulent activities experienced to date and frequency of online shopping.

- In terms of risk-taking in online shopping, attitudes towards online shopping were not negatively influenced. In contrast, the credibility of online shopping influenced participants in a positive manner at the time of data gathering.

- Constructions of site recommendations mainly held that safety and quality are the main aspects contributing to this aspect of online shopping, resulting in more enjoyable shopping experiences such as being able to make price comparisons, saving money, reliability and user friendliness.

6.3   Limitations of the research

6.3.1   Size and nature of the sample

The sample is limited to eight South African citizens living in Gauteng at the time of data gathering. Also, only one black person was included in the study due to the use of the snowball technique to draw the sample. This study therefore has certain shortcomings, such as that its findings cannot be applied to all South Africans. The study's aim was, however, to explore meanings that people attach to online shopping using in-depth interviews, and not to generalise findings to the population of South Africans who shop online.

6.3.2   Limitation of scope

The research and its findings are specific to online shoppers, therefore only contributing to this specific domain, excluding the views and opinions of people that do not shop online. Online shopping is a relatively new trend in South Africa, and understanding why people would shop online would be important for online retailers as the focus of consumer psychology is on understanding and explaining the psychological factors which influence consumers' choices, purchases and usage behaviours (Bettman, 1986).

6.4   Recommendations for future research

6.4.1   Research to broaden the online shopping consumer base

Additional research, specifically focussing on peoples' reasons for engaging in online shopping or not, within a South African context needs to be conducted, utilising a broader sample size. It would be worthwhile to further explore the phenomenon of online shopping within a social constructionist approach as shopping is mainly a social activity engaged in by people. This research would bring to light additional insights regarding this phenomenon that have as yet not been identified. New consumer behaviour models, theories and approaches could be identified from additional research, ultimately aiding online retailers to broaden their consumer base. Online shopping should be marketed to a greater extent by its stakeholders in order to increase

emerging groups of Internet users, and ultimately, active online shoppers.

6.4.2 Research concerning human motives affecting online shopping

There is a need for research in order to become more aware of the fact that online shopping is not necessarily and completely governed by rational human motives. Therefore a need exists for future research into the roles of emotion and interpersonal relationships that may affect the online shopping activity.

6.4.3 Methodological imperative

As indicated previously, most research conducted to date on the subject matter is quantitative and driven by pre-conceptions. Thus, there is a need for future research, conducted from a qualitative vantage point, free of assumptions and producing in-depth results. This would broaden the scope of research on the subject matter, evidently contributing to the general body of knowledge and to the consumer psychology paradigm in general. The latter will in turn contribute in terms of new models and approaches being identified to assist online retailers in their quest to attract more consumers.

6.4.4 Diversifying sample characteristics

As the sample in this study does not represent the diversity of the South African population, further studies should explore the meanings that a range of South Africans attach to online shopping. Emerging groups of Internet users in South Africa should be included in future research studies.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study are valuable for various reasons. First, a set of South African results are produced which can be compared to similar research studies conducted abroad. Secondly, this study provides information of interest to any company or retailer focussing on South African online shoppers as part of their customer base. Understanding the constructions and motivations

that influence consumers in terms of online shopping could prove worthwhile for retailing companies. These different constructions also bring forth, or invite, a different kind of action from human beings. The results can provide direction in terms of planning and implementing features that will increase online shopping and the customer's loyalty, both online and offline. Thirdly, a contribution is made to the body of knowledge of the consumer psychology paradigm as meanings influencing South Africans to take up online shopping or their reasons for not doing so have been identified. In some instances the results from this research study and other studies support each other, as indicated in this chapter.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

MA Research Psychology

MINI DISSERTATION

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

FOR

A STUDY ON PEOPLE WHO DO ONLINE SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Maray de Swardt. I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research for my dissertation in order to complete my MA Research Psychology degree. We shall be talking about online shopping. There are no right or wrong answers; I would just like to hear your views. This interview will take approximately an hour. Your time and participation in this study is highly appreciated.

INTERVIEW DETAILS

		/		/	2	0	0	4

Date of Interview:

		h		

Start Time:

		h		

Finish Time:

PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Age:

Race: Please Specify:

_____

M	F

Gender:

What is your home language?   Please Specify:

_____

In which suburb do you live?

_____

What qualifications do you hold?

_____

Location of the interview:

When last did you make use of an online shopping facility?
_____

How often do you shop online?   Once a week: O

More than once a week: O

Once in 2 weeks: O

Once a month: O

Less than once a month: O

If less than once a month, how many times per year do you shop online?
_____

Please indicate your salary bracket per month: Above R2347

Above R3960

Above R6189

Above R8522

Above R12195

Above R18216

WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1)   **Do you generally shop online or mainly in stores?**
Probe:
Interviewer probe in general, all sorts of items etc.

2)   **What do you enjoy about shopping in general?**
Probe:
Why, why not?

MAIN QUESTIONS

3)	Key	**What aspects do you enjoy most about shopping online?**	Aspects enjoyed
	Probe:	Please explain.	

4)	Key	**What aspects do you enjoy least about online shopping?**	Aspects least enjoyed
	Probe:	Why? Please explain.	

5)	Key	**You indicated earlier that you shop online X times. Is there a specific reason for this?**	Regularity of shopping
	Probe:	Please explain.	

6)	Key	**What types of products do you generally shop for online?**	Products purchased
	Probe:	Do you only buy product X or have you ever bought anything else? Can you please elaborate?	

6.1)	Key	**Of these, which products do you <u>most</u> shop for online?**	Products most purchased online
	Probe:	Are there any particular reasons why you purchase these products more online? Where do you prefer to buy these items? **6.1.1) What about these products make you buy them elsewhere?**	

6.2)	Key	**Of these, which products do you <u>least</u> shop for online?**	Products least purchased online
	Probe	Are there any particular reasons why you purchase these	

:	products less online? Where do you prefer to buy these items?	
		Reasons for shopping online
	6.2.1 What about these products make you buy them elsewhere? **6.2.2 Are there specific products that you will not buy online and why?**	
Probe:	Please explain. Do you think it is more convenient, or maybe safer than online shopping, or is it less time consuming?	
7) **Key**	**What do you understand by the term "information security"?**	Information security
Probe:	Please explain.	
7.1) **Key**	**How do you feel about your personal particulars being available on the Internet?**	Personal concern
Probe:	Please explain.	
7.2) **Key**	**What do you understand about people hacking into the Internet? How does this affect your choice to do online shopping?**	Internet hackings
Probe:	Please explain.	
8) **Key**	**What do you usually use the Internet for?**	Internet as a role player
9) **Key**	**Please tell me how the following aspects influence your attitude towards online shopping:**	Aspects influencing online

- **The high South African crime rate;**
- **Familiarity with the Internet;**
- **Trust in the Internet as shopping channel;**
- **Risk-taking in online shopping; and**
- **Credibility of online shopping.**

shopping

	Probe:	Why, please explain. Are you influenced in a positive or negative manner?	
10)	**Key**	**Has a friend ever recommended a site / online shopping facility to you?**	Site recommendations
		10.1) If yes, do you think that you use this site more often / regularly than other sites?	
		Please explain.	
		10.2) Have you ever recommended a site to a friend?	
		What kind of a facility and why?	
11)	**Key**	**To conclude, in your opinion, what do you regard as your main reasons for shopping online?**	Motivations for shopping online
	Probe:	Please explain. What factors or key motivators entice you to do online shopping?	

Are there any questions that you would like to ask regarding the topics discussed today?

11.

Thank you for participating in the study!