СИЛАТА НА НАГЛАСИТЕ И ТЯХНОТО ИЗМЕРВАНЕ С МУЛТИ-АТРИБУТИВНИ МОДЕЛИ (КАЗУС НА СУПЕРМАРКЕТИТЕ)

Савица Димитриеска, Александра Станковска

THE POWER OF ATTITUDES AND THEIR MEASUREMENT WITH MULTI-ATTRIBUTE MODELS (CASE STUDY FOR SUPERMARKETS)

Savica Dimitrieska [1] Aleksandra Stankovska [2]

Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to present the theoretical knowledge about attitudes and their measurements and to apply that knowledge to the practical experience of buying in different supermarkets. Attitudes, as psychological factors that influence consumer buying process, are very important but not decisive for consumer buying. In other words, consumer might have a positive attitude about the product or service, but he/she has no intention to buy it. Consumer buying decision depends on many other factors, apart from the psychological ones. Those other factors are economic (income, family size, price, demand, inflation, economic situation), social (external social pressure, word-of-mouth, opinions of friends, relatives, colleagues, social class, reference groups, culture), demographic factors, marketing activities (product, price, promotion, distribution and availability) and others. However, positive attitudes lead to positive consumer behaviour.

This paper uses several multi-attribute models (Fishbein model, Theory of reasoned action, Theory of planned behaviour, Ideal-point model of preferences) to research the process of buying of Macedonian consumers in different supermarkets (Vero, Ramstore, Tinex and Zito).

The results of the research will confirm that positive attitudes towards the supermarkets (in terms of quality, variety, availability, security, convenience and

---

[1] Faculty of Economics, European University-Republic of Macedonia, Associate Professor, PhD, Savica.Dimitrieska@eurm.edu.mk

[2] Faculty of Economics, European University-Republic of Macedonia, Associate Professor, PhD, Aleksandra.Stankovska@eurm.edu.mk

promotion) does not mean that consumers will realize their procurements in them. The paper confirms that positive attitudes are different from customer intention to buy.

1. Introduction

In the context of consumer behaviour, attitude is a "learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1991). According to this definition, attitudes are learned (either through direct experience or from others), targeted (toward a particular object) and are characterized by consistency and stability (they have consistency, but are not necessarily permanent and can change over time). Attitude is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation (Business Dictionary, 2017). Attitudes are lasting (enduring) evaluation of people, objects, advertisements or issues, but they can change over time (Solomon, 2009). Attitude object is everything that a person can estimate.

Attitudes are part of psychological factors that influence the consumer's decision to buy products or services. Consumers have attitudes, positive or negative, toward many things, such as products, services, companies, advertisements, people, activities, ideas, etc. Research evidence supports the assumption that attitudes strongly affect consumer behaviour. Marketers use advertising to create favourable attitudes toward company, its products and services, reinforce already favorable attitudes and change unfavourable attitudes.

Attitude has three components:

a) affect – the way consumer feels about an attitude object;

b) behaviour-person's intentions or actual behaviour regarding at attitude object;

c) cognition – beliefs a consumer has about an attitude object.

This is so-called ABC model of attitudes. The three components of attitude are consistent. This means that a change in one attitude component tends to produce related changes in the other components.

Attitudes vary in direction, intensity and the degree of confidence with which they are held. To measure consumer attitudes a scale should be used that allows the consumer to express the nature of their attitude appropriately. To understand consumer attitudes marketers have to "dig" deeper than simply asking how much they like an object. They should ask consumers to report their beliefs, feelings and intentions.

Multi-attribute models: explain consumer's attitude towards an attitude object that depends on beliefs he/she has about the attributes of the object. Attitude models examine the composition of consumer attitude in terms of selected product attributes or beliefs. They have three elements:

a) attributes;

 b) beliefs;

c) importance weights.

Multi-attribute models that will be used in the practical example are the following:

A) Fishbein model

B) Theory of reasoned action

C) Theory of planned behaviour

D) Theory of goal-directed behaviour and

E) Ideal-Point theory of preferences

The motive for writing this paper that applies theoretical knowledge to practical example of buying in different supermarkets comes from the fact that, despite the high prices, they have become so much a part of modern living, especially in major cities. People like the idea of shopping into big malls. They recognise the quality of products there, the variety of products, the high prices, as well as the promotion activities, but still they prefer to buy in local friendly shops. The paper will confirm that economic and social pressure influence on customer buying process. Psychological factors (attitudes) have an influence, but they are not decisive in the act of buying.

The differences among different models can be illustrated in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Formulas of the attitude models

Fishbein model
AO = ∑BiEi

Theory of reasoned action
BI = Aact + SN

Theory of planned behaviour
BI = Aact + SN + PCB

Model of goal-directed behaviour
B = BI + Aact + SN + PCB + FPB + RPB + D + PosEA + NegEA

Ideal point model of preferences
Ao = ∑ Wi   Ii - Xi

Ao = Attitude towards object
Aact = Attitude towards act
Bi = Belief about the product's possession of the attribute
BI = Behavioural intention
D = Desire
Ei = Evaluation of the attribute
FPB = Frequency of past behaviour
NegEA = Negative anticipated emotions
PCB = perceived behavioural control
PosEA = Positive antiipated emotions
RPB = Recency of past behaviour
SN = Subjective norms
Wi = Importance of the attribute
Ii = Ideal amount of attribute
Xi = Perceived amount of attribute contained by product

2. Research method

For the purpose of this paper, two sources of data were used:

A) Secondary sources: data and information from reviewing the literature on attitudes and their measurement.

B) Primary data: the data necessary to develop the final questionnaire were divided in two sections: a) demographic data (gender and age) and b) psychographic data on person's opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences collected through Likert scale and Semantic Differential Scale. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to 44 individuals, in period between

15th of January and 15th of February, 2017. Results were collected by e-mail and Facebook.

3. Results and analysis

In the practical example, attitudes of consumers towards four brands of supermarkets were examined - Vero, Ramstore, Tinex, Zito. Firstly, consumers were asked to identify the most important (salient) attributes of supermarkets in general. They were asked about the most important attributes by using the following open-ended question: "What are the most important attributes of supermarkets?" Consumers stated several attributes, but as most important were pointed out:

a) Price;
b) Quality;
c) Variety;
d) Convenience;
e) Security;
f) Promotions (discounts, information on rabats, sales promotion).

Other attributes that were mentioned were: parking, offering original products, organic food, ready-made food, fruits, wider moving space for customers, location in the supermarket where it can offer cheaper products only, better service, free shopping bags, etc.

Table 1. Results according to Fishbein multi-attribute model

Attributes of supermarkets	Importance of an attittude rating Ei (-3...+3)	VERO		RAMSTORE		TINEX		ZITO	
		Belief (-3....+3)	b x E	Belief (-3....+3)	b x E	Belief (-3....+3)	b x E	Belief (-3....+3)	b x E
Price	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	3
Quality	3	2	6	3	9	1	3	0	0
Variety	3	3	9	3	9	1	3	-1	-3
Convinience	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Security	-1	3	-3	3	-3	3	-3	3	-3
Promotions	2	3	6	3	6	2	4	1	2
Attitude score A0			21		24		12		1

Then, consumers were asked to rate the stated attributes according to their importance (Ei), on a scale of 7 items, ranging from - 3 (not important) to +3 (very important) for each of the salient attributes. According to the results, quality of products and variety are the most important attributes of supermarkets to customers. Security, convenience and price are the least important attributes. It doesn't mean that they are not valid, but customers expect them to be there for them.

The component Bi shows how much customers believe that the actual supermarket possess the salient attribute. Beliefs, were, also measured on a scale ranging from -3 (very low) to +3 (very high) for quality, variety, convenience, security and promotions, and from -3 (very high) to +3 (very low) for prices. For each brand of supermarket - Vero, Ramstore, Tinex, Zito, beliefs of consumers about each attribute were estimated. (4 supermarkets and 6 attributes result in 24 belief measurements).

The final results, according to Fishbein model, show that Ramstore has the maximum score (the best score) of 24. In analyzing results by using Fishbein model, the maximum score is the best score. This supermarket Ramstore has the highest points in quality, variety, security and promotions. Also, Vero with 21 points is a very good supermarket that was positively rated by the consumers. Zito, has the best prices (the lowest ones) but it lacks points in quality of products, variety and not enough promotions of products. The Table 3 shows the results of Model of Ideal point.

On the Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important), respondents were asked to state the importance of attributes of supermarkets in general (Wi), as well as their "ideal" (preferred) attribute (Ii). After this, consumers were asked to state their beliefs about the attributes that are possessed by concrete supermarkets (Xi). Consumers perceive "ideal" supermarket with a moderate price, best quality of products, lots of variety, good convenience, good security and lots of promotion activities. Ramstore, again, by using this model seems to be very close to "ideal" supermarket, according to almost all attributes. Other supermarkets lack points in promotion, quality and variety mostly.

Table 3. Results according to Ideal-Point model of Preferences

Attributes of supermarkets	Importance of an attittude rating Wi (1-7)	Ideal point Ii	Beliefs Xi			
			VERO	RAMSTORE	TINEX	ZITO
Price high (1) - low (7)	5	4	2	1	4	6
Quality bad (1) - good (7)	7	7	6	7	4	2
Variety low (1) - high (7)	6	7	7	7	5	2
Convinience low (1) - high (7)	4	2	4	4	5	6
Security low (1) - high (7)	2	7	7	7	7	7
Promotion bad (1) - good (7)	5	6	6	7	5	2
Attitude score Wi * (Ii-Xi)			25	28	50	111

The Ideal point model of preferences means that the lowest points are better than higher ones, or they are close to the ideal, that is quite opposite than Fishbein model. The ideal results are obtained if the actual brand has an overall attitude score of zero.

For the purpose of other models, that include the customer's intentions to buy in supermarkets and their emotions, knowledge and behavior about them, the following results were obtained:

To the question: "Does advertising influence on your buying decision in supermarkets?" Out of 44 respondents, 28 (64%) said "yes", 8 (18%) were undecided and 8 (18%) said "no". This confirms the postulates of Theory of reasoned action that subjective norms (the external environment and social pressure) influence customer's decision making. This was also confirmed with the results of the following question: "Does information on sale promotions and discounts influence on your buying in specific supermarket?" Out of 44 respondents, 32 (73%) replied "yes", 2 (5%) are undecided and 10 (23%) stated "no".

However, customers like the idea of shopping in supermarkets and big malls, but they do not intend to buy there on a regular basis. They recognize the

quality, the variety, security of the big supermarkets, but they do buy in other retail shops. This claim was confirmed by questions: "Do you intend to buy goods in the mentioned four supermarkets in the course of this week?" and "How often you purchase goods in the mentioned four supermarkets"? Actually results supported the Theory of planned behavior when out of 44, 21 (47%) replied that they have intention to buy in the mentioned supermarkets in the course of the week, 11 (25%) were undecided and 11 replied "no".

The final results show that people like shopping in supermarkets, but they are not so willing to buy in them. This confirms that for buying decision not only psychological factors are important, but also companies need to pay attention to social factors (culture, subculture, reference groups, friends, relatives, word-of-mouth, social status) and marketing activities (product, price, distribution and promotion).

4. Conclusion

Even not so often, but generally people want to buy goods in supermarkets. Regardless of age and gender, people have a positive opinion about supermarkets. According to respondents, an "ideal" supermarket should offer the best quality of products, lots of variety of products, middle-leveled prices, good convenience, excellent security and lots of promotion activities. It is true, that people recognize the quality, variety, high prices in the big supermarkets, but because of the living standard and their economic situation they prefer to buy in local shops. This actually confirms the theoretical theories for measuring attitudes of the consumers.

People make the decision to buy goods in supermarkets based on psychological factors, but also on the basis of social and economic pressures. On their buying decision, friends, colleagues, mass media (subjective norms) have a great influence. Results also show that people pay attention to advertisements and promotion of goods.

The results of the research were supported by the theoretical multi-attribute attitude models. In order supermarkets to be successful, they need to research the needs, demands, wishes and preferences of consumers, as well as the impact of the external environment and economic pressures to buying decision of customers.

REFERENCES

Armstrong, M., Vickers, J., Zhou, J. (2009). Prominence and consumer search. The RAND Journal of Economics, 40 (2)

Business Dictionary, Definition of Entrepreneurship, Available at: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneurship.html [Accessed 16th January 2017]

Fishbein, M (1967). Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement. New York: Wiley

Fishbein, M., Ajzen, I. (1975). Belief, attitude, intention and behavior. Mass: Addison- Wesley

Nelson, P. (1970). Information and consumer behavior. The Journal of Political Economy, 78 (2)

Schiffman, L., Kanuk L. (1991). Consumer behavior, 4th Edition, Prentice Hall, USA

Simon, H. A. (1955). A behavioral model of rational choice. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 69 (1)

Solomon, M. (2009). Customer behavior – buying, having, being, Eight edition, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Pearson Prentice Hall

Solomon, M., Russell-Bennett, R., Previte, J. (2013). Consumer Behaviour, Pearson Australia