

ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AS THE BASIS FOR PRESERVING THE COMPANY'S COMPETITIVE POSITION IN THE MARKET

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Abstract:

Consumer satisfaction is the subject of a growing number of researches. The markets are more and more adjusted and shaped under a predominant influence of consumers. Such influence created a need for continuous measurement of consumer satisfaction, which puts consumers at the epicentre of business activities. In this paper we researched the consumer satisfaction with company's X products in Croatia. The quantitative research method was used. The data gathered with this survey show consumer attitudes towards the experience of using company's X products. According to the research results, consumers are to a large extent satisfied with the fulfilment of needs and expectations by company's X products. The research shows that, apart from quality, design and current offer of products, the consumers are mostly satisfied with the price-quality ratio.

Keywords: consumer satisfaction, design, consumer behaviour, measurement, shopping.

1 INTRODUCTION

Consumer satisfaction is a current concern from the point of view of sustainable business operations in modern market conditions based on the knowledge economy. The choice of topic and research area is based on the fact that today's market is shaped under the most consumer influence. As a result, of this, the increasingly global competition, whose products are technological and non-technological innovations, which are aimed at the activities of consumers and their satisfaction. Failure to gain a consumer or even neglect consumer needs will not prevent the company from surviving today as well as further participation in market games. Consumer satisfaction thus becomes the basis of growth and enterprise development of the company. Research shows that many companies are massively adjusting to consumers, and their resources focus on understanding and meeting their demands and needs. The fact of importance and the strength of satisfaction as the demanding business goal of every company has inspired intrigue for the area and subject of the research.

Consumers do not buy products that are not needed. They will select the product they are convinced that they will meet one or more of their needs. Satisfaction is one of the possible consequences of consumer spending decisions. Regardless of the level of advertising, inability to meet the needs means brand failure (Foxal et al., 2007). According to author Kesić (1999, p. 317), satisfaction is related to the prize resulting from the use of the product and which is in line with expectations, while the authors of Grbac and Meler (2010, p. 279) define consumer satisfaction as a measure to measure the product or service delivered or exceeded the expectations of consumers.

The feature that a consumer searches for in a product is a utility that is also a condition for survival and success on the market; so that the motivation to buy can be derived from the function of the benefit (Grbac, 2009). In order for the companies to realize and maintain satisfied customers, they decide to strengthen the consumer-driven value factors. Market value is an independent consumer assessment of product usability that is based on perceived benefit versus cost. Sometimes manufacturers have adapted to consumers, but today they produce standardized products and leave consumers to choose from the offer, and they resort to more precise marketing for the purpose of building consumer relationships (Kotler, 2008). The higher the value created for the consumer, the satisfaction is expected to be greater.

Consumer satisfaction is the key to retaining and attracting consumers. A customer whose needs are not met is less satisfied and his (non)satisfaction is likely to have an impact on future decisions.

Consumer satisfaction is measured in order to better understand the experiences that consumers are tempting to use through the product. By measuring, we find out if the selected product has met expectations and whether there is a need to modify or supplement it. The process is focused on collecting satisfaction data that is stored and analyzed statistically.

Measurement of pleasure does not only offer information to consumers about the level of consumer satisfaction, it also shows consumers loyalty through maintaining relationships, provides information on consumer reactions to new products, and points to areas that companies need to improve. Consumer needs as well as trends change very rapidly, so this fact justifies continuous monitoring of consumer satisfaction.

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the importance of understanding and influencing consumer satisfaction in business operations. Although consumer satisfaction is a relatively researched term, research results could open up numerous issues and shape new solutions. The main objective of the research is to find out and answer the main research question and to the hypothesis testing. A face to face questionnaire with the quantitative research method is used to explore the consumer satisfaction. A major research question is to determine are consumers satisfied by meeting their own needs and expectations with the company's X products in Croatia?

2 METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

A face to face questionnaire is used in quantitative research method. The sample contains of 50% female and 50% male respondents. Based on the real feasibility of the research, according to the limitations, sample size was determined on 100 subjects. Quantitative research was carried out, the

data was collected until the quota of a predetermined sample structure was reached. Targeted population is the basis for determining satisfaction, answering the main question of research, and testing the hypothesis. A cross-sectional research design was selected, in which a population, a sample of research and collected data were surveyed by surveyed consumers over a period of time. The largest number of surveyed consumers belongs to the age group of 18 to 30 years. The second age group is a group of 31 to 49 years. The age group of 71 and over does not belong to any of the surveyed consumers. The lowest percentage of surveyed consumers includes the age group of 50 to 70 years old, which belongs to 20% of the surveyed consumers.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Half of the surveyed consumers as the reason for their purchases at the company's X warehouse accounted for the price of products. 42% were male and 58% female consumers, while more than a quarter of consumers had product quality and other reasons as purchasing reasons at the company's X warehouse.

In the next step of the research, the issue is focused on discovering entities that, together with consumers, participated in the buying process. Deciding on choosing and buying a product can certainly be influenced by the opinions and attitudes of people accompanying consumers.

58% of the consumers shopping in the company's X warehouse by the family, which was confirmed by the target group of targeted consumers of the company X. With a friend shopping in the company's X warehouse, 16% of consumers surveyed, while with a wife or husband shopping in the company's X warehouse, 13% of consumers surveyed. Only 4% consumers spent their purchases independently. With a girl or a boyfriend shopping in the company's X warehouse, 9% of consumers surveyed (Table 1).

Table 1: Consumer choice of purchasing participants in company's X warehouse

Answers	%
Alone	4 %
With family	58 %
With friends	16 %
With girlfriend/boyfriend	9 %
With wife/husband	13 %

96% of the surveyed consumers are satisfied with company's X products quality based on their own experience. The survey shows that only 4% of respondents are not satisfied with company's X products quality (Table 2).

Table 2: Zadovoljstvo potrošača kvalitetom proizvoda poduzeća X

Answers	%
DA	96 %
NE	4 %

Given such a large percentage of satisfied consumers with the quality of the products follows that:

H1 (First Research Hypothesis): "According to own experience more than 60% of consumers are satisfied with company's X products quality" has been confirmed.

In the research, we are examining the satisfaction of consumers with the width of product offerings of company X. Answering the question can provide the company's home warehouse with information about possible bid adjustments. The decision to choose the range of assortments from company X seems to be justified by the percentage of 86% of consumers surveyed who are satisfied with the current range. However, the percentage of surveyed consumers who are not satisfied with the range of assortment offerings should certainly not be ignored. The results pointing to 14% of dissatisfied consumers with the current range of assortment offerings can be seen as a potential reason for adjusting the assortment of the bid, as it is a smaller sample of 100 respondents. Larger research

could indicate a significantly higher percentage of unsatisfied consumers, which would confirm the possible need to adjust the range of assortment offerings. If the assortment range does not meet the needs, consumers could easily change their favorite place of purchase. Negative consumer communication on the lack of assortment supply range would certainly add additional damage to the reputation of company X's commodity store. The result analysis follows that:

H2 (Second Research Hypothesis): "More than 70% of consumers are satisfied with the current breadth of company's X products range" has been confirmed.

The purpose of the research is to determine the level of consumers (not)satisfied with the company's X products design. In addition to quality, design has been selected as another criterion that will have an impact on the satisfaction of meeting the needs and expectations of company's X products. Satisfaction with the design used the following scale: totally dissatisfied, partially dissatisfied, partially satisfied, satisfied, completely satisfied. Less than half (44%) of the surveyed consumers are satisfied with company's X products design. In a sample of 100 surveyed consumers, none are completely dissatisfied, while only one is partially dissatisfied. Partially satisfied with company's X products design X is 14% of consumers surveyed. Maximum satisfaction with company's X products design was 41% of the surveyed consumers, more than half of whom were male consumers. Measures that express the forms of design satisfaction total include 99% of the consumers surveyed. Based on the results obtained it follows that:

H3 (Third Research Hypothesis): „More than 60% of consumers are satisfied with the company's X products design“ has been confirmed.

Two competitive advantages of Company X's products are the price and quality of the products. The question examines consumers about the satisfaction of the price and product quality ratio. A large number of companies point out that their products are the best price/quality ratio. 97% of surveyed consumers are satisfied with company's X price and quality ratio. The price and quality ratio has certainly met the expectations of consumers. Of the total number of surveyed consumers, 97% are satisfied with the ratio of product price and quality. The results point to the justified long-term price strategy of company X with the offer of quality products. The results obtained show the high utilization of the company's X products, which promotes the emotional attachment of consumers who consider their purchase as justified as well as product choice decisions.

Analysis of the results show that 96% of the respondents are satisfied with meeting the needs and expectations of the company's X products. Of the 96% of consumers surveyed, 51% are women and 49% of men. The measure that could describe satisfying consumers through the above mentioned issue are completely satisfied with consumers.

Fulfilled expectations have proven to be a good basis for continuing to maintain customer relationships, and justify the consumer's trust. Company's X products satisfied needs and expectations of up to 96% of consumers surveyed. The design has met more than 80%, 96% quality and the widest range of 86% of consumers tested. Analysis of the results suggests that shopping consumers go to close people, mostly accompanying with the family, which is also the target group of company X. It has created a strong relationship and close relationship with consumers and created their marketing toward family measures. The highest satisfaction of the surveyed consumers has been confirmed by the value provided through the price and product quality ratio.

In response to the main research question, which is: Are consumers satisfied by fulfilling their own needs and expectations of the company's X products we can conclude that the respondents are satisfied with meeting the needs and expectations with company's X products.

4. CONCLUSION

Consumers make their decisions based on adopted marketing messages, and companies make decisions about marketing messages based on consumer satisfaction measurement. Within that business cycle, today's measurement of consumer satisfaction becomes an indispensable activity, which is also a condition for survival in a competitive market. Messages are tailored to consumer autonomy and maximize consumer perceptions. Given the continuous development of the degree of

customer demand, the activities of the company must necessarily encompass the processes of eliminating doubt about the quality of the product. In addition to quality, one of the most important criteria when making a purchase decision is price. Consumerism is influenced by financial derivatives to form a market where companies can very rarely determine their prices independently, without being dependent on market trends.

Through the analysis, we get a picture of how company X focuses on finding opportunities that can affect its performance rather than competition. Within all of their processes, company X took the interests of the clients into account and identified them as a fundamental reason for achieving the company's success. The research suggests that the golden advantage of the company X over competitors could be that, which has enabled price availability with quality, and an innovative and fashionable product design. The importance of consumers gets effective on a daily basis so that the impact of their thinking goes through all the corporate structures. At the end, companies "live" from consumers. The company's additional success will depend on the level at which the company has accepted the persistence of everyday change. Resistance to change in companies gives flexibility to meet changing consumer demands and needs.

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