

Research Methods SUMMATIVE

Ziwei Li¹, Haizheng Li²

¹ Constantine College, University of York, York, U.K.

² Wentworth College, University of York, York, U.K.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the most effective methods of incentive policy and the impact on consumers behaviours. In the business case of “Starbucks’ new sustainability commitment”, its main aim is to encourage greater consumer acceptance and use of reusable containers by understanding the characteristics of consumers behaviours and then designing incentive methods that are appropriate. This research can provide scientific insight into the most effective methods of incentivising. Based on the findings, Starbucks can motivate more consumers to use reusable containers.

KEYWORDS

Customers behaviours; Research methods

1. INTRODUCTION

The research topic is customers behaviours, because from “Starbucks’ new sustainability commitment,” it wants to promote reusable containers and primarily to find the most effective ways of motivating consumers behaviours. The question I want to explain in this research: What is the relationship between customers’ acceptance and use of reusable containers and incentive methods in Starbucks’ in the UK? Because there are many incentive methods, research is needed to find the relationships and to discover the most important and effective ways to motivate consumers’ behaviours.

The main body of this report consists of 3 sections. Section 1 will discuss methodology from the perspectives of research paradigm, approach and strategy; Section 2 will discuss Data collection and analysis; Section 3 will discuss Ethical Issues.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is used to explain why a particular method needs to be used to answer a research question; it is a set of philosophical assumptions that support the development of research. The quantitative method is generally used to analyse problems from an objective point of view. The Research Paradigm can generally consist of three parts in management research: Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, n.d.)

The positivist research paradigm is the basis of quantitative methods (Tuli, 2010). The objectivist ontology, epistemology and axiology contained in the positivist paradigm requires an objective or independent approach to research. We have chosen to explore relationships and influences because

the effects of the trends found in the data are present in other locations and contexts. The focus is on measuring variables and testing causal hypotheses (Sarantakos, 2005; Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005). Ontology: the existence of the world is objective, which is why it is possible to discover universal laws and relationships. Epistemology: It is possible to look at facts (historical data; the collection of large amounts of data) to derive causal relationships and laws of interest, to reduce phenomena to their simplest elements and to make predictions about the future. Thus, in our research, trends and relationships can be identified through the collection of large amounts of data, which can be generally applied and guide future behaviour. Axiology: The research is conducted in a value-free manner where the researcher is independent of the data and maintains an objective stance, and where his or her values do not influence the outcome of the research. The results of the research will be analysed by statistical methods rather than subjective interpretation.

Positivism allows for analysis using objective research methods, thus providing objective data and trends for research, as opposed to interpretivism, which is interpreted from a subjective perspective and does not fit the research design (Morgan, 1980).

2.2. Research Approach

The Research Approach is how to develop theory/knowledge. In this research, the approach is deductive. Deductive reasoning is a process of theory testing and is primarily used to validate the theories of previous generations. It begins with a given theory or generalisation and seeks to see if that theory applies to specific instances (Hyde, 2000). The approach is generally paired with quantitative, and the process is Theory - Hypothesis - Observation/Test - Confirmation/Rejection. The hypothesis is many factors influence consumer acceptance and financial incentives may be important in changing consumers to reusable packaging systems (Coelho, Corona, ten Klooster and Worrell, 2020). This hypothetical proposition will be put to the test in this research.

This choice was made for this strategy for the following three reasons:

- (1) This research strategy was chosen because it allows you to identify issues based on demand and is more flexible than archive.
- (2) It is less restrictive than an archive, for example, if a region has a slow growing Starbucks, a small number of consumers and fewer consumers, in which case the questionnaire can be used to consider the idea of a potential customer.
- (3) It is possible to assess the intent of people who do not buy, or who do not accept, and thus get a richer and more multi-faceted picture. (Bryman, 2007)

Based on the discussion of paradigm, approach and strategy, quantitative research will be chosen for this study.

3. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Data Collection

The study chosen for this research was a quantitative one, with data collected through a questionnaire. Questionnaires are used to collect data by asking participants to answer exactly the same questions. They are usually intended to gather relevant opinions as well as survey data and are used as part of a survey strategy (Foddy, 1994). The questionnaire was chosen for this study for three main reasons.

- (1) In contrast to Archive, which can generally only collect from a fixed number of shops, questionnaire can collect the thoughts of consumers in different regions - for example, by distributing questionnaires via the internet or social media platforms.

(2) The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between incentive methods and consumer behaviour; the Questionnaire is scored on a Likert scale to help us understand how customers behave and accept reusable containers. Archive, on the other hand, can only focus on established facts through a database.

(3) The questionnaire collects primary data in order to better match the data collected to the research question. The Archive, on the other hand, collects secondary data, i.e. predefined data, which can only be used with existing data and cannot be used to collect more information according to the right question (Mitchell, V, 1996).

Strengthens:

(1) In order to validate the previous hypothesis through a deductive approach, the questionnaire has the advantage of a large sample size and can produce more reliable and representative results.

(2) The researcher can choose the type of data, the content of the questions and the method of collection according to the situation, providing customisation (Oppenheim, 2000). Questionnaires can be tailored to the characteristics and requirements of the research.

Weaknesses:

(1) The questionnaire was scored on the basis of fixed questions and could not cover all questions or feedback, and additional questions from participants could not be addressed.

(2) All the questions need to be designed before the questionnaire is distributed, there is a risk that some questions may be missed or the personal circumstances of the participants may be overlooked.

(3) On the Likert scale, different people are treated differently on a scale of 1-5.

3.2. Data Analysis

Questionnaire mainly uses statistical analysis, e.g. assessed statistically using techniques such as correlation or regression (Brown and Saunders, 2008). For example, independent variable: acceptability of second coffee at half price or credit; dependent variable: acceptability of reusable containers. Why choose statistical analysis?

(1) In contrast to textual analysis, which can only inform about phenomena and cannot analyse data, statistical analysis can test hypotheses, such as correlations and causality between variables (deVaus, 2002).

(2) To minimise the influences of researchers' interpretation - result interpretation can be based on the data patterns e. g. positive/negative correlation The interpretation of results can be based on the data, e.g. consistency or correlation (Anderson, 2003).

Strengthens:

The statistical analysis will give a relatively objective result by means of a large number of questionnaires. The final result will not be influenced by the personal circumstances of a few interviewers.

(2) By deriving the statistical results, a relatively consistent view and result can be obtained. It is more beneficial to test the previous hypothesis.

Weaknesses:

(1) The statistical analysis relies heavily on the sample size of the questionnaire, if the sample size is large the data is reliable, if the results are not necessarily reliable because of the limited number of people completing the questionnaire, or the small number of valid questionnaires.

(2) The results of the statistical analysis only reflect the relationships, not the specific needs or ideas of the participants, and some details are not reflected.

4. ETHICAL ISSUES

As questionnaires use raw data and the data is obtained by the researcher and involves contact with the participants. They are therefore usually more likely to involve ethical issues, which require considerable attention and processing. Ethical issues that may involve participants. The first thing to be aware of is the potential harm that the questions and orientations in the questionnaire may cause to participants. The second is that the questions may involve personal data such as personal background, preferences, frequency of purchases and other private data. Also, questionnaires need to be taken with the participants understanding the purpose of the study. These are all areas that need to be self checked before doing the questionnaire. How to avoid and control the impact of Ethical Issues. The questionnaire should be voluntary, allowing participants to complete the questionnaire anonymously, and the questions should be designed in such a way that no personal information is revealed and no personal data is made public. The purpose and content of the study should be stated at the beginning of the questionnaire so that participants are fully informed. It is also important to include a statement on the questionnaire to ensure that no third parties are involved in the collection and processing of data and that the results of the survey will not be made available to third parties (Brown and Saunders, 2008).

5. CONCLUSION

This report focuses on a research question about the most effective methods of incentive policy and the impact on consumers behaviours. Throughout the research, it selects positivism research paradigms, deductive approach, quantitative research method and survey strategy. At the same time, it selects questionnaire for data collection. Finally, possible ethical issues are identified and effective measures are taken to avoid and control the effects of ethical issues. Overall, this study is feasible. Firstly, the research design is in line with the purpose of the study, and the data collected and analysed through the questionnaire is able to test the previous hypothesis and answer the research questions. Secondly, Starbucks has a number of shops in the UK region and is a leading brand in cafes and has a certain level of popularity, so it can easily reach its customers. Also, with the popularity of questionnaires, people are more accepting of this quick and easy way to answer the questions.

However, there are still some uncertainties. Firstly, the data collected may not reflect all the details of the issues; secondly, in terms of privacy, participants in questionnaires may not always be willing to reveal their true thoughts; and also, whether the sample size is large enough that the requirements of the study can be met.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bryman, A. (2007) 'The research question in social research: what is its role?', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 5–20.
- [2] Coelho, P., Corona, B., ten Klooster, R. and Worrell, E., 2020. Sustainability of reusable packaging—Current situation and trends. *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*: X, 6, p.100037.
- [3] Creswell, J. (2002) *Research Design: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (2nd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [4] Fink, A. (2003b) *The Survey Handbook*. (2nd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [5] Foddy, W. (1994) *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Hyde, K., 2000. Recognising deductive processes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(2), pp.82-90.
- [7] Marczyk, G., DeMatteo, D. and Festinger, D. (2005). *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*. New Jersey. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- [8] Mitchell, V. (1996) 'Assessing the reliability and validity of questionnaires: an empirical example', *Journal of Applied Management Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 199–207

- [9] Morgan, G. (1980) 'Paradigms, metaphors and puzzle solving in organization theory', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 25, pp. 605–22.
- [10] Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., n.d. *Research methods for business students*. (fifth edition)
- [11] Tuli, F. (2010). *The Basis of Distinction Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Social Science: Reflection on Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Perspectives*, 6(1).