

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN ROMANIAN TRADE

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The paper aims to identify the importance of scientific research for romanian trade companies, how they deal with marketing research and what aspects retailer companies generally want to study, concerning the market they operate in. Although, research is not necessarily specific for trading, however, companies in this area have began to show their availability to carry out research of customer needs, their suggestions, their capacity to purchase, the level of training and the habits of buying and using, the way how their products are received by individual customers.

To understand exactly how the above issues are addressed by traders through a qualitative marketing research we were able to identify the opinions and attitudes of traders concerning the use of market research methods. The research was based on sampling retailer companies in Braşov.

Cuvinte cheie: scientific research, marketing research, commerce, retailers companies

Clasificare JEL : M31

1.Intoduction and framework of the study

In trade, like in the whole economy by the way, scientific research is a tool for studying and analyzing the phenomena in the economy, determining the ways for increasing economic efficiency, forecasting and scheduling activities, the organization and the management of business processes. [8]

The purpose of this paper is to determine the major importance of scientific research for the trade; we will see in which way retailers are influenced by marketing research, more exactly if they resort to such research and in which way decisions based on the results from their implementation.

Scientific research gives to the economic units, real opportunities to learn the phenomena in the economy, their content, structure and dimensions, to determine the means for identifying factors that lead to their formation and lead economic units to solve the problems. [1]

The Functional involvement of scientific research in the foundation and implementation of trade policies is owed to the complexity of processes taking place in the movement of goods and continuous improvement of trade. The private sector development, the restructuring trade, the social protection of consumers are just a few items that had a critical importance in the foundation of scientific research seen as fundamental elements of trade policies. Given the complexity of such issues, currently the scientific research for trade implies an operational involvement through studies, analyzes and predictions trade to ensure a proper diagnosis and resolution for the problems faced by retailers in Romania. [3]

Commercial scientific research plays an important role in the whole development of trade by expanding the scope of business, improving distribution and promoting modern forms of sale. Extending the scope of business has emerged as a result of the transition to a market economy because today's wholesale and retail trade not only target individual consumer goods for the population, but also consumer goods especially productive for entrepreneurs and businesses (in a market economy both categories of products traded are based on the supply and demand game, regardless of the business activity, company must play by the rule). Situations like this require scientific research to find some way of harmonizing and realizing the distribution of the two product categories both in terms of trade flows and in terms of logistics that can be used.

Other issues highly important that can be solved using scientific research for commercial are those relating to the orientation of development and modernization of the commercial network. For this, there are necessarily solutions for increasing their commercial areas, choosing the best business location, profiling units according to market requirements, and other aspects that contribute, that the commercial agent gets closer of the consumer, and so he could influence its buying choice.

At the same time with the development and the modernization of trade there is a need to research the possibilities of introducing on a permanent basis during the activity of new modern forms of sale that will enable all consumers to reach a wide range of products both through the classic commercial units but also trough other new forms such as e-commerce.

The specificity of scientific research in trade requires making a difference of the three types of research, i.e. fundamental, applied and development, which have a strong interference as applied research is largely conditioned by the fundamental, and the latter can not be defined without concrete approaches of different fields. [4]

There are four roles in the commercial research: explanatory, predictive, summary, and practically, their content ranging from explaining the essence of the phenomena and the processes studied and the relationships types between them (causal conditioning and functional) to verify in practice the truth obtained and formulating the solutions to improve commercial practice. The marketing research requires the analysis of relevant data for the researched problem of a retailer, who deals with it at a certain moment during his current activity [7]

As a result of the contribution that scientific research brings in solving the problems of traders regarding the most efficient integration in the market, this activity enjoys increasingly higher attention being assimilated to trade policies promoted through the development programs of each company.

Starting from the wide range of concerns and complexities trade is facing, scientific research has the following areas: the research of the international market, the research of the domestic market, organization and operation of the information systems and providing logistics information, organizing promotional activities in country and abroad.

Domestic Market research is an area, where papers in a prospectively and applied form, concerning the major area of commercial activity can be developed. The main issues that can be studied in this field are the distribution channels, the trade market logistics conjuncture and market investigations. Investigations on the supply and demand of goods are made to create statistical surveys regarding the design, substantiation and conducting various tests of image products, stores and companies, and research concerning the population's behavior of consuming and buying. Regarding the distribution channels there are taken into account-diagnostic analysis on commercial infrastructure in the territory.

In the process of studying the domestic market conjuncture, there are taken into consideration concerns regarding the creation, development and maintenance of separate modules, in the public database of information on the trade, concerning: retail prices and their trends, financial indicators, types of business (commercial, agricultural companies, industrial, service providers).

Scientific research is an activity that must be integrated into the management of the business traders, which is motivated in mostly by the strong competition in the market, companies are facing more often with the need to find superior solutions to the problems they face. Besides this, commercial firms must also know, the implications of different types of innovations occurring in the structure of products, promotional techniques, negotiating or contracting have on the market [2]

One of the most important aspects regarding the integration of scientific research in the management of the activities in the commercial structure relates to the very high costs generated by the complexity of the research. Generally speaking small firms are not financially strong enough to invest in research and often they don't even have a specialist in the firm to handle the implementation of solutions based on information provided by the scientific research.

2. The role and the importance of scientific research to the retail in Romania

The present study aims to identify the importance given by the managers of retailer companies in Braşov to marketing research.

The method chosen is the projective qualitative one: the in-depth semi-structured interview.

We chose this method because it runs on a guide and we can learn from subjects the exact topics that interest in this research. If the subjects does not address some issues that concern us, the interviewer has the possibility within semidirectiv in-depth interview to intervene, calling into question those problems and issues that we want to find out from the research. [6]

Qualitative research method was associated with the project "complete the sentence technique." This requires to the subject to complete an unfinished sentence or phrase with "whatever comes him in mind". Using this method it is possible to obtain responses that are more precise compared with answers to questions on the same subject, because it appeals to the human subconscious. For example:

Market research methods are.....
One reason I would not use the methods of market research is.....
Since we use market research methods.....
I consider the methods of studying the market is.....for our company.
After studying the market our decisions were.....
Quantitative marketing research is.....
Qualitative marketing research is.....
Companies that use market research methods are.....

The advantages of this method are: it is easy to implement, relatively low costs and productivity in finding the desired information. As the main drawback we identify the impossibility to extrapolate the research to the entire

population. The sampling unit in our case will be the managers of retail companies in Brasov, regardless of the business of the company, size or turnover that can be selected in order to form the sample. [5]

The sample size was 12 managers. They were grouped by size as it follows: four managers within small-sized companies, 4 of the medium-sized companies and from large retailers 4 of them. They were contacted by telephone to check if they accept to be in the sample and after the phone call the exact date and time of the interview were set up to. The location can be established at the company's headquarters or at another place where the managers agree to be interviewed.

In this research it was not necessary a recruitment questionnaire because the managers were contacted from a list of retailers Brasov made available by the Department of Statistics.

2.1. Research objectives

We intend to determine the possible use of marketing research; determining the importance of using marketing research; identify the reasons why interview subject - Braşov retailers use marketing research in their current activity; identify the reasons why the interview subject -Brasov retailers do not use marketing research; determining if representatives of retailers surveyed are satisfied with the effects of the use of market research and determine if the interview subject- Brasov retailers representatives are satisfied with the cost - effectiveness.

2.2. Data analysis and interpretation

The analysis of test results from the technique “complete the sentence” provided the following answers:

Market research methods are generally considered useful by the interviewed subjects. Most interviewees would like that these methods were more affordable in terms of cost and achievable in a shorter time (for quantitative research).

The main reasons why subjects would not use marketing research is the lack of money for the moment, the lack of a specialist's own in-house to handle this activity and the distrust in the results that may occur has a result of distrusting collaborators that are working in this study.

Most of the interviewed managers consider important and necessary the market research methods, for their firms and said after conducting studies take better decisions. Retailer managers of small size companies do not use the market studies in their current activity, they consider it important but at the same time too costly and resource intensive.

In general managers who used the market studies and have adapted their decisions based on the results in a greater or smaller extent. They consider quantitative marketing research as the most important method of market research and market research firms that use it in the current activity are generally successful companies with a high budget and its own marketing department.

On the opposite side are the managers of companies that have never used the methods of market research (five managers), but they consider it important for reasons such as lack of money and lack of a specialist in the company they have not framed this activity in the companies; they would like in general, market research methods wee less resource intensive.

Also among the 12 subjects, only 7 used to market research methods, both qualitative and quantitative. They studied the market to maintain their market position, to improve the service for customers and to study their behavior.

Except for one subject, everyone else considers, the market research methods very important. Apart from the five subjects who have never used market research, the other uses it every 6 months or 1-3 times a year or at intervals greater than one year (generally medium-sized companies).

The main methods used are either quantitative research or qualitative research methods are: the interview (listed three times), the verbal protocol (twice), the focus group (once), and the observations (once). In all cases the consumers spoken behavior, the opinions, the preferences and their attitudes were studied

Of the seven respondents who have used market research methods, only one was not so satisfied, the other six being quite happy with the results.

The results are considered important and are therefore taken into account in the decision by six of the seven managers. Five subjects will certainly use the research in the future, another subject takes into account this possibility, and another does not believe that will use the market research. In the case of the 5 subjects who have never used a marketing research, the main reason was the lack of a proper specialist (in four cases) followed by lack of budget (one case).

Market Study is generally carried out by large retailers who don't care so much for the costs of this activity. Small retailers do not use market research in general for reasons such as lack of budget for this activity and the lack of its own specialist or marketing department.

2.3. Results of the qualitative marketing research

From the above analysis we can conclude that the large retailers have assimilated quite well the research, becoming aware of the need to study the market. This was possible due to their financial capacity, but also because they have their own department with specialized people who can carry out a market survey.

In contrast, small retailers even if they consider important the market research, they don't make any market study because their main activity is based only on simple resale of goods. But successful companies want to know the consumer behavior, their opinions, their preferences and their attitudes about the work of the company. By knowing these factors, the company can improve its services and thereby increase customer satisfaction and increase profits. Market research arrangements differ from one trader to another, they can be studied to achieve quantitative or qualitative based on an interview, focus group or observation. The results of these studies are particularly important and therefore must be taken them into account in the decision process.

The above analysis proves this; most interviewed managers are largely taking into account the results of the undertaken studies.

3. Conclusions

A marketing-oriented company, whether commercial or not, can not operate under normal conditions if it has not a sufficient amount of information. The complexity and dynamics that characterize the information area, requires a rigorous approach to collecting, inventorying, evaluation and analysis. To meet this requirement, marketing has helped the commercial agent with the marketing research. For a better understanding of the market to seize motivations and behaviors of consumers, to formulate and properly orient their strategies, marketing professionals must be well informed. In a competitive and unstable environment it is necessarily to be constantly informed, the information is helping to reduce the risk in taking decision. In order to have better information they achieve to marketing research.

In this paper we wanted to identify the importance given to scientific research by firm's retailer, how they deal with marketing research and what aspects retailer firms generally want to study about the market in which it operates. Although research is not necessarily specific for trading, however, companies in this area, now began to show their willingness to carry out research for customer needs, to see their capacity to purchase, the level of training of purchasing and using habits, the way in which their products are received by individual customers.

As a result of qualitative research, it was revealed that large retailers have quite well assimilated the research, becoming aware of the need for market research. This was possible due to their financial status, but also because they have their own department with specialized people who can carry out a market survey. In contrast, small retailers consider it important even if they not have done any market research study as their main activity is based only on simple resale of goods. Market research arrangements differ from one trader to another, they may be carrying out studies quantitatively or qualitatively based on an interview, a focus group or an observation method. The results of these studies are particularly important and therefore must be take them into consideration in the decision process. The analysis was based on research interviews and has revealed that most interviewed managers largely take into consideration the results of studies undertaken in the companies they manage.

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