UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE TECHNICAL FACULTY IN BOR MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

XII INTERNATIONAL MAY CONFERENCE ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT



XII STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

Hotel "ALBO" – Bor 28-30. May 2016.

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XII STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION AND MOTIVATION WHEN CHOOSING A LIFE INSURANCE

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Abstract: Life insurance occupies a central place in the insurance market and represents unique financial product that offers both insurance and savings. As a result, this research paper analyses the impact of perception and motivation on consumer behavior when choosing life insurance. The necessity for such analysis stems from the fact that many aspects of consumer behavior change over time influenced by various psychological factors such as: attitudes, perceptions, motives and lifestyles. Having into consideration this aspects, marketers have come to conclusion the following ways to motivate consumers: implementation of loyalty program, risk aversion, fostering curiosity of consumers and changing a consumer's attitude towards a product. Loyalty is an important factor for the consumers to remain loyal to the product or visit the same insurance company as opposed to those consumers who are not loyal. The failure of the life insurance companies to meet customer expectations will lead to customer dissatisfaction and reduced consumer loyalty. Perception affects motivation and is one of the basic factors when choosing a life insurance. If the consumer's perception is ignored, then the success of the marketers is limited in designing the marketing strategy. Hence, this study focus to identify and detect the impact of perception and motivation on consumer behavior when choosing a life insurance. For the purposes of this study, questionnaire was completed by 220 respondents and distributed on the territory of Republic of Macedonia through personal contact (in printed form) and through the social network Facebook. The survey results suggest that consumer motivation and perception about the necessity of life insurance can be increased by: adequate training of the marketers about the product knowledge, implementation of customer relation management in order to reach potential customers through recommendations from existing customers and on time communication with the customers on key changes in its policies and system of information.

Keywords: Life insurance, motivation, perception, consumers, polices, attitudes

1. INTRODUCTION

This research study aims to analyze "The influence of perception and motivation when choosing life insurance." Given the fact that the life insurance market in Macedonia is not developed, a survey was conducted to determine the impact of perception and motivation on buying behavior. Perception and motivation influence consumer's behavior when buying a particular product or service. Hence the relevance of this issue. Given the importance of life insurance, this research study intent to look into how consumers evaluate the product and how they can be motivated to buy the product. In this study specific measures are presented that would ensure continued growth and development of the life insurance market.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND EMPIRICAL EXISTING PRACTICES

Needs in life are expressed in certain periods of life and are affected by various economic, sociological, psychological and other factors. The need for financial security is closely related to consumer's motivation. Motives are important and crucial mental phenomenon and are narrowly defined as:

"Internal forces that drive people to a certain activity, which results in readiness to perform a certain action, and the ultimate purpose of such action is to establish a balance" (3).

Scientificly, there are several ways behind how buyers make their buying decisions: implementation of loyalty program, perceived risk, free products, contests and fostering consumer's curiosity.

Loyalty programs motivate consumers to remain loyal to the product or visit the same insurance company as opposed to those consumers who are not loyal. In the Republic of Macedonia Croatia Insurance Company Inc. - motivates customers to be loyal if they save for their children with "Croatia" loyalty card which allows discount in over 200 locations throughout Macedonia when visiting restaurants, language schools, perfumeries, travel agencies etc.

Other ways to increase the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty is through customer relationship management (CRM). Customer relationship management enables organisations to provide excellent real-time customer service through the effective use of individual account and through collaboration, trust, commitment and information sharing. By applying the customer relationship management, the life insurance company will fix the source of consumer's dissatisfaction. The life insurance company should present all of the necessary informations to the consumers in a clear, comprehensive and accurate manner at the time of sale. After the sale, the communication with the consumers should be achieved in a timely manner and understandable way in order for the consumers to be provided with timely information on any key changes in its policies. This can be achieved through anniversary letter sent to all of the clients (7).

Other way consumer's motivation can be achieved is with emphasis on perceived risk. Perceived risk is considered consumer's level of uncertainty regarding the outcome of a purchase decision. Consumers make decisions under certain degree of risk in their activities when buying a particular product. Life insurance is a tool that eliminates risk and provides certainty to ensure timely assistance to a designated beneficiary upon the death of the insured or to the insured if he or she lives beyond certain age. Educating consumers about existing risks is of great importance because it can motivate consumers to make decisions that reduce risk exposure. Consumers will embrace the perceived risk, understand its significance and will be motivated to buy the product. Some consumers can rely on social security, but there are several risks associated with this type of security. Many consumers are insured by their employers. However, this coverage at work can be completed when an employee will leave their working position. (2)

Consumer's motivation can be increased by monetary rewards in order for the consumers to make a purchase. In the Republic of Macedonia, Croatia Insurance Company Inc. motivates consumers to make a purchase with payment of cash gift in the amount of 3% of the sum insured if they save for their child. One of the condition for the cash gift is excellent results achievent in all of the years of the child secondary education.

Consumers selectively choose which lottery to participate based on perceived value and their expectations for profits. (9) However, one of the problems which might result with cash prizes is that the amount of sales will increase, while the profitability will remain unchanged. As one market researcher explained: "Over time, the promotional price train consumers, especially those that are disloyal to seek deals on the open market rather than to encourage them to be loyal to a certain brand based on attributes other than the price." (2).

Perception is another lead factor in the consumer insurance decision. In the scientific theory there are numerous definitions of perception. The differences arise in defining the stages covered by this process from which we can mention the following definition:

"Perception is a predisposition to perceive things in a certain way and makes sense in line with its prior knowledge, memory, expectations, beliefs, attitudes and personality" (3)

Perception can be shaped under the influence of the external environment. Perceptual sets occur in all the different senses. In life insurance, perception is ascertained by culture, social development, education and informational background (6). For example in Ghandia, majority of policyholder life insurance policies argue that life insurance companies are good at collecting premiums and if one has an accident the life insurance policy will not cover the incurred risk. In contrast, in developed countries people are aware and educated of the importance of life insurance and own more than one life insurance policy.

Perception is a psychological process that includes recording and processing of information. In the process of perception, individuals receives information from the external environment in which they process, select or store the given information. Consumer's acceptance of the external environment has its selectivity, its own interpretation, defense mechanisms, distortion irritations and retention (3) If the consumer's perception is ignored, then the success of the marketers is limited in designing the marketing strategy. Life insurance falls into the category of intangible products and contains special features apart from the material good. Life insurance represents service where production and consumption are inseparable and consumer's are part of the manufacturing and delivery system. This means that the delivery system must reach the consumer, or the delivery system must go to the market. Consumers can evaluate a product along several levels.

Consumers first evaluate the basic characteristics and fundamental advantages of the product. Sales agents can make a significant difference in the product by including added benefits to their customers. For example when acquiring life insurance, the consumer do not acquire only the risk protection represented by the sum of money payed in case of a risk but also the feeling of support and the psychological confort that can be offered by this exchange during the purchase process. The perception by the consumer includes benefits that are not tangible, such as security and support to the client during the purchase process.

Other factors that influence the effect of perception are the emotional influences. For example, in Thailand marketars use emotion as one of the signature characteristics of Thai Life Insurance market. The marketers in Thailand are building the brand through emotional engagement. Thai commercials are more than just a commercial, the Thai Life Insurance Company sends out a lesson about family and about life, about how to love and how to live, about thinking and about behaving. The purpose of advertisements is to cause emotion and perceptual change in consumer's attitude towards the product.

Social factors also affect consumer's perception about the truthfulness of the information. Consumer's perceive their friends as a source of accurate information rather than an advertisement. People who do not own life insurance policy may decide to buy life

insurance because they believe in the truthfulness of the information of their friends and the fact that they have already gone through the process of informing and searching (5). Therefore, the marketers should introduce advertising where real users publish their life stories to present the benefits of life insurance.

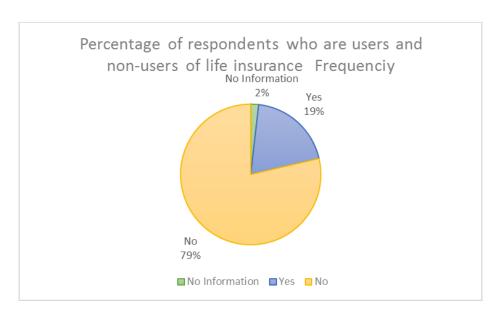
Service staff plays a particular role in forming customer perception about the truthfulness of information. The service staff is in direct contact with customers and connects the inner company with the outside world through the exchange of information (4). These intermediaries are expected to meet the demands and needs of customers with quality intermediation in order to create greater customers trust. Key parameters such as past experience, personal needs, external communication and verbal communication can significantly affect the quality of insurance services. There are three types of customer expectations: the expected service, the desired service and unsatisfactory service, representing the relationship between client and evaluation of service quality and client satisfaction (3). Client satisfaction results in increased profitability, greater market share and is an effective tool in developing a competitive position in the service sector. Client satisfaction results in reduced marketing expenses for attracting new clients, which are higher than the cost of keeping existing ones (4).

Trust is another important factor of life insurance and is best attained when both parties to the agreement fulfill their part in good faith. The life insurance agent must trust the life insurance policymakers and the reliability of the information presented to them, and in turn the policyholder should trust that the agent is providing appropriate and honest advice, untainted by conflicts of personal interest. In the absence of such trust, insurance becomes difficult because it cannot function properly. That means there are new opportunities for life insurance policymakers to attract and retain customers by strengthening customer trust (8).

Understanding these influences can assist policymakers in tailoring products and purchases to the needs of customers. This means taking into account: emotional influences, the presence of trust, education, social influence, social norms, social factors and the perceptived risk. This will increase the overall value of the product, since customers greatly appreciate these added values and are aware of them.

3. RESEARCH METHODS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

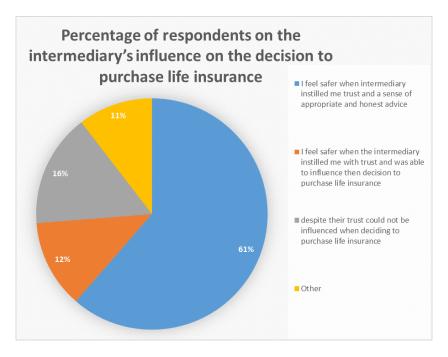
Guided by the theoretical and methodological framework of this paper concerning the impact of motivation and perception on customer behavior when choosing life insurance, based on the proven theories, the paper focuses on determining what the situation in the Republic of Macedonia is regarding this matter. To this end, I conducted research using the questionnaire survey method. The questionnaire was distributed on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia through personal contact (in printed format) and through the social network Facebook.



Source: Own research, conducted from January 2015 to March 2015

Figure 5.1 Figure 5.1 Percentage of respondents who are users and non-users of life insurance

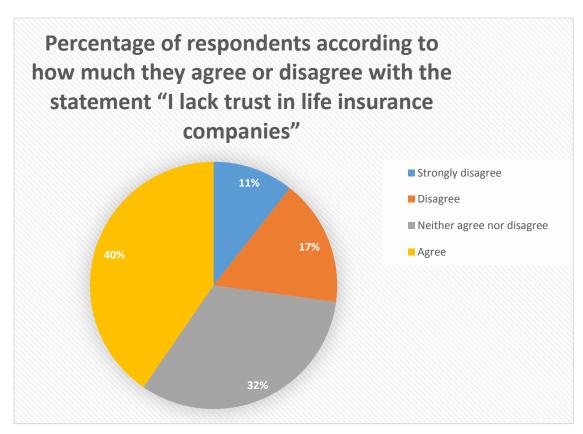
It is important to point out that of the total number of respondents, only 43 respondents (or 19%) had bought life insurance policies, while the remaining 171 respondents (79%) had not. These data indicate that Macedonian citizens have a low awareness of the benefits of using life insurance packages (Chart 5.1).



Source: Own research, conducted from January 2015 to March 2015

Figure 5.2 Percentage of respondents on the intermediary's influence on the decision to purchase life insurance

It is important to also analyze the results from the question "Did the intermediary's attitude affect your decision to purchase life insurance?" The 61.40% who were beneficiaries of life insurance safer when the intermediary instilled them with trust and a sense of appropriate and honest advice, 12.28% felt safer when the intermediary instilled them with trust and was able to influence the decision to purchase life insurance, while 15.78%, despite their trust and certainty, could not be influenced when deciding to purchase life insurance. The findings of this survey show that trust certainty are important elements in the formation of customer perception of their trust of the truthfulness of information. In the absence of trust and certainty, insurance becomes difficult and it cannot function properly. (Figure 5.2) Various strategies to raise awareness among customers include: trust between the intermediary and the life insurance policymakers about the reliability of information presented to the intermediary, intermediaries needing to attract and retain customers by strengthening customer trust, intermediaries needing to be properly trained in product knowledge and possess the necessary communication skills to implement their knowledge, intermediaries needing to develop and advance in line with international insurance standards and possess a flexibility that offers a solution or a suitable alternative to all client requests.



Source: Own research, conducted from January 2015 to March 2015

Figure 5.3 Percentage of respondents according to how much they agree or disagree with the statement "I lack trust in insurance companies"

Trust is an important factor of life insurance and is best attained when both parties to the agreement fulfill their part in good faith. The life insurance agent must trust the life

insurance policymakers and the reliability of the information presented to them, and in turn the policyholder should trust that the agent is providing appropriate and honest advice. In this analysis, respondents who did not have life insurance were asked to rank the statement "I lack trust in insurance companies" on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Of the respondents who did not have life insurance, a higher percentage was distrustful of insurance companies, whereas 27.22% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Figure 5.3).

Most of the respondents who did not have life insurance said they did not trust insurance companies. Given these results, customer trust and loyalty can be increased by: using social media through online discussions and questions clients ask, then establishing effective listening in order to understand the need and the interest of customers, communicating with policyholders who are often confused about whom to contact about services, introducing a permanent systematic program to reach potential customers through referrals from existing clients and timely communication in order to ensure customer awareness of key changes in their policies. This can be done through sending an anniversary letter to clients.

4. CONCLUSION

Understanding the impact of customer perception and motivation is important for the process of customer behavior when choosing life insurance. Loyalty is an important factor in customers remaining loyal to the product and returning to the same insurance company. Communication with policyholders through cooperation, trust, commitment and the sharing of information is important in the process of the customers' degree of satisfaction. Since people perceive friends as a source of accurate information more than they do any salesperson or advertisement, policymakers should introduce advertising wherein real users share their life stories in order to present the benefits of insurance. Furthermore, educating customers about existing risks is of great importance because it can motivate them to make decisions that reduce risk exposure. Service staff plays a particular role in forming customer perception about the truthfulness of information. Key parameters such as past experience, personal needs, external communication and verbal communication can significantly affect the quality

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