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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' DIGITAL COMPETENCIES IN THE PROCESS OF MASTERING MARKETING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Marketing research has always been and will always be of great importance to business, as it studies consumer behavior and economic trends, helping businesses develop and adjust their strategies. Studying and mastering the concepts and methodology of marketing research and acquiring the skills to analyze marketing information are essential for future marketing professionals.

Marketing research is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data that allows companies to better understand the market, consumer needs, and the competitive environment. The main goal of marketing research is to provide the information necessary for making informed business decisions [2]. Research can be conducted by the company itself or by a third party that specializes in market research [1].

The responsibilities of any manager include making decisions, the correctness of which depends on the accuracy and relevance of the information provided to them [3, p. 21]. In this regard, the following possible objectives of marketing research are identified:

1) Studying consumer needs for goods or services, their expectations and preferences;
2) Analyzing the competitive environment, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of competitors;
3) Developing and testing new products;
4) Forecasting the market situation, assessing market trends;
5) Evaluating the effectiveness of marketing strategies [2].

The objectives of marketing research can be classified as follows:

1) Exploratory – involves gathering information that identifies a problem and developing ways to solve it;

2) Descriptive or monitoring – a detailed description of selected research objects and factors that influence them;

3) Experimental or causal – testing hypotheses about the existence of cause-and-effect relationships;

4) Confirmatory – verification of decisions made, reinforcement of formed opinions or beliefs with objective information;

5) Predictive – forecasting the situation on the market or the state of the research object.

At the same time, Gilbert A. Churchill distinguishes the following types of research: exploratory research, descriptive research, and causal research. Exploratory research is research that focuses on generating ideas and gathering information that helps to understand the problem. Descriptive research consists of determining the frequency of occurrence of a certain event or establishing a relationship between two variables. Causal research is research that establishes a cause-and-effect relationship. Gilbert A. Churchill notes that the differences between the three types of research are not clear-cut and that a single study may have several objectives [3, p. 111].

Regardless of the type of research, there are certain stages in its conduct. The first stage is to define the problem and the object of research. The second stage is to choose a research strategy. The next stage is to collect data using the method chosen in the previous step. Data processing and analysis is the fourth stage of marketing research, which is carried out using analytical tools. After completing all of the above stages, the information obtained will be relevant and useful for decision-making, but for it to be applicable, it must be presented with data visualization and key conclusions. The final stage is the use of the research results in the practical activity for which it was conducted [4].

Marketing research is also divided by type of marketing information – primary and secondary. Primary data is raw data collected or obtained through surveys, observations, interviews, and experiments. Such information is unique and selected according to the requirements of the research. It is collected for the first time, which explains its relevance, accuracy, high cost, and duration of collection. Secondary information is information that has already been collected,

processed, and published by another entity. Secondary information is usually provided by organizations such as educational institutions, private enterprises, public sector organizations, trade and industry associations, and companies engaged in marketing research. Examples of Ukrainian research institutes and agencies specializing in various areas of research include the Kyiv School of Economics, the Info Sapiens agency, the Fama agency, and the Center for Social and Marketing Research (SOCIS).

Secondary data is available in print and electronic form, for example in collections, specialized journals, reports, articles, and websites [6]. The State Statistics Service of Ukraine has a website, , where it publishes statistical information. The existence of two types of information gives rise to certain differences that need to be considered.

Table 1

Differences between primary and secondary information

Primary information	Secondary information
Collected for the first time by researchers and corresponds to the research objectives.	Already collected by another researcher and may not correspond to the research objectives.
Up-to-date and new.	May be outdated.
It is costly, as it requires time and other resources for its collection, processing, and analysis.	Relatively inexpensive, as information is collected more quickly and does not require data collection from primary sources, processing, and analysis.
It is in an unprocessed state.	Is processed and analyzed.
Is more accurate and reliable.	Is less accurate and reliable.
Collected through surveys, observation, and experiments.	Collected from printed and electronic sources.

Methods of obtaining marketing information are classified according to the types of marketing information. Primary information is collected through interviews (including in-depth interviews), observation, experiments, surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups. Methods of collecting secondary information include the use of sources from the Internet, archives, and libraries.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are distinguished based on their numerical nature.

Qualitative research refers to the collection of primary or secondary information that is not numerical and cannot be measured. Qualitative research

is conducted to obtain details and specifics that can be used to draw conclusions [8].

Quantitative research involves the collection of primary or secondary data that is numerical and can be measured. Due to the numerical nature of this data, the information obtained is more objective and factual, and easier to work with. Comparative analysis is important for marketing research, and quantitative research facilitates this[8].

Specific types of marketing research can also be identified, which are classified according to the object of research, for example, branding research. It is important for companies to create, maintain, and manage it. It includes identity, values, image, and brand voice. All these aspects require attention because they determine brand loyalty, positioning, perception, identity, and value. It is important to assess how the brand performs compared to its competitors and how to improve its performance, influence, and image.

Consumer behavior is another subject of marketing research, as such information is useful for understanding the influential factors that encourage sales. The purpose of such research is to study the conscious and subconscious factors of consumer interaction with the company. Typically, the level of loyalty, the degree of consumer satisfaction, and what influences them are studied. Additionally, segmentation is provided.

Competitor research is a necessary study for a company, conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of other companies. Such research is useful for planning activities and developing competitiveness, as a company needs to develop and maintain its unique selling proposition. Through comparative analysis of existing indicators, it is possible to identify a competitor's sales level, market share, and the reason why consumers prefer them [8].

To develop a successful product, information obtained through product research is necessary. Companies need to assess how consumers perceive a product or service, what its value is, and whether it is being used correctly. Based on this research, aspects such as branding and product testing are added to the research in order to create a new product or service or improve an existing one [8].

Thus, there are many types of marketing research that differ in purpose, method, object of research, and type of marketing information used, all of which contribute to the achievement of the company's goals. Marketing research indicates what needs investment or shows the economic inexpediency of investing funds. Therefore, conducting marketing research is an example of using an effective tool to maximize profits and will be useful for any type of business activity.

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