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Validity and Reliability

Questionnaires are the most frequently used type of research tool and or instrument when it comes to gathering information from a target respondent population. In general it is an effective tool that helps the researchers gather information on the attitudes, knowledge, opinions, facts, behaviors, and other information regarding their target respondents. However, it is important to note that there are specific qualities of a questionnaire or a research instrument that researchers must consider and gauge if they want to produce high quality results, evidences, and findings in their research. Naturally, the higher the level of validity and reliability of the research, the better because that would only mean that the research contains a high level of evidence validity and reliability as well; after all, the reliability and validity of the research instrument would only translate to the reliability and validity of the results and findings too, usually in a proportional manner.

Development of a valid and reliable questionnaire is simple but it takes time and the successful execution of several steps to be completed. Some of the questions that the researchers may have to ask would be whether the conceptualization, goals, purpose, and objectives of the questionnaire are in line with its content with that of the entire research as a whole. If the answer to such questions is a yes, then that would mean that the research questionnaire used was a valid and reliable one.

Validity pertains more to the appropriateness of the research; whether it suits the objective and purpose of the research. In this case, when assessed qualitatively, the survey questionnaire that was made and administered

using the popular web-based survey creation application Survey Monkey can be considered valid because all the questions were either directly or indirectly aimed at solving the research questions and validating the research hypothesis. A careful review of the questions would suggest that this is indeed the case, especially when the theoretical collective response of the researchers would be considered.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the reproducibility of the results; given that the same conditions, scenarios, and circumstances are present . In the case of this research, the question to ask if the goal is to question the research instrument's reliability would be whether it can produce consistent results. Unfortunately, the only way to determine the reliability of the research questionnaire is to conduct pilot testing; of course, the more pilot testing procedures done, the better because a reliability trend can be established. In this case however, pilot tests may not be necessary any longer because, from a qualitative perspective, the content validity of the research instrument used was already high; content validity pertains to the extent by which the content of the research tool or instrument represents the content and objectives of the entire research and whether it is comprehensive enough to collect all the information needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the study. To summarize, it may be safe to say that the research tool and instrument used in this study is a valid and reliable one, although the reliable part may still have to be questioned until pilot tests get conducted or at least until all respondents have already given their responses to the tool.

The main question that this research was trying to answer was whether the establishment of a corporate blog would lead to a scenario where the company, Investment Punk, would experience a significant increase in sales that may be correctly and directly attributable to its blogging efforts. In conducting a research such as this one, it is important to draw on a generalized consensus from the related literatures reviewed in the paper and compare it to what the empirical evidences or the collection of primary research information that was obtained in the study. The ideal scenario for most researches is one where the general consensus of the literatures reviewed in the paper agree to what the empirical evidences and the collection of primary research information suggest because that would mean that the research goes in line with what the other researchers who are authors of the previously published studies suggest.

When it comes to getting a somewhat conflicting result between what the literature review and what the research's results and findings suggest, there can be many possible reasons and it is the job of the researcher to identify and pinpoint the reasons. In this case, one possible reason would be the use of a research tool or instrument that has a different level of validity and or reliability; this is not an uncommon occurrence in research fields or subjects where numerous standardized questionnaires can be used in gathering information from the subjects; and in ones where the use of customized questionnaires are allowed and not strictly regulated. To proceed smoothly with the discussion, it would be important to describe the distribution of the respondents' population by age group. Nearly one third of the respondents belong to the early adolescent age group (18 to 15 years old); approximately

a quarter belong to the 30 to 35 years old age group and the remaining part of the population pie was those who were between 26 and 29 years old. Younger individuals, for example, tend to visit blogs, even corporate ones, to interact with other people, socialize, and learn new things. Older people, on the other hand, tend to visit the same things for a different purpose. All in all, this may be a good indicator to use when it comes to studying the effects of a certain marketing strategy such as the establishment and maintenance of a corporate blog in this case, to the sales or any other metrics of an organization.

Given this definition, it would only be normal to assume that the goal of any marketing team or the owner of the company who hired the marketing team is to increase the sales of the company and with the current marketing strategy that would only be made possible by increasing the marketing conversion ratio. Suppose that there were a hundred people who the Investment Punk Academy targeted as customers. Naturally, they would come in contact with these target customers, present them with promotional and marketing materials about the types of products and services that the company can offer. For demonstration purposes, let us assume that out of the total one hundred target customers who got exposed to Investment Punk Academy's marketing campaign, only eighty people actually bought at least one product or subscribed to at least one service from the company. Doing the math to mathematically compute for the marketing conversion ratio, one could easily arrive at the answer which is 80%.

This means that only 80% of people who got exposed to the marketing campaign of the company actually turned into customers. This hypothetical

level is actually unsustainably and unbelievably high because marketing conversion ratios typically hover around the single to low double digit ranges only, especially if the target market is large. So what is the significance of discussing these things in the present research? The answer is because this is basically the exact same model being used in the present research. The corporate blog that the Investment Punk Academy has established and been maintaining would be their marketing tool and or strategy. As supported by the literatures reviewed in this paper, one of the primary reasons why companies establish a corporate blog is so that they can communicate more directly and freely with their customers or target customers.

Practically every one of the biggest multinational corporations out there have their own corporate blog; and most corporate blogs have been established by the people behind the organization in an effort to increase their market exposure in hopes that a higher level of market exposure could lead to increased levels of sales. So, the act of establishing a corporate blog can be established as a marketing strategy and its effects on sales can then be considered as its marketing conversion ratio generator. Based on the results of the survey and the different correlation tests conducted, it has been found that the marketing strategy employed which was the creation of the corporate blogs may not really be correlated with the increase in the number of subscription in Investment Punk Academy's website. Therefore, the initial consensus would be that it did not really lead to a significant sales increase.

Conclusions

Summary

In conclusion, the initial consensus suggested that the marketing strategy employed in the present study by the Investment Punk Academy, which pertains to the creation of a corporate blog, was not really the one that led to the increase in the number of subscriptions that the Investment Punk Academy experienced. Take note that this was just the initial consensus that we have made because there are simply a lot of ways how to analyze the effects of a marketing strategy to the behavior of a company's sales and revenue generation. One possible theory is that the correlation description tools used were not really applicable to the current situation that the Investment Punk Academy is in; which is why it led to the finding that suggests that there was no correlation between the company's creation of a corporate blog and an increase in the number of sales. Based on the research hypothesis that was described in one of the earlier sections of this research, the administration of certain marketing strategies such as the creation and maintenance of a corporate blog in this case by Investment Punk Academy, can almost always lead to increased sales. However, this may easily be ruled as one of the few cases where company sales simply do not respond no matter how aggressive or conservative the marketing strategies that have been employed already are. However, it may also be that the relationship between the variables in the current marketing situation are so complex that it would take more than just a simple correlational analysis to describe the phenomenon. This, the author of this believes, is the case; and the reason why they are seeing no correlation between the

increase in the number of subscription to Investment Punk Academy's service and the use of marketing strategies such as the establishment and maintenance of its own corporate blog.

It has also been checked whether the differences between the members and non-members of Investment Punk Academy's website exist regarding the source of which they got their knowledge regarding investments. Some of the major sources tested were lectures of the company owner; YouTube; Facebook; the Investment Punk Academy corporate blog; and friends. To summarize what the authors discovered regarding this matter, the lectures of the owner of the company, YouTube, and the Investment Punk Academy's corporate blog were the ones that were found to have the greatest contribution to the attitude of the members and non-members when it comes to the idea of becoming a member of the Investment Punk Academy. Notice that this somehow contradicts the initial consensus that we had regarding the non-existence of the relationship between the existence of the Investment Punk Academy's corporate blog and the number of subscription to the said service which is one of the main revenue streams of the company via the subscription fees. On one hand, the results and findings of the research suggests that the Investment Punk Academy's blog, the lectures of the company's owner, and media sites such as YouTube were found to be one of the biggest drivers of knowledge when it comes to investing and therefore in eventually becoming a member of Investment Punk Academy—which requires subscribing to its service and paying a subscription fee by the way; on the other hand, the correlational study on the effects of the establishment and maintenance of a corporate blog and the improvements

in the company's subscription rates suggest that there was no relationship between the two said factors at all.

Between the two, the one that suggests that there was a correlation between the existence of the corporate blog (although it is only one of the three major factors considered as the cause) as one of the reasons behind the changes in the attitude of the respondents regarding investing and becoming a member and subscriber to the services of companies like the Investment Punk Academy was the one that goes in line with what authors of previously published researchers suggested. So if asked to choose which side to follow, the most probable one would be this because it is backed by evidences from previously published researches, and the general consensus in the literature review. One possible reason however why there was a conflict in the results and findings is the fact that the relationship between the use of marketing strategies and sales in Investment Punk Academy's case may be too complex for conventional correlational studies to successfully describe and explain

Management Implications

Knowing the results of this research, the management can draw upon reflections that may alter the way how they engage in maintaining their corporate blog such as updating its contents, improving its features, and keeping their subscribers happy by continuously offering high value services and information, which may be considered as the reason why they are paying for a subscription in the first place. With the information presented in this research, the owner of and managers at Investment Punk Academy can make the necessary changes to improve the way how they market the

company's services to its target consumers; know whether they are currently in a good position and or condition to invite more people to subscribe; or whether they have to make certain changes first. All in all, the information in this paper, the results and findings, can serve as the company's and other similarly natured companies' guide when it comes to determining the effects of certain marketing strategies (i. e. corporate blogging) on the sell-ability of their products and services

Suggestions for Future Researches

One major suggestion for future researches is that they should use just one approach in describing a phenomenon or relationship between variables. In this case, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used, something which can cause conflicts and being out of focus. A good recommendation would also be the use of a larger respondent population as this would normally lead to a higher level of reliability and generalizability of the results and findings. And lastly, studying an organization that has a more conventional business model may be a good option to consider in order avoiding conflicts in findings such as the ones encountered in this paper.

References

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