Visualising Evoked Set Size of Consumers Possessing Different Demographic Traits

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Abstract
In order to live up to the expectations of consumers and to enhance the company’s image and sales figures, the researchers need to understand the purchase behaviour of consumers. When a consumer goes into the market for buying some product, he/she may consider many brands for evaluation. All these brands considered by him/her becomes the evoked set size of the consumers out of which he/she chooses his/her final brand. Westbrook and Fornell (1979) find that size of evoked set of brands is directly related to need for information search. Larger the set, greater is the need for information search. Further Srinivasan and Ratchford (1991) contend that large evoked set implies more alternatives to choose from and, hence to gather more information. They find a positive relation between evoked set size and information search, which means that consumers whose evoked set size is large, make more searches for information.

Keywords: Demographic Traits

Introduction
In order to live up to the expectations of consumers and to enhance the company’s image and sales figures, the researchers need to understand the purchase behaviour of consumers. When a consumer goes into the market for buying some product, he/she may consider many brands for evaluation. All these brands considered by him/her becomes the evoked set size of the consumers out of which he/she chooses his/her final brand. Westbrook and Fornell (1979) find that size of evoked set of brands is directly related to need for information search. Larger the set, greater is the need for information search. Further Srinivasan and Ratchford (1991) contend that large evoked set implies more alternatives to choose from and, hence to gather more information. They find a positive relation between evoked set size and information search, which means that consumers whose evoked set size is large, make more searches for information.

If the consumer has a large evoked set, he/she has more options to choose from, thus loyalty falls (Wirtz and Mattila, 2003). Whereas on the other side, if the consumer has a small evoked set, there is more probability that he/she will remain loyal since he/she has less brands to consider from which he/she has to choose. Ostlund (1973) concludes that brand loyalty leads to small evoked set size. Thus it becomes interesting to identify which consumers have larger evoked set and which consumers have smaller evoked set.

Further all the consumers possess different demographic traits. Thus it is very likely that different consumers will have different evoked set size. Hence in this study consumers are categorised on the basis of their demographic characteristics so as to determine the evoked set size of each particular consumer possessing particular demographic characteristic.

Data Collection and Research Methodology
In this study, an attempt has been made to determine the evoked set size of the consumers possessing different demographic characteristics. For the attainment of this purpose, data is collected through survey method. People from Punjab are approached through a field survey. Survey is conducted in various areas like Amritsar (26%), Jalandhar (24%), Ludhiana (26%) and Chandigarh (24%). The information needed is collected from the consumers of the product selected for the study.

A sample of 550 respondents is selected on the basis of judgement cum convenience sampling. As far as possible, the respondents were approached in the market place outside the major shopping centres of the four cities. They were requested to participate in the ‘not for profit’ survey. If they agreed, they were asked to fill the questionnaire. Due care was taken to give appropriate representation to gender and age. Finally, 543 questionnaires have been used in the analysis. Biased and incomplete questionnaires have been removed from the study.

The sample shows that out of the total respondents, 44% are male and 56% are females. The actual age of the consumers has been recorded. Thus no age wise description is made. However age of the respondents varies between 18-59 years of age. Out of the total sample, the percentage of married respondents is 46% and that of unmarried is 54%. The respondents were asked their educational qualification. Education level of the respondents shows that 8% of the respondents have passed secondary school, 44% are graduates, 31% are post graduates and 17% are professionally qualified. The respondents are segregated on the basis of income also. Income level shows that 10% of the respondents are earning up to Rupees 15,000/-, 34% are earning between Rupees 15,001/- to Rupees 25,000/-, 35% are having income from Rupees 25,001/-to Rupees 35,000/- and 21% are
earning Rupees 35,001/- and above. The sample collects information from almost all types of the consumers who are engaged in different occupations. Self-employed means businessmen as well as professionals having their own practice like doctors and chartered accountant doing their own practice. The percentage of respondents who are self-employed is 28%. Salaried people cover services as well as respondents working as executives or on other higher posts. The percentage of salaried people is 35%. Housewives account for 17%, students 15% and retired personnel are only 5%.

The scope of this study is restricted to the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). The product category chosen is toothpaste which creates importance in the minds of the consumers because of its utilitarian nature as any wrong purchase could result into serious dental problem. Thus a consumer is very conscious while indulging in buying process of this product.

**Measure of Variables**

**Size of Evoked set:** Evoked set refers to the set of brands in the product class which the buyer actually considers while making a brand choice (Spiggle and Sewall, 1987). Respondents were asked to state the name of the brands that they could recall while buying toothpaste. Accordingly the evoked set size was made. If a respondent has mentioned 2 brands, the size of evoked set is taken as 2. If a respondent is able to recall 4 brands, the value of evoked set is shown as 4 and so on.

**Gender:** Gender is taken as dummy variable in this study. Female category is taken as base. Thus, if a respondent is male, value assigned is one and if female, then zero.

**Marital Status:** Respondents are asked to state their marital status in terms of choice between married and unmarried. It is presented as a dummy variable. Unmarried status is taken as base category. Thus the respondents who are married are allotted a value of 1 and zero otherwise.

**Age:** The actual age of the respondents was asked. Thus age is taken as a continuous variable. The actual age mentioned by the respondents is taken as the value of the variable.

**Education:** Education is measured as a categorical variable. The respondents who are under graduates are assigned a code value of one, graduates are coded as 2 and post graduates/professionally qualified respondents are taken as 3.

**Income:** Income is measured in four categories. Respondents are asked to mention their monthly family income in any of following mentioned categories, a) less than Rupees 15,000/- b) Rupees 15,001/- to Rupees 25,000/- c) Rupees 25,001/- to Rupees 35,000/- d) Rupees 35,001/- and above. All the income categories are assigned codes of 1,2,3,4 respectively.

**Occupation:** Four dummy variables are taken (salaried, housewives, student and retired personnel) and ‘self employed’ is taken as base category.

**Method**

In this study, evoked set size is in continuous form. Thus regression equation is used to determine the relationship between demographic characteristics and evoked set size. The regression equation is shown as under.

\[
Y_{\text{evoked set size}} = \alpha + \beta_{\text{Gender}}X_{\text{Gender}} + \beta_{\text{Marital status}}X_{\text{Marital status}} + \beta_{\text{Age}}X_{\text{Age}} + \beta_{\text{Education}}X_{\text{Education}} + \beta_{\text{Income}}X_{\text{Income}} + \beta_{\text{Salaried}}X_{\text{Salaried}} + \beta_{\text{Housewife}}X_{\text{Housewife}} + \beta_{\text{Student}}X_{\text{Student}} + \beta_{\text{Retired personnel}}X_{\text{Retired personnel}}
\]

**Equation: 1**

**Results**

The above mentioned equation was tested through E-Views and results are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Parameter estimate</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-4.257</td>
<td>14.933*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.594</td>
<td>4.633*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>-0.558</td>
<td>-3.602*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.801</td>
<td>-3.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.767</td>
<td>-3.903*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>2.242**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (Salaried)+</td>
<td>-0.363</td>
<td>1.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (Housewife)+</td>
<td>0.669</td>
<td>1.893***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (Student)+</td>
<td>-0.153</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (Retired personnel)+</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>1.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R²: 38%

Note: * means highly significant, ** means significant at 1%, *** means significant at 5%, + self employed as base category.

Table 1 reveals that all variables are found to be significant except occupation (salaried, student and retired personnel).

Result represent that evoked set size of females is more than males. Unmarried also have a larger evoked set as compared to married ones. While analysing age, it is find that the size of evoked set falls with the increase in age. Evanschitzky and Woisetschläger (2008) also find that increase in age reduces the evoked set size of consumers.
Coefficient value of education reveals that with the increase in education level of the consumers, evoked set size falls. Gronhaug (1973-74), May and Homans (1976) and Gruca (1989) also find that education and evoked set size is positively related. Table 1 further reveals that increase in income level of the consumers increases the size of evoked set. While talking of occupation, housewives are found to have a large evoked set size as compared to self employed personnel.

Implications
The above discussion makes it clear that different consumers have different sizes of evoked set. As already mentioned, size of evoked set effects the loyalty pattern of consumers being large evoked set size, consumers exhibiting less loyalty because of more options to choose from and small evoked set size consumers showing more loyalty because of less options to choose from. Thus marketing managers are required to concentrate on creating loyalty among that segment of consumers which have a large evoked set size.

References