Research for Marketing Decisions

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Measurement and Scaling: Semantic Differential Scale and Other Scale Decisions

So, the next one is semantic differential scale in the non-comparative. Now, semantic differential is very popular but not very frequently used because it might be perceived little difficult to answer. So, in the Likert item scales what we use we say Let's say we want to measure the preference towards Pepsi. Pepsi is tasty, youthful, easy, you know, tasty, easily available, good brand, good brand image and so on.

You have different, different preferences, statements to measure the preference towards Pepsi, right? now in semantic differential when you are asking such question you would have instead of saying that tasty you would have not at all tasty also on the other side. So, for example, this is about seers, let's say this this they are talking about uh nilgiris nilgiris is powerful weak. So there is a continuum you the respondents need to mark closely to the descriptor this they feel represent that particular characteristic of the product, so Nilgiris is powerful or weak, if you feel it is weak then you will answer close to weak, unreliable reliable, if towards unreliable, you will say modern all the old-fashioned. So here the difference with the Likert item scale is, in the semantic differential scale you use the descriptor on the both side. Both positive and negative descriptors you use.

And the respondents have to mark closely to the descriptor they feel it is representative. This is better than Likert scale. Because in Likert scale, we present one side of the story. Pepsi is tasty. Strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Why can't we write Pepsi is not at all tasty on the other side? If we use such descriptors, the truth of the answer might increase. See, many times we are writing positive things about the is tasty, is powerful, is is youthful. And strongly agree to strongly disagree.

If we write the opposite words on the other side, against youthful, old. Old fashioned. Or aged. Against tasty, not at all tasty. Against active, lazy.

This is a difference in the semantic differential we use the opposite descriptors and tell the respondents to mark close to the descriptor they feel represent correctly. Here also the similarity is there it can be multiple item or single item. For measuring preference towards Pepsi we use multiple item tasty, modern, powerful and we can take the summated In semantic differential also we can have same thing but we have opposite descriptor mentioned on the other side and we can still take the average to measure the preference towards Pepsi. The measurement is taken the same way.

Now they are very very powerful because they are used to semantic differential is used to understand how people think of our brands, the brand image, the brand personality. Now in semantic differential we can have three types of items. One is evaluation based, where the descriptor on opposite side will be bad, good, cheap, expensive, foolish, wise, ugly, beautiful, dishonest, honest, cruel and kind depending upon what is the kind of product category you are talking about. The second one items can be about the potency. How weak or strong, decisive, indecisive, soft, hard, important, potent, severe, lenient, cowardly, brave.

And the third one is activity. How active is a brand? How much active? Passive, active, lazy, industrious, aimless, motivated. So when you ask these questions,

some of these appropriate to the product category about the brand you would get to know what people think about your brand, what is the image that they have of your brand. You are giving them attributes characteristics that you that generally you use with people, these are understandable characteristics about your brand right? and they they are very useful to get the brand image for a particular brand. Simple if you are doing a brand image study can you use these one to capture the brand image, the most benefit of it is something like here this is called profile analysis. Here what you are doing on these heavy, light, low price, high price, spotty quality, consistent quality, tangy, smooth, this is about three beer brands and you want to know in your target market, there are three beer brands that are very competitive, how people think of these three beer brands this is the regional brand this particular and this one is Miller's, and this one is central one is Budweiser. For all these three brands separately the questions were asked about these attributes.

Because these are these are the attributes that are very important for in the beer to have, and then they were plotted together based upon so let's say hand with the thousand respondents it is done in the target market these are the average scores plotted for heavy and light regional brand is here low price it is here this for regional brand and you join the lines then for Millers. So once you do this profile analysis, you will know how people think about your brand as compared to competitor brand. Sometimes what you are trying to say as your USP in the profile analysis, you see that you are lacking, you are lagging in that. When sometimes when your sales are not picking up, let's say when we took the example of Diet Cherry Coke.

The sales were not picking up because the image was old fashioned. Whereas company did not have any idea what is happening. In all the other attributes, it would have been doing well. But in the major, the image, the modern or old fashioned, it was old fashioned. That could appear as when you do profile analysis, that could appear as one of the probable causes of it.

I have wondered, by allowing this scale to be a continuum and your alarm response to choose any value between 3 or 4. No, no, not in between 3 or 4. So, so, no, no, it is from 1 to 5. They have marked it. So, this is the average scores that are plotted.

Somebody would have marked it 1. Somebody would have marked it 2. But the average of the thousand people, that is plotted. This is another example for commuter airlines or a major airlines on the attributes how they are different? so, if you want to see why some why one brand is not doing well as compared to the other brand for the same target market or similar target market, you can do this you can also actually do this for the ideal product versus your product. Now in this case this is their present bank versus the ideal saving bank for a customer, you tell them that think about the ideal bank and mark how ideal bank would be on these attributes progressive, conservative. So wherever and then plot then ask about now rate about my brand separate questions and then you can plot seeing that where are you with in comparison to ideal brand for your target market.

So you will be able to see the gaps. Now all I am not saying all these gaps where you are not doing well are important. But you will know where are the gaps. Now some of these gaps would not be meaningful. But others might be important.

That is a separate then that is a further analysis. And you might do this for the brands that are direct competitors to your brand. Let's say there used to be a commerce bank in America, so commerce bank, it was a bank that was for type of customers who would like

to personally visit the bank maintain you know they would like to visit the bank rather than doing online banking and they liked chit chatting with the people, friendliness because that is how they think that there is good trust among them right? Now this particular bank was giving one of the worst interest rates on their savings and the number of products that this bank was giving were also less as compared to the competitor banks. But this did not bother the target market because target market wanted a bank where they can personally visit any time of the day.

They'll be politely greeted. They'll be talked just like a friend or a family member and their task will be done and it would be convenient. So they used to open the bank every day till late evening hours and on Saturdays and Saturdays also they used to open. So which means if you try to compare this bank with the other bank on these attributes of product variety, interest rate, you will see the difference that there are worst and other computer banks are good on that. But that does not mean you need to improve there because your target market doesn't want that.

And if you are opening on Saturday, full day or late evening hours, you will have to pay extra time to your employees. Where this extra time will come from? From your worst interest rates. The savings from there will go there. You cannot have everything.

You cannot give your customers everything. If you try to give everything, that is a recipe for failure. What do you mean by worst interest rate? It is very low. Very low.

That means loans are also cheaper. No, no, loans, no. I am taking interest rate on deposits. So if Starbucks, you know, high price, it's worst on price because it's very expensive. But others, it is good on others.

How it has to fund your, you know, staying For a longer period of time, using Wi-Fi with friends and just keep sitting for and having a good experience. How they fund from the price. Some they fund directly. Some they get it funded in a different way.

Like self-serving restaurants, they do not employ heavy, huge number of employees. You have to self-serve. Sometimes you have to in very few of the restaurant you have to sometime discard also on your own. So that saving they give you in that saving they might give you in terms of lower price. But every attribute one cannot give best to the customer that is not possible.

If you try to give there are restaurant that right they cut on their margin profits and so on they make very little profits. they would survive or some would not survive. Now,

quickly try to do a profile analysis along with your partner whoever you are sitting with do a profile analysis on let us say two competitor brands which what brand what product category you would want to take. Let's say Netflix and Amazon Prime, okay. Netflix, everybody would have seen the kind of programs that have the kind of web series and Amazon Prime we are also.

So, can we do for Amazon Prime video and Netflix on these and then plot it also quickly. You have to ask with your partner about Amazon Prime Video and Netflix on all of these. How they see Amazon Prime Video, first for Amazon Prime Video, then for Netflix and then put a profile analysis in a sheet to say what is what which is closer to what the image the image and quality will come out. This you need not use.

You have to use these. In the evaluation bad, good, cheap, expensive, foolish, wise, potency and activity. But do not try to force your view on the other person. Just keep your eyes neutral. Do not respond to let's say if they say Netflix is foolish.

Do not respond by opening your eyes wide. Because the person will then feel that okay did I say something wrong. Let their responses be neutral. See you can when let's say there is an let's say when you are choosing your life partner also in the future you can actually the ideal characteristics of a partner and what are the options you have, it can be used in life as well not only with the brands with the other person and draw the profile analysis for your partner. See for every product category you need not take all the elements the ones that look relevant both functionally and emotionally because emotional attributes are very very important as well.

Problem is see nowadays in any product category you take the you know the there is very less difference among the brands in the quality features they offer. Image is something which can be differentiated and these could be very helpful in identifying the image for your brand. And please remember that you will have to do this for the market you are going to offer the product to which means not every market segment. There would be some segment that you do not want to get buying your products. For example, if it is an economy airline, that is a no-frill airline, it would not want any luxury customer to travel because they would only complain.

This is not there, that is not there. It is very inconvenient. Because that flight is not meant for any, you know, high service passenger. So you need to go for your the market that you are or segment that you are targeting. So anywhere where you will have to let's say

determine the position of your brand with respect to competitors on image on certain quality related features.

You can use this simple semantic differential scale which comes handy, you know in a lot of situations. Then do the profile analysis because it is easy to graphically show the difference. Many a time, this simple analysis will itself, you know, solve your market research problem. The brands that say they are struggling to find out what to do. There are big, big, there are big, big brands that do not know what to do about their perception, their image.

Big brands having crores and crores, thousands of crores of money, they do not know sometimes what to do with their brand image. Just now I asked, two of us might not be comfortable like this don't know or may not use. In real life also, within the target group also there can be some people who we can end up giving the survey they don't have any idea about. Yes.

We will see what to do with them. Very good question. Okay, anybody who would like to share about their partner, what are their responses? How do they see Amazon and Amazon Prime Video and Netflix are different in terms of whatever criteria you have used? anybody who is willing to share, or I might have to pick somebody, anybody who is willing to share, sorry see there was one question there is one question where you know a particular functional attribute of a product like toothpaste you know

that was measured through semantic differential, so if you are not getting an opposite, so let's say for toothpaste, it is removes plaques, does not remove plaques that is also fine. If you are not getting a suitable Opposite objective. In this case, it is a functional attribute. So you can do this not only for adjective that is as it is given in this screen, but also for functional attribute like she did for cold for for two brands to toothpaste brands removes plaques does not remove plaques. So, with functional attributes also one could do as the commuter airlines they have done on the attributes of the airline service.

So, one can do this for brand image and the attribute functional emotional when we I talk about brand image. There are more emotional attributes that come in there are few functional as well, let's say perform a high performance low performance that is a functional. So one can do it both for image or adjectives can be there and the functional attributes can also be there but do not put both of them in the same graph if you are doing for brand image or if you are doing for these the ones that are shown do it separately then do for feature a separate one. Okay so, let's move on yes so one could actually follow this

up with an interview, let's say the respondent says that one is good and bad other is bad now good and bad one is you know one is good and bad. Then you can ask the reason also through interview.

To get more information. The idea is you need to actually solve somebody's company's problem. When you use this, this will be a you know a support for you to probe further. One can use as a part of interviews as well. So let's move on.

Anybody who would like to share and who got some interesting results and would like to share? Sir, is it one, like, only one e-copy, copy, can I share that? If it is very interesting, then share it. So, one thing is that, like, in Amazon, the scores consistently more on the, like, watchable, good UI, user interface, and

these but you know shall always recommend, but in diversity of the content use content library diverse content Netflix is more. Okay good good good very good okay. so so once you do it for the market that one is targeting and then submit for a representative sample you will get some good indication of what your market is thinking about the content, the image of the brand and so on. One could also follow this up with the interviews, you can get more information about some because this is more quantitative or structured you can follow this up with unstructured asking questions on all of these. The idea is you need to get into the depth of the reasons also. Why somebody is saying it is good bad? What is the reason?

What the brand need to do? So all of these things are required to do to solve a brand's problem. Now there is another important thing about the Likert item scales. One is how many number of categories we use. How many number of categories we are mainly saying that 5 categories strongly agree to strongly disagree 5 4 3 2 1 right.

Why 5, why not 11, why not 10, why not 7, why not 9, why not 3? So, these number of categories on what it would depend that how many number of answer categories I should use for the Likert item scale. If you if we do not know any reason criteria then safe is to use five point scale. If you are if your audience your customers are knowledgeable and they can identify the minute differences also in the characteristic that you want to, then you can have more than five seven point strongly agree, moderately agree. slightly agree. neutral, disagree or slightly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, 7 point. You can make it 9 point also.

You can make it 11 point. Depending upon how knowledgeable your audience is, how finally they will be able to tell you the, give you the answers. Will they be able to differentiate between slightly and moderately? If not, then use 5 point. What else?

That means if more knowledgeable it is the more it tends to become more quantitative the survey. No it will be still quantitative when you have 1 to 5 but 1 to 7 you will get a good variation so the idea is if you use 3 you will not get much variation in the data 5 you will get good variation 7 you will get very good variation, but do not increase the category because it might confuse then the respondents It depends upon. Now, it is only we are talking about English. Now, much of your target population, for example, for certain products, if you are doing for rural markets, you would have to translate them into their local language.

Bahut sahi hai. Sahi hai. Na hi sahi hai, na hi galat hai. Galat hai. Bahut galat hai.

Then you will have to translate and then you have to see whether they would be able to distinguish when you are in there, you know, with minor differences. That depends upon the number of categories. The next one is balanced versus unbalanced. Balanced means equal number of positive and negative categories. Unbalanced means unequal number of

so you have more for positive and less for negative. Let's say very good, good. fair, poor. So poor is representing the negative part, but it has only one answer option, whereas others have three, that becomes unbalanced. Balanced is when strongly disagree, disagree, neutral or even if you remove neutral balances to positive to negative on both sides that is balanced scale. Always try to use balanced scale. Unbalanced scales are used when you see that in your sample or in the population from which you are withdrawing the sample, people are more likely to answer in the positive because of that kind of characteristics would come towards the more positive side than negative. But always try to use the balanced scale.

The next one is odd or even number of categories. Odd is mainly when we insert the neutral in between now, neutral means neither this not there, it does not mean I don't know, it does not mean I don't know, I don't know means there is a six you you have to then put a last another option saying that I do not have any idea about this or I do not know, I refuse to answer, that is a separate but neutral means I am not here not there in between now, how happy are you with let's say you ask a child about how happy are you are you with the parenting by your father let's say? very good, very bad, spicy, sometime good, sometime bad in between, that is the answer, it would not that I don't want to

answer that does not mean neutral but when we are asking putting in questionnaire so we do not give the sixth option because then many people would try would try to use the sixth option. We try to force them to answer to think and answer, that's why we put the neutral, don't put neutral say that neither agree nor disagree, neither important nor unimportant, so rightful, if you say neutral sometimes people you know, even those who do not want to express an opinion would say neutral.

So there are, so these are certain problems. Sometimes people who do not have an idea, make sure that you are asking these questions from people who are aware of that particular subject. Because if they are not aware, they do not know. And then still they, let's say, mark something, then it becomes a problem. So, odd is when you include the midpoint, even is when you say very important, important, unimportant, very unimportant, in between is missing.

That is even and then odd is when you provide in between, generally we provide a in between thing also. Force versus non-force, force is when you when you are forcing the when you are wanting the response, let's say when you are putting five, giving five options, strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly disagree. You are not giving, I do not want to answer or I do not know. If you give another category, that will become non-forced.

Forced will be when you will give only five and they have to express their opinion. That becomes forced. We use the forced one, not the non-forced one. Because when somebody mark on that category, I do not know. That will be not useful response.

We do not give score from 1 to 5. When we are giving score from 1 to 5, 5 is strongly agree, 4 agree, neutral is 3, disagree is 2, strongly disagree is 1. What score we will give to, I do not want to answer or I do not know. No, there is no score. You should not include.

That's what this will be. That will be like a missing answer. You cannot do anything with that. So that's why we don't use non-forced. That's why we don't use non-forced because then even those people who know the answer, they would also choose not to sometimes answer

and you do not want that. Verbal description and physical forms something so, verbal description is do you want to provide description to each and every point, writing with one sometimes one to seven. Seven you say strongly agree, one you say strongly disagree

and in between, you do not write anything maybe in the center. One you can write something not providing description for every point so, that is verbal description you can choose to provide for every point, you can choose to provide for endpoints and the midpoint and that can vary and sometimes the physical form of the scale could also vary like in this case when you are asking for children so instead of giving them strongly agree, strongly disagree, if you make these smileys they would understand better than when you give them strongly agree. strongly disagree or when you write happy and sad instead of that can you write put smileys which are more understandable by that audience. So this also you can make interesting your scale interesting your survey interesting by doing these small small changes. As I said, I am also using some of the slides some of the pictures from Dr. Michael Hammond slides because he has been teaching it and he has a lot of good examples.