Methods for Service & Marketing Research

Syllabus

Administrative information

Instructor(s): Prof. Dr. Pietro Zidda

Quadrimester: 1st (Q1)

Number of credits and teaching hours: 5 credits / 30 hours

Language: English

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Learning outcomes

This course has two main objectives. First of all, it aims at training students in quantitative methods that are useful for solving marketing research problems in general and in the service industry in particular. The second objective is to confront student with marketing problems, real data and statistical softwares in a decision-making perspective. This course thus deals with concepts, methods, and applications of decision modelling to address current issues faced by marketing managers. It provides students with skills to translate conceptual understanding into specific operational plans.

Regarding student s competences, the course mainly develops knowledge and reasoning, scientific and systematic approaches and to a lesser extent corporate citizenship, and personal and professional development.

Content

The course starts with a general introduction to the marketing research process with a service perspective as well as to marketing decision models and modelling (the so called "marketing engineering" approach). The methods (and topics) covered are exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis methods (measurement), regression analysis, simulation and optimization techniques (pricing), regression analysis with dummies and analysis of variance techniques (testing relationships between service marketing constructs), cluster and discriminant analysis (segmentation & targeting), judgment-based models (advertising budgeting). More specifically, this course aims at helping students understand by means of various examples and case studies, how analytical techniques and computer decision models can enhance decision making by converting data and information about markets to insights and decisions. It also provides students with software tools (SAS and Excel) that will enable them to apply the methodological approaches taught in the course to real marketing decision problems.

The topics covered are (2-hour session):

- Session 1: Introduction to service marketing research and decision-making
- Session 2: Reminder of the research process
- Session 3: Response models and modelling
- Session 4: Case study discussion – Advertising budging with judgment-based estimation models
- Session 5: Linear and nonlinear regression analysis techniques (from estimation to prediction)
- Session 6: Case study discussion – Solving a pricing decision problem
- Sessions 7 & 8: Measurement issues – scale development and testing with factor analysis techniques (EFA and CFA, scale reliability and validity testing)
- Session 9: Case study discussion – Measuring service marketing constructs
- Sessions 10: Segmentation and profiling issues with cluster and discriminant analyses
- Session 11: Case study discussion – Segmenting, targeting and positioning for a new smartphone
- Sessions 12 to 13: testing relationships between service marketing constructs (moderation and mediation analyses with linear regression and analysis of variance techniques)
- Sessions 14 : Case study discussion – from service quality to satisfaction and loyalty

Teaching methods

Each concept/method/issue covered in classroom has a software implementation (SAS and Excel) with the solving of a case study. The course emphasizes interactions between students and the instructor.

Course Material

Course pack (slides) is available before the course on the web platform.

Evaluations

The evaluation of students is be made by means of an ongoing assessment and a final written examination:

- Ongoing evaluation (40%): Each student's work is evaluated during the case studies (based on case preparation, study steps, class participation, etc.); a personal feedback is given at the end of the class
- Final exam (60%): Final evaluation is made by means of a written examination covering all the topics discussed in the classroom. It comprises a theoretical part (concepts and theory NOT mathematical formulas!) and an application part (exercise and/or short case study).

Recommended readings

Reference textbooks (non-exhaustive list):

- Hair, J., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., and Anderson, R.E. (2009). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Upper saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education International.
- Iacobucci, D., and Churchill, G. A. (2015). *Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations* (11th Edition). The Dryden Press.
- Lilien, G.L., Rangaswamy, A., and De Bruyn, A. (2007), Principles of marketing engineering, Trafford Publishing
- SAS documentation

+ journal articles in *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Recherche et Applications en Marketing* (English version), etc.