
An assesment of consumer atitudes towards gourmet shops in bulgaria: the case of dobrev's cheese shop

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The chapter of methodology of the current research paper presents a crucial part as far as it provides data that is necessary for proper and relevant assessment of profitability of the investment to the introduction of gourmet shops under the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop. Hence, the detailed and constructive description of the implemented research methodology is presented in this chapter.

According to Fisher, the investigation that is based on the empirical study of the selected phenomenon is targeted at the explanation and interpretation of the current state of affairs by means of predetermined measurement variables. Such an approach has been used in the current study. Furthermore, it is significant to underline that the process of investigation relies on probability to certain extent. As a direct consequence, the methodological framework that has been used in this paper provides a background that leads to the comprehension of the significant and integral role of the given predetermined variables upon the final outcomes of the whole research process. Therefore, it is important to underline the correlation of the final research findings and the current theoretical framework. It will help dwell on the level of relevance and profitability of the

introduction of gourmet shops under the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop.

Hence, the chapter analyses the research methodology that has been used in the study. All the major aspects and technology are described. The research methodology comprises the primary research methods as well as the secondary ones. Furthermore, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are implicated in the course of the investigation. Such a multidimensional structure of the methodology and its practical implementation provide an excellent opportunity to investigate the case of the introduction of gourmet shops under the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop and assess the potential profitability of the investment in this business venture.

The research design comprises such constituent elements as observation, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. All the aforementioned types of primary data research are relevant and potentially efficient for the selected scope of case study. Furthermore, the final results of the mentioned research data techniques provide a sufficient and perspective background for further analysis, interpretation, and assessment process.

It is also essential to underline that the limitations are identified and discussed in terms of the current investigation. They form a frame of constraints and biased assumptions. Therefore, the limitations should be obligatory taken into account.

3.2. Research Design

The research design may be of two types: qualitative or quantitative. The basis for distinguishing between these two types comprises the contextual conditions of the current study as well as the structure and peculiarities of the questions used in the course of investigation.

It is essential to underline basic differences between these two scopes of the research process. According to Smith, the qualitative research design implements such activities as analysis and evaluation. The primary target of the analysis and evaluation processes is to provide the response to the aforementioned Research Questions and, consequently, present a relevant and constructive conclusion.

The major difference between this type of research design and the quantitative one is that the former one implicates data collection and its subsequent analysis exclusively of statistical measures and quantifiable data in order to provide a consistent and relevant final conclusion.

The study deals with the assessment of the relevance and profitability of such a business venture as introduction of the chain of gourmet shops under the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop on the territory of Bulgaria that is based on the analysis of the attitudes and conception of the actual audience of the potential consumers of gourmet dairy

products within the aforementioned locality. Therefore, it is appropriate to integrate into the research design of the study both quantitative and qualitative methods. As far as the comprehensive data analysis process will be supported by means of implementation of both primary and secondary data sources, the final outcomes and conclusion will be relevant, objective, and absolutely constructive.

Hence, the primary data research comprises such activities as observation, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. As far as the method of observation provides a significant general background for the whole investigation process, it is necessary to provide more accurate and quantitative research methods. Therefore, the questionnaires as well as semi-structured interviews have been added to the list. Subsequently, focus groups will contribute significantly to the final conclusion of the study. It is apparent that each research method supplements and adds essential data or even perspective for further research. Thus, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative research methods provides coherent and constructive process of investigation and relevant final outcomes.

3.3. Research Setting

The preliminary step of the methodology implementation into practice comprises the definition and argumentation of the research setting

and the scope of the respondents for the observation, interviews, and surveys. This is why the analysis of the process of the respondents sampling is worth presenting. As far as the current study deals with the assessment of the perspective and potential profitability of the certain business venture, it is appropriate to provide sampling within the potential customers of the gourmet shops in Bulgaria. In order to provide a relevant and consistent study, the sampling plan of the respondents' selection should refer to the locality. The locality in the current study is Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

3.4. Participants

As far as the cheese market is quite developed, advanced as well as appreciated and displays a significantly high level of demand, it is relevant to sample the representatives from various layers of Bulgarian population. Furthermore, it is necessary to underline the relevance of the age group of the potential consumers who prefer the products offered by Dobrev's Cheese Shop. Hence, the respondents should meet the following criteria: be in the age group from 22 till 50; be from the middle and upper social classes; be willing to participate in the course of data collection. Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that neither sex, nor race or religious outlook may impact the process of sampling as far as they are not crucial for the ramifications of the assessment process. Therefore, no discrimination is to be

demonstrated in the course of data collection.

Moreover, the aforementioned obligatory criteria should be accounted for and reasoned in more details. Actually, the aspect of willing participation is apparent to be taken into account as far as it provides credibility and relevance of the data that is obtained in the course of its collection. Furthermore, the age group is also significant as far as gourmet shops are targeted at the sophisticated audience with sufficient financial position. Evidently, it is hardly probable that the students become a target audience and regular customers at the gourmet shop because of the factors aforesaid. As far as the study needs as objective and relevant data as possible, such a criterion has been included in the process of respondents' sampling. Furthermore, the social position as well as financial one is also probable to impact the attitude and overall conception of such a phenomenon as a gourmet shop. It is evident that such kind of shop is an exclusive and quite expensive one. Therefore, the criteria mentioned above are so essential to follow.

The next step to discuss is the selection of the actual respondents. The most appropriate one is the type of random selection. The potential respondents will be selected using random choice from the provided database. It is also necessary to underline that there are certain technical requirements. It is also compulsory to take them into consideration. The aforementioned requirement is so essential as far as it will be used in the course of several parts of the process of data

collection. This criterion deals with the valid e-mail address of the potential respondent as far as it provides high level of probability of successful data collection. Though, in case the respondent fails to provide certain data, it is appropriate to move to the next third potential respondent in the list. The failure of data collection may happen either in case the respondent is reluctant to cooperate and provide the required data or in case the e-mail is valid but abandoned by the user. Hence, such a probability should be taken into account. Moreover, it is recommended to work out the whole plan of the alternative decision beforehand. Thus, the stratified random sampling plan is used in the current study. As Panneerselvam underlines, the stratification provides more accurate and credible data obtained from the data collection results. Therefore, the data collection will be a relevant and consistent process from the initial stage of actual implementation.

As far as the sampling strategy and its specific peculiarities have been already identified, it is appropriate to dwell on the overall quantity of the respondent in the course of data collection. Reason and Iradbury emphasize that the more the quantity of the data collection process is, the more objective and relevant as well as perspective data will be obtained in the course of investigation. Though, the huge amount of respondents is a hard and controversial issue. The reason for such an assumption deals with the amount of work and time as well as with the questionable quality and relevance of the data that will be finally obtained.

Hence, the decision has been made to present the data that has been collected by means of the investigation on the basis of personal responses and discussions of the most significant issues concerning the scope of the current study. Therefore, the general number of potential respondent is 100. These people are selected by the stratified random sampling plan and divided into several sections of the investigation course corresponding to the types of primary data research. These numbers will be presented and properly discussed in the correspondent chapter of the study.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

Data collection is considered to be a crucial aspect of any type of investigation and empirical research as far it provides integrity, coherency, and constructive approach for the whole study. Furthermore, it provides credible and relevant data to form the final conclusion. The significant role of data collection process is directly connected with the phenomenon of probabilistic approach. Such an approach utilizes descriptive as well as statistical data with the purpose to form the perspective and credible conclusion.

According to the aforementioned statement, the current study implements both primary and secondary data as well as qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Such an approach is necessary

in order to assess the profitability and appropriateness of the mentioned investment.

3.5.1. Primary Data Sources

The process of primary data collection is characterized by means of the direct contact of the researchers' group with respondents through surveys, questionnaires, interviews, organization of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, etc. The significant role of the primary data in the course of analysis and assessment performance is motivated by its raw nature and actual absence of preliminary manipulation. Hence, the data precisely corresponds to the true state of affairs in the investigated scope. It may be also regarded as a relevant and credible basis for the consequent conclusion. The validity and accuracy of the obtained data may be compared to and analysed along with the secondary data sources. The following methods present the stage of primary data research.

3.5.1.1. Questionnaires

The use of such a method of primary data collection as questionnaire is motivated by the fact that it tends to facilitate the obtaining of huge amount of significant and relevant data within the appropriate locality and respondents' audience. Therefore, the respondents comprise the potential clients of the gourmet shop of the middle and upper class of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. The questionnaire was targeted to determine the potential success, feasibility, and perspective of the

introduction of gourmet shop offering dairy products of supreme quality. The label and other details have been omitted in order to obtain a generalized outlook and attitudes towards the idea of gourmet shop. The questionnaire implicated attention-grabbing or controversial questions in order to obtain vivid interest and sincere responses to the offered questions.

The questionnaire included 12 questions. It contained both structured and open questions. The open type of questions have been involved in the questionnaire so that to guarantee that the respondents may express their opinion relevantly, comprehensively, and in detailed manner. Hence, the structured questions implemented the multiple choice as well as ratio scales techniques. The multiple choice questions concerned the specific aspects of the customers' preferences and views on the aforementioned phenomenon. They included four options whereas the questions with the ratio scales technique comprised the scale from zero to five. Zero revealed the lowest ratio while five related to the highest level. These questions concerned the current labels, their popularity, and level of demand among the contemporary customers as well as the attitudes of the respondents to the phenomenon of gourmet shops and probability of becoming a permanent customer of such a shop. The primary goal of the questionnaire was to investigate the current attitude of the customers to the dairy items' producers and the overall conception of the gourmet shop as a target element of the investigation. One of the most essential questions for the current research asked the

respondents to rate the level of quality of the dairy products they usually bought. It is also essential to underline that the questionnaire has been offered to every respondent of the aforementioned audience of 100 participants, and every participant confirmed the willingness to provide the answers.

3.5.1.2. Semi-Structured Interviews.

Semi-structured interview is a quantitative type of primary data collection methods. It provides more specific and narrow scope of the investigation. As far as the investigator has the opportunity to model a situation and set certain relevant conditions, the customers tend to provide data that is accurate and correspondent to the aforementioned case. This method provides the scenario that involves the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop. The semi-structured interview of the current study mainly presented the respondents with the limited open-ended questions. It is also significant to underline the high level of flexibility of the interview. Hence, the scheme of interview permitted more questions to be outlined according to the contextual conditions. The interview was led to certain extent by the interviewees and their answers.

The semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 25 respondents. All of them confirmed their willingness to participate in the investigation and expressed sincere interest in the presented project of gourmet shops' introduction in their city.

The preliminary list of questions of the interview comprises 10 questions whereas 10 of the aforementioned 25 interviews comprised additional data obtained by means of extra contextual questions. 5 questions referred directly to the phenomenon of the gourmet shop, appropriateness, necessity of introduction, potential advantages/disadvantages as well as expected prerogatives in comparison with the standard shop. Final question of this subgroup concerned the probability of future attendance of such a shop. The next 5 questions comprised the same aspects of the investigation, with the direct reference to the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop and its actual as well as potential dairy products. The interviews provided broad space for analysis and assessment processes. The thing is that the respondents presented the research group with the details and even own suggestions, offers, and advice concerning the introduction of gourmet shops in Sofia. This data is especially essential for the assessment of the appropriateness of the investment.

3.5.1.3. Focus Groups

The use of focus groups is essential as far as it presents not only the possibility to acquire necessary data but also to obtain the exchange of viewpoints and suggestions in the course of sharing the attitudes and opinions concerning the topic.

Focus groups of the current study comprised eight respondents from different social and financial strata. Such an approach to selection and distribution of the participants contributes to the aspects of objectivity

and probability. There were 3 focus groups. Therefore, the overall number of participants of the aforementioned type of activity was 24.

The duration of the discussion between the members of each focus group varies from 30 minutes to one hour. The questions presented for the discussion were the most crucial and specific for the study. Hence, they comprised such issues as rationale of introduction of gourmet shops, the reason of selection of the label of Dobrev's Cheese Shop, and the probability of success. What is more, they included the level of presupposed profitability as the direct consequence of the demand on such a type of shop in the current course of time in Sofia as well as major prerogatives of the introduced business venture and necessary innovations to provide the anticipated success. Furthermore, the personal preferences concerning the dairy products were also comprised.

3.5.2. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources comprise the information that has been obtained from the documented credible sources concerning the aforementioned case. Hence, it may be considered a background for the interpretation of the results of primary data collection and further analysis and conclusion.

The study utilizes the work *The Feta Cheese Dispute* by Peluso as a secondary data source. This source is credible, objective, complete,

and properly documented as well. Consequently, it meets all the required crucial points. It presents the significant aspects of the cheese market development, actual advantages and disadvantages, obstacles and perspectives of the introduction of the shop with the dairy products labeled as Dobrev's Cheese Shop production.

Moreover, the analysis of the phenomenon of rivalry within the feta cheese market is also essential and even signal in the context of current study because it presents a crucial aspect worth that was taken into consideration in terms of a new business venture introduction.

3.6. Value of the Study

The value of the current study has been confirmed by the pilot study targeted at the provision of the relevant background for the final conclusion concerning the aforementioned Research Question. Hence, the value of the study has been affirmed in practice.

3.7. Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the current study should be taken into consideration

regarding the marginal errors which are actually present in the study ramifications and final results. Therefore, the major constraints which affected the study are time and potential false data percentage constraints.

The time constraint is a regular error affecting factor and is regarded as a usual constraint that has been taken into account while making the final conclusion. The constraint of potential false data percentage is quite weak as far as all the participants have expressed the vivid interest in the aforementioned project and have been obviously willing to contribute to the investigation process. The basic reason of such an assumption is the fact that they have provided the most detailed and even additional information in the course of data collection process.

Thus, the constraints mentioned before do not impose a threat for the overall validity and credibility of the presented study as far as marginal errors are not sufficiently numerous. The only sufficient constraint of the study is the limitations of the potential customers' audience. Though, this constraint presents an opportunity to continue and extend the current study.

3.8. Ethical and Legal considerations

It is obligatory for any type of research to take into consideration

ethical as well as legal concerns which are directly connected with the process of undertaking a research study. Such basic ethical considerations as principles of voluntary participation along with the anonymous respondents' activity have been absolutely followed in the course of the research process. Furthermore, the respondents were guaranteed that the research activity will be completely devoid of potential harm and biased actions.

3.9. Data Analysis and Representation

According to Fisher, the process of data analysis is the relevant sequence of examination, transformation, and modeling of the collected data. Moreover, this process is to be performed with the basic objective of highlighting any kind of constructive, relevant, and useful data in order to provide credible and perspective conclusions as well as support of the whole decision-making process.

It is significant to underline the unified approach which presupposed the use of both inferential and descriptive statistics for the analysis and subsequent conclusion. Furthermore, the technique of data interpretation primarily involved univariate data analysis for the separate variable analysis whereas multilateral data analysis was implicated for the process of examinations of the relations between

several variables. The final ramifications and outcomes of the current study were presented in the form of discussion of the results as well as by means of the tables, which provided the support of evidence presented in figures.