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A METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE JUSTER SCALE:
CONTEXTUAL REQUIREMENTS AND MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE
BEHAVIOURS

By

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing at
Massey University
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April 2004
ABSTRACT

The relatively poor performance of intention scales to forecast future purchase behaviour turned researchers’ attention to testing probability scales and the 11 point Juster Scale has become a preferred instrument for this task. The scale has undergone considerable testing and has been implemented successfully in a variety of research environments including self-completion mail surveys, telephone surveys and Internet-based surveys. Nevertheless, several methodological challenges remain, each of which produce some variation in the scale’s accuracy. In particular, the review of Juster Scale literature revealed that accuracy of the scale was not consistent across product categories. This raised concerns about the reliability of the scale with both the context of the scale as it is presented to respondents and the nature of samples used to test the scale cited as possible causes for inconsistency. The review also identified two areas of development for the Juster Scale. These were to examine whether the structure of the scale could improve its performance and a problem that researchers encountered when using the Juster Scale to forecast mutually exclusive behaviours.

The research carried out for this thesis aimed to address two of the four issues raised above. They were, one, to address the contextual requirements of the Juster Scale and, two, to resolve the problem that researchers encountered when using the Juster Scale to forecast mutually exclusive behaviours. Data required to address the two issues were secured by implementing two Internet-based surveys. One was carried out on the clientele of Vodafone New Zealand (Vodafone survey) and the other on a sample of the national population (New Zealand survey). The test products were WAP-capable mobile phones and the payment plans offered by mobile telephony companies. Purchase probability data for these products were obtained in separate treatments to produce the required comparisons.

The review of literature identified three factors that exhibited tendencies to alter context, namely, question order, the practice of testing the Juster Scale concurrently on product categories and respondent’s interpretation of the question accompanying the Juster Scale. Prior to addressing these issues, it was necessary to standardise the contextual requirements of the Juster Scale. Investigation was undertaken by implementing the Juster Scale in separate treatments with and without providing
additional contextual inputs. Results showed that the Juster Scale implemented on its own without additional contextual information produced mean probability scores similar to when the scale was implemented after contextual information was provided.

The Juster Scale has also been successfully employed in the forecasting of mutually exclusive behaviour. The review of literature revealed two methods namely weighting and the Constant Sum Scale for the above purpose. However, no comparisons were previously made to test whether the forecasts made by these two methods were similar or not, and this became the second major objective addressed in the current research. Investigation was undertaken by implementing the two methods in separate treatments (Weighted-scores and Constant Sum Scale) in the New Zealand survey. Results produced were mixed hence it was not possible to conclusively establish one method's superiority. The topic remains open for further investigation to test a method that is best suited for collecting probability data of mutually exclusive behaviour.

The investigation on the contextual requirements of the Juster Scale concluded, at least for the test products (WAP-capable mobile phones) used in this research, that the Juster Scale is a robust forecasting instrument in a typical purchasing environment. However, contextual requirements of the Juster Scale were examined here for just one product. Future studies might investigate whether the results obtained here can be reproduced for other product categories.

Results from the investigation to resolve the problem researchers encountered when using the Juster Scale in forecasting mutually exclusive behaviours were not conclusive. This research, however, showed that the Constant Sum Scale was a better instrument to produce clear data, ready for analysis. Nonetheless, the topic remains open for more investigation. In any future research, selection of test products will be crucial. Frequently purchased products may not generate the necessary comparisons.

The major contribution of this thesis to the academic community is that the Juster Scale is successful in collecting probability data in a purchasing context. While the objective regarding mutually exclusive behaviour yielded less conclusive results, the research showed that either of the two methods compared (Constant Sum Scale and weighting process) could be used when respondents are confident about their behaviour.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My foremost acknowledgement goes to God Almighty through the Lord Jesus Christ. I have had the greatest experience of trusting in God all the years I have worked on this thesis. I would like to offer my praises to God with the opening verses of Psalm 103

“Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits…”

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my wife, Sherly for her tireless love and support. She has with tremendous patience helped me in each stage of this thesis. Without her, I would not have completed this piece of work. My three daughters, Sharon, Sarah and Raquel, have been a source of motivation for me to complete this thesis. I’ve enjoyed the love and care of my family during times of difficulties and times of success. I would like to also mention my appreciation to fellow-believers at the Victoria Gospel Hall, Palmerston North and Mailer Street Gospel Hall, Dunedin. Thank you for the many prayers and help given; may God continue to bless and prosper your services that you do in the Lord Jesus.

I have had a great team of supervisors behind this work. To begin, I’d like to thank Dr Ron Garland for stepping in as my chief supervisor. Your guidance was precise and always right. Thanks for the timely feedback and comments; they were very useful. Next on my list is Associate Professor Tony Lewis; your arriving to my help was timely which turned this thesis around. Thank you for your advice and support, they had great value to this thesis. I was introduced to this research by Dr Mike Brennan; thanks Mike for setting me up with this research. Thanks for those early papers and conference experiences. One person who has followed me through my work is Mr Barry Jackson. I have used him as my punching bag; thanks Barry for keeping up with me. I would like to express my thanks to Professor Phil Gendall for offering me the opportunity to do my PhD in the department. I have enjoyed working under you and the experience gained in survey research has been very useful in doing the research for this thesis. I would like to convey my thanks to Dr Zane Kearns and Mr Don Esslemont. I thoroughly enjoyed learning under you both; thanks for your help, support and friendship. My thanks to Mrs Sue Johns for reading the thesis before I submitted; thank you very much Sue. There were some who silently did their part to make my PhD days go easy. Mrs Maureen
MacDonald, Ms Pru Robbie, Mrs Rosemary McDonald, Mrs Pat Collins and Mr Craig Goodwin, thanks for your best wishes and help from time to time.

In closing this brief acknowledgement, I would like to mention my thanks to Mum and Dad. They have sacrificially given a lot of themselves to me. They gave me a great home to grow up, good education and wonderful days. They have faithfully followed me with their prayers. My thanks also go to Sherly’s Mum and Dad for their love and prayers. To all my brothers (Achachan, Geogie, Binod, and Babuchayan) and sisters (Sheena, Sheela, Elsa and Beena), thank you for praying for me. I am thankful to God Almighty for all you wonderful people in my life.
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