

Marketing Analysis of Additional Services Provided by Pharmacies

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Abstract—The article presents the concept of marketing analysis of the additional services provided in pharmacies in the city of Belgorod. The authors carried out the assessment of customers' satisfaction with the quality of the additional services provided in the pharmacies in the city of Belgorod. Also the authors analyzed consumers' preferences to form the list of services that can increase a pharmacy's customer loyalty and its competitiveness in the pharmaceutical market.

Keywords—marketing analysis, pharmacy, additional services, IT-technologies

I. INTRODUCTION

The high profitability of the pharmaceutical business leads to its active development and as a result a high level of competition in this field [1-3]. In the conditions of intense competition when positioning a pharmacy or pharmacy network the concept of “pharmacy formula” plays a significant role. Pharmacy formula is a combination of goods and services of additional value that attracts the target buyer and allows the pharmacy to be competitive [4-6].

Additional services are elements of social and ethical marketing and they are also provided to buyers to increase the competitiveness of a pharmacy, create its positive image, build customer loyalty and provide qualitative pharmaceutical assistance [7-10].

It is relevant to conduct systematic research in the field of additional services provided by pharmacies to buyers.

The purpose of the study is a marketing analysis of additional services provided in pharmacies of Belgorod.

II. EXPERIMENTAL

In the process of research we used methods of systemic and structural analyses and sociological methods. The objects of the study were 50 pharmacies in the city of Belgorod and 100 questionnaires of respondents in a sociological survey.

To conduct a marketing analysis of additional services, we developed a research concept that includes 3 blocks: 1. the marketing analysis of the range of additional services

provided in pharmacies in the city of Belgorod (price, customer, medical, additional services based on information technology). 2. the analysis of consumers' satisfaction with the quality of the additional services provided in the pharmacies of Belgorod including 2 stages: the formation of a socio-demographic portrait of a pharmacy's visitor and the analysis of consumers' satisfaction with the quality of the provided additional services in pharmacies of Belgorod. We analyzed consumer preferences in the field of additional services provided in pharmacies in the city of Belgorod (price, customer, medical, additional services based on information technology).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the initial stage of the study we developed a classification of additional services provided in pharmacies including price additional services (discount cards), client services (department of optics), medical services (measuring blood pressure) and information services which we divided into: consulting services (the presence of an inquiry office in a pharmacy), services based on IT, for example, the ability to pay by credit card and services based on mobile technologies, for example, mobile apps

We analyzed the range of additional services in 50 pharmacies in the city of Belgorod and revealed that 64.5% of pharmacies provide additional price services, 87.1% of pharmacies provide additional customer services, 29.03% of pharmacies provide additional medical services and 95.5% of pharmacies provide additional information services.

Most percentage of pharmacies (85.0%) provide additional price services in the form of promotions and discounts for certain groups of products, 50.0% of pharmacies provide discount, accumulative and bonus cards to buyers, as well as “regular customer” cards, the so called loyalty cards. The service “gift for the purchase” is presented in 5% of pharmacies.

An assortment analysis of additional client services revealed that the service “possibility to order a medicine” is presented in 100% of pharmacies. Some percentage of

pharmacies (3.7%) is engaged in the manufacture of orthopedic insoles for individual orders. Some pharmacies (6.14%) offer the service “glasses production by prescription”.

The analysis of additional medical services provided in pharmacies in Belgorod showed that “blood pressure measurement” prevails among these services and amounts to 88.8%. Customers can measure blood pressure by themselves or with the help of a pharmacist. Also 33.3% of pharmacies give customers the possibility to receive a consultation of an ophthalmologist, cardiologist and a specialist in rehabilitation and patient care. Some percentage of pharmacies (11.1%) provides additional services for the diagnosis of feet and 22.2% of pharmacies have the ability to examine the interior of the eye with an ophthalmoscope.

The most common additional services based on information technologies are information and consulting services such as “a consultant in the sales area” in 3.4% of pharmacies and additional information services based on IT technologies such as “payment by bank transfer” in 100% of pharmacies, “own web site” (17.2%) and “a touch information terminal in the sales area” (3.4%).

The first stage of the study results allow us to conclude that the leading position among additional customer services belongs to the “possibility to order a medicine” service (100%). In most pharmacies the service “blood pressure measurement” accounts for 88.8% among the additional medical services. Additional information services based on IT technologies such as “payment by bank transfer” are implemented in 100% of cases.

The second stage of our study is devoted to the analysis of the customers' satisfaction with the quality of the additional services provided by pharmacies in the city of Belgorod. For this purpose we interviewed 100 customers in various pharmacies in the city of Belgorod. Analyzing the questionnaires we formed a socio-demographic portrait of a customer of a pharmacy in the city of Belgorod: it is a woman (74%) aged 55 years (42%), who is retired (32%), married (59%) and having higher education (46%).

In addition, the analysis revealed that 65% of respondents are informed about the availability of additional services in pharmacies of the city, while 35% of respondents do not know about them. In 49% of cases, the pharmacy itself is the source of informing customers about their additional services. Some customers (33%) learn about additional services from reference groups (acquaintances and friends), and less than 20% of respondents get to know about additional services from a retail pharmacist or the media.

The analysis of the additional services use by customers showed that 88% of respondents always use them, 10% of respondents use them rarely and 2% of respondents do not use additional services in pharmacies. Also, 95% of respondents noted that the availability of additional services affects the choice of a pharmacy they use.

To assess the respondents' satisfaction with the additional services provided by pharmacies in Belgorod we used a 5-point scale where 1 is a “very low level”, 5 is an “excellent level”. The analysis showed that 47% of respondents consider the level of additional services “satisfactory” and 29% of respondents consider it “unsatisfactory”. Some respondents

(15%) noted a “very low level” of the additional services provided by pharmacies. Only 7% of respondents rated it “good”. Minority of respondents (2%) believes that additional services are provided at an “excellent level” (Fig. 1).

As the third stage of the study we carried out the analysis of consumer preferences for additional services provided in pharmacies in the city of Belgorod. In order to implement a study of consumer preferences we compiled a questionnaire where respondents were asked to choose from their point of view the most requested services among the list of potential additional services.

The analysis of potential price additional services showed that 91% of respondents want to use discounts, 88% of respondents prefer using discount cards in pharmacies and 68% of respondents would like to use cumulative bonus programs. Promotions and free samples attract 63% of respondents, 61% of respondents have chosen a gift for a purchase as an additional service. Some respondents (56%) would like to have a gift certificate and 47% of respondents are ready to receive cash-back as additional services in pharmacies. 36% and 32% of respondents have chosen the coupon system and package sales, respectively (Fig. 2).

The majority of respondents (75%) consider a twenty-four-hour work schedule of a pharmacy as the most important service among the consumer preferences of additional consumer services. For 72% of respondents home delivery of drugs is the most important service and for 70% of respondents it is the presence of an optics department in a pharmacy. The most insignificant services for customers are

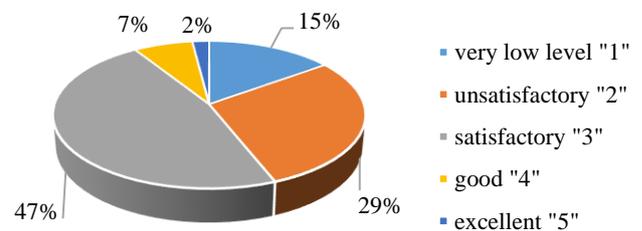


Fig. 1. Analysis of respondents' satisfaction with additional services provided in pharmacies in the city of Belgorod on a 5-point scale, %.

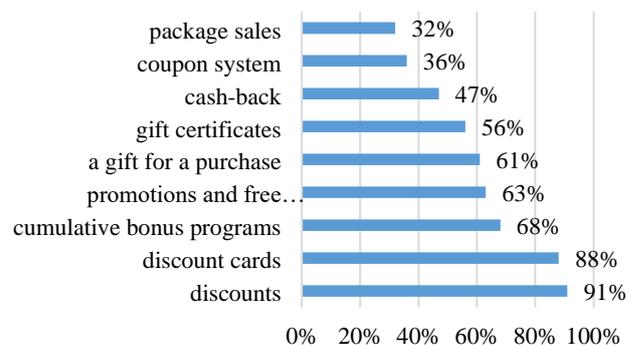


Fig. 2. Analysis of consumers' preferences for price additional services, %.

the presence of a children's playroom and the sensation of aroma in a pharmacy (Fig. 3).

Some percentage of respondents (77%) want to receive medical services in the form of measuring blood pressure and heart rate, 68% of respondents want to receive medical services in the form of measuring anthropometric data (weight and height). 56% of respondents have chosen the rapid test on cholesterol level in blood. Less than 8% of respondents gave minimal preferences to physiotherapy and rapid testing strength of the shoulder girdle and hand.

We analyzed consumers' preferences in information and consulting additional services and can resumed that 71% of respondents consider the telephone consultations important, for 70% of respondents a telephone inquiry about the availability of medicines in pharmacies is preferable, 68% of respondents would like to receive information about medicines for the prevention of seasonal diseases and 65 % of respondents would prefer the consultation of a pharmacist in the sales area.

The analysis of consumers' preferences for additional services based on IT technologies showed that 83% of respondents are interested in an information terminal for providing information about OTC drugs in the sales area (pre-consultation), 78% of respondents would use the electronic queue service, for 73% of respondents online booking (ordering) of drugs is of great importance and 69% of respondents noted the preference to pay by bank transfer (Fig. 4).

The analysis of consumers' preferences for information mobile additional services showed that most respondents (91%) would like to be able to obtain information about medicines and other goods of the pharmacy assortment using mobile devices and 80% of respondents would like to use the pharmacy mobile app.

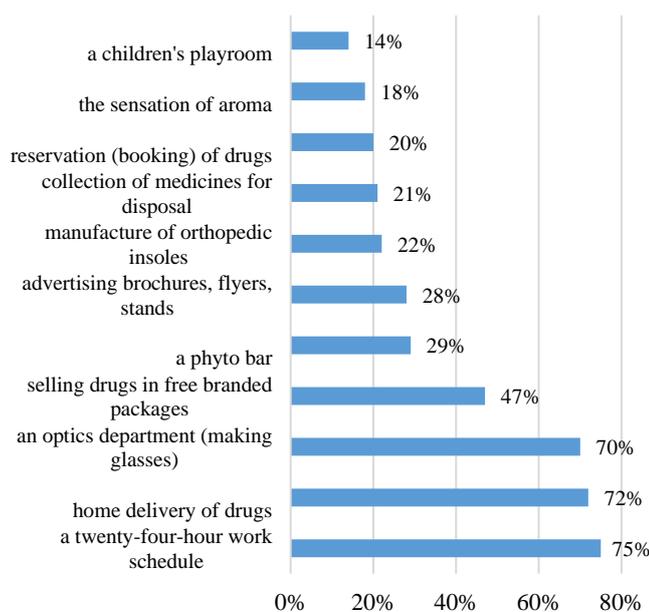


Fig. 3. Analysis of consumers' preferences for customer additional services, %.

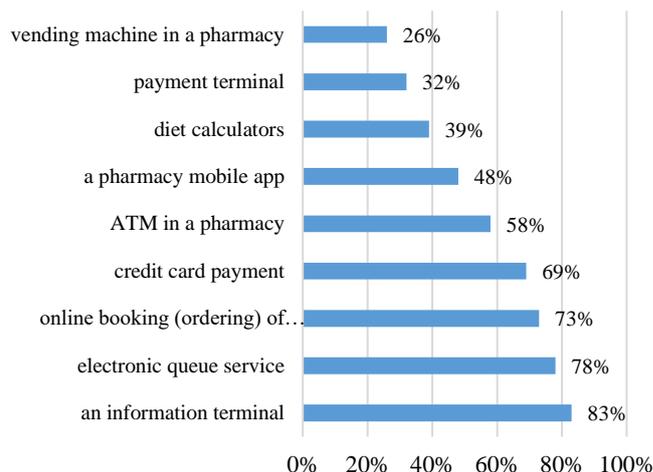


Fig. 4. Analysis of consumers' preferences for additional services based on IT technologies, %/

At the final stage of the study we carried out a comparative analysis of the potential and actual additional services preferred by customers which are currently available in the pharmacies in the city of Belgorod.

The analysis revealed that the actual realized additional services provided in pharmacies account for less than 36% of the possible "potential" ones (14 of 39).

IV.CONCLUSION

Thus, during the marketing research we found that the most attractive option for customers of pharmacies is to get "price" benefits (discount cards and discount programs). The twenty-four-hour work schedule of a pharmacy is important among the additional customer services. The analysis within the additional medical services revealed the greatest preferences in the ability to measure blood pressure. High consumer demand among additional information services is represented by the possibility of using an electronic queue system, the availability of an information terminal in the sales area for pre-consultation about drugs, the possibility of drug online booking (ordering) on the pharmacy website, the availability of a pharmacy mobile app and the possibility of obtaining information about medicines using mobile devices. The study results allow pharmacies to introduce the most preferred additional services from the presented assortment list and thereby increase the commitment of existing and potential customers, as well as be competitive in the growing pharmaceutical market.

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