

THE CONSUMER INNOVATIVENESS RESEARCH: THE THEORETICAL DEFINITION

As a marketing concept, innovativeness can be defined as imprecise. Firm innovativeness, or ‘creation of newness’ depicts a firm’s ability to develop and launch new products at a fast rate. Product innovativeness, or ‘possession of newness’ is the degree of newness of a product. Consumer innovativeness or ‘consumption of newness,’ is the tendency to buy new products more often and more quickly than other people.

The result of our research showed that there is no real consensus on the meaning of innovativeness. It may be described as early purchase of a new product, as well as a tendency to be attracted by new products. Following the distinction made by Midgley and Dowling [1] between actualized and innate innovativeness, most authors seem to consider innovativeness a trait, the nature of which is still under question.

Numerous scales have been created for the purpose of measuring innate innovativeness. Innate innovativeness is a ‘predisposition to buy new and different products and brands rather than remain with previous choices and consumer patterns’.

Four explanations have been proposed for explaining such a predisposition: stimulation need, novelty seeking, independence toward others’ communicated experience and need for uniqueness.

Thus, there is no consensus in the definition of innovativeness. From ‘inherent novelty seeking,’ which may have consequences other than new product buying behaviour, to predisposition to buy new products,’ which defines the concept by its main consequence, through ‘independence in innovative decisions,’ which could not be empirically validated, various authors have given different views of the concept. There is no consensus either on the roots of innovativeness. Of the need for stimulation, novelty seeking, independence in judgment and the need for uniqueness, which are true antecedents of innovativeness. Analysis of existing innovativeness scales may provide insights into these questions.

References:

1. Midgley D, Dowling GR. Innovativeness: the concept and its measurement. *J Consum Res* 1978;4:229– 42.