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INVESTIGATING EFFECT OF BRAND DIMENSIONS ON CLIENTS` INTENTION TO REPURCHASING FROM ETKA DEPARTMENT STORS

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ABSTRACT

The research provides a modern point of view regarding ETKA Organization marketing strategies in the department store field. This research revealed that brand evidences and brand communication have direct effects on clients` behavioral intentions. In doing this research, survey (field) description method was used. By studying books, articles and reports, information which is needed for field studies was provided, and then with the help of questionnaire data needed for the research hypotheses test was gathered. Among all the ETKA Department Stores in Tehran City, 6 of them were selected with the approval of managers and experts of ETKA Organization and 408 questionnaires were distributed among clients 393 of which had been answered. Then gathered data were analyzed with the help of PLS Software. After conducting analysis related, all the research hypotheses were approved and it was clear that brand evidences (brand name, price, working place, main service, staff service, emotions and compatibility with personal understanding) and brand communication (controlled and uncontrolled) have direct effect on satisfaction, attitude and intention of clients` repurchasing. Among this, service work, staff service and controlled communication will have the most influence on clients` behavioral intentions.

Keywords: Brand Dimensions, Satisfaction, Attitude, Repurchasing

INTRODUCTION

Significance of conducting a research is related to significance of service brand in organization`s marketing strategies and its role in appealing, maintaining and supporting clients. Trading signs have a key and strategic role in gaining competitive advantage and decisions of service organization strategy management. Clients` willingness to trading signs will be a good criterion for assessing long-term marketing decisions and one of the significant decisions on marketing is loyalty to brand and intention of repurchasing. This concept plays a key role in making long-term goals for organization, since loyal clients don`t need wide promotion efforts. They are willing to pay more for gaining their favorite advantages and brand quality.

Importance of Research Subject

Several theoretical frameworks were presented for understanding clients` mind and reaction. These frame works are willing to conceptualize serving sectors` brand which is similar to physical products` features with the minimum emphasis on service brand.

Some models have the ability of application in both fields of products and service, but applying such models can be challenged according to marketing principles and natural differences between products and services. Due to significant growth of servicing brands and lack of sufficient researches in this field especially Iran; we will deal with two key objectives:

First: We will deal with servicing brand which was dealt with according to the research literature in recent years.

Second: According to the research literature and also the results gained from current research, we will deal with effect of servicing brand dimensions in ETKA Department Stores on variables of client response (satisfaction, attitude to brand, and intention to repurchasing).

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Concern of ETKA Organization on this issue will indicate to what extent brand evidence (brand name, price, working place, main job, staff job, emotions and compatibility with personal attitude) and brand communication (advertisement, selling development, face-to-face advertisement and public affairs) have direct effect on satisfaction, attitude, behavioral intentions and reselection. These variables will be influential on clients` repurchasing from ETKA Department Stores. And as a result ETKA Organization condition will be get back to its real and true position. In fact, variables investigated will help reduce the gap which exists between current and fine condition and then the organization`s need to achieving competitive advantage and powerful image of the brand will be met. So it can provide more trust and commitment feeling in line with providing better services for clients.

Research History and Theoretical Background

Intention to Repurchasing

Maybe the most important dependent variable in communicative marketing researches is keeping willingness to repurchasing. In recent years some researchers have dealt with the relationship between emotional commitment and keeping clients and have shown a positive and strong effect on keeping clients without exception. Since clients are willing to support things with which they are identified and things with which they have dependency feeling (Bansal *et al.*, 2004).

Based on brand-services-client relationship, clients will keep buying brands with which they are identified and are committed emotionally. Loyalty to brand and intention to repurchasing is achieved from both attitude and behavior attitudes. In other words, loyalty to brands is the finally responds of clients to assessment and performance on a brand within framework of a deep commitment to repurchasing of clients. In process of loyalty to brand the service brand will be advised continually in the future with the presence of position effects in line with marketing efforts (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

The intention to repurchasing means repeating shopping whose reason is psychological processes. In other words, repeating shopping is not merely an optional reaction, it is the result of psychological, emotional and normative factors (Oliver, 1999).

The intention to repurchasing is formed of two elements of behavioral and attitude willingness. Behavioral willingness is defined as loyalty to brand through observable buying during a period and attitude loyalty is defined based on expressing preferences, commitment or intention of buying (Menz *et al.*, 1996).

Many researchers believe that behavioral loyalty cannot express real reason of buying; therefore attitude dimensions should be noticed as well. Richard Oliver defines loyalty as follows:

Keeping deep commitment to repurchasing or reselecting product or services can cause changes in client behavior continuously (Oliver, 1999).

Attitude Concept

Thurston (1928) was the first to present a definition of attitude. Based on his theory attitudes are a set of individuals` emotion towards issues around them (Freeman, 2010).

Based on studies of Kim *et al.*, attitude and habits to brand is different with loyalty to brand, although finally it leads to loyalty to brand. Attitude to emotion includes emotion and behavioral intention of clients towards a certain brand. Client`s willingness to buying only one brand in a product class indicates high-level loyalty to brand, but multiple loyalty or loyalty towards more than one brand is a low-level loyalty (Kim *et al.*, 2008).

Brand attitude will be attitude and positive or negative condition of client towards brand which results from their satisfaction with trading motivations. Attitude could be defined based on learning theories and cognitive approach. In each of these therefore, concept of attitude is defined in a different way and all different aspects of attitude are emphasized. Attitude is a mental and natural preparation condition which is organized though experience and it leaves a dynamic effect on individual`s response to issues and positions where these responses are related to them (Allport, 1935).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a positive feeling which is established in individuals after using product or receiving service. The emotion is made from contrast of client expectations and distributor`s performance. If

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products and services which are received by client are assessed on the same level of expectations, then satisfaction feeling will be established in them. On the opposite, if level of services and product is more than client's level of expectations, then it will lead to nasty taste. Also lower level of services and product toward expectations leads to client dissatisfaction (Beerli *et al.*, 2004).

Satisfaction means positive or negative response of clients to perceived service performance and approval or lack of expectations before buying services. This indicates quick response of client to brand performance. In other words, client's reaction satisfaction to brand dimensions and approval or lack of approval of client's expectations are all argued in the post-consumption phase (Grace and Cass, 2005).

Studies show that rise of client satisfaction leads to increase of client attitude loyalty to a brand. Every client may be satisfied or dissatisfied after receiving services, buying or using a product (Bent *et al.*, 2005).

It is hard to measure client satisfaction, since determining satisfaction level of clients is that hard? Client satisfaction is a new way for showing quality level in an organization and expands a client-centered culture and management. Measuring client satisfaction provides a quick, objective and meaningful feedback regarding client's preferences and expectations (Johnson, 2005).

Controlled Communications

This is advertisement and selling development on brand which is received and experienced in the pre-buying phase by clients indirectly.

Advertisement

This is one of controllable relations with advertisement clients which includes communication and impersonal introduction of a product or service (Rousta and Ebrahimi, 2008).

Advertisement is one of the most important communication tools for individuals who intend to sell a product or service. In other words, it is called making relationship with client for influencing on their attitude and behavior (Esmailpor, 2005).

Promotion

Measures which are conducted for supporting commercials and coordinating direct selling are called selling development. It uses a certain combination of impersonal advertisement, personal selling, advertisement, and public affairs of an organization for following advertisement goals and marketing. In fact, it is formed of a set of varied and short-term motivating tools which is applied for motivating clients towards quicker buying of product or services. Part of these measures include: matches and entertainment, lottery of prizes and awards, buying coupon, encouraging discounts, entertaining plans, receipt, letter and calendar, games which provide some prizes for winners, announcements, trading plans, providing product sample and prices (Black and Bleach, 1990).

Uncontrolled Communication

It includes oral advertisement and public affairs. External communication has secondary effect on awareness with brand and brand concept whose effect is not that strong. Experience of client in service organization is the result of their collaborative experiences with engagements with servicing organization. Client experience has a direct influence on external communication and brand concept (Berry, 2000).

World-of-Mouth

Despite significance of this type of advertisement especially in servicing field, marketers ignore active managing of oral advertisement and regard it uncontrollable. In some studies they realized only 2% of these advertisements is the result of communicative and marketing efforts of organizations (Mangold *et al.*, 1999).

Managers should look for some ways for motivating this type of advertisement (Stock and Lumax, 2002).

Many organizations are well aware of power of oral advertisement.

Such organizations look for motivating social networks for advising their products and services to others (Kotler, 2000).

Oral communication can be defined as the communications among clients regarding a product or services of organizations in which individuals who participate in such communication don't follow any trading goal (Litwin *et al.*, 2007).

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Such communication includes fine and good advices which individuals give to others regarding product, services or brands (Data et al., 2005).

Publicity

It is another type of uncontrolled communication which is said ideology of a certain group. It may be goal of public affairs, clients and shareholders of an organization. Part of measurements of public affairs is related to materials except selling and we can observe them in form of a response to questions of reporters in newspapers, annual reports, charities and helping local training projects. Public affairs have one advantage and one disadvantage:

1. Low level of costs related increases message credit among individuals in some cases.
2. Disadvantage: lack of control in messaging and lack of time for influencing.

Brand Evidence

In branding services, brand evidences is a set of factors which is experienced by clients in pre/post buying steps and also in phase of consumption.

Brand evidence includes all the servicing brand dimensions which influence on assessment and understanding of clients in service brand such as brand name, price, place of presenting services, main services, behavior and staff appearance, client personal impression with brand image and the emotions which appeared during using services (Grace and Cass, 2006).

Brand Name

American Marketing Association believes a trading sign includes name, expression, signal, symbol or plan or a combination of all these which is applied with the aim of identifying products or seller's services and can cause differentiating of these products and services from products and services and they are distributed by opponents. In fact, brand name is part of trading signal which should be met; we can express it (Cutler and Armstrong, 2009).

Price

Price is one of the elements which is located in a more tangible level of services and it is more than a currency in minds of clients. Price is the fee which individuals pay in return for receiving services (Grace and Cass, 2006).

Working Place

Coordinated place of working (servicing) and coordinating services can leave emotional, physiological and cognitive influence in clients. In fact, different working places can have some effect on client's response which leads to non-stop assessment during consuming and buying. This also could be one of the key brand dimensions on servicing. Environment and service space can provide valuable breakthroughs and support before shopping and while shopping for clients. E.g. a department store had got modern facilities or if it has attractive visual facilities or employees with nice appearance and fine clothes or not (Grace and Cass, 2006).

Core Service

Service is everything that can meet need or desire. In primary level of services provided, there exists service core and main service. Main service is related to services which are given to client; is the main services presented by department store is in line with client's needs or not (Grace and Cass, 2006).

Employee Service

Employees are a communication bridge and key marketing factors which can change satisfaction level of client significantly. Staff service is employee's response in presenting services and staff empathy in providing services. Staff services are regarding behavior and performance of staff in the service provided. For example, to what extent is staff of department store polite? Is the staff always willing to help clients? Or will they care about clients on time or no (Grace and Cass, 2006).

Feeling

Emotions are in intangible level in presenting services. They play a key and identified role in client decision-making and have a deep influence on experience of consumption and reaction of clients. More accurately, do clients have good and happy feeling during using department store services or not (Grace and Cass, 2006).

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Self-Image Congruence

Clients keep buying brands with which their identity is determined. Infact, this issue points out the extent services present are compatible with understanding level of client.

Empirical Background

A Review on Domestic Researches

Researches of Rd, Mansour Samady and Dr. Bahman Hajipour (2009): in a case study they dealt with presenting modeling test in the field of service brand in Refah Department Store in Tehran. Data were gathered through questionnaire. The research results indicate that brand evidence (main service employees, brand, service work, price, emotions and compatibility with personal impressions) and also brand communication do have a direct influence on satisfaction, attitude and behavioral intentions (Samadi and Hajipour, 2009).

Researches of Rohollah Ahmady and Mohammed Donyaei and Kambiz NavabiZand in 2010: in a case study they sought to identify view of clients in Refah and Sharvand Department Stores regarding service quality, trust and client satisfaction in order to make loyalty in them in two Refah and Sharvand Departments Stores. Statistical society of the research includes all the clients of Refah and Shahrvand Department Stores in which 385 individuals were selected randomly and then questionnaires was distributed between them. The results indicate that from view of clients if these two department stores, service quality and their trust and satisfaction with departments store have been fine (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2011).

A Review on Foreign Researches

In a research Chernatony and Segal horn (2003) sought for some criteria for successful naming of services from aspect of experts. The aim was having deep understanding of knowledge and understanding factors which are influential on success of service trading names. In this research 28 interviews were done with consultants in trading brand affairs, advertisement, design, marketing management, market researches and a writer. In the interview experts were asked to name features which are associated with success full naming of services. Moreover expressing different aspects, experts pointed out to some dimensions of fixed position, constancy which is related to quality constancy in staff behavior and their engagements with clients and also they focused on values for example and the culture of doing the right thing for clients (Chernatony and Horn, 2003).

Brady and Bourdeau (2005) investigated brand signs in different servicing sectors according to intangibility level of services provided for these sectors. Service sectors selected include investing funds, hotels, and computer system department stores where tangibility level of the services provided is added to these sectors. Inthis research data were gathered through questionnaire and the sample space was chosen from business students which had 101 members. Internal signs directly originate from the product, therefore, we canhardly change them. In return, internal signs are dimensions which are placed around the product and we can hardly change them (Brady and Bourdeau, 2005).

In a case study, of Berry & Seltman (2007) dealt with May clinic in order to receive a model from this clinic in making a powerful brand. According to survey conducted in 2003, May clinic received the fist place in curing serious diseases among others. In this research, moreover servicing naming model for client`s experience, it was known as a key factor in making strong brand (Berry and Seltman, 2007).

Grace and Cass (2005) dealt with service brand from point of consumers. In this research 6 structural and non-structural interviews were conducted. Moreover, 527 questionnaire were distributed 1 of which were removed. 256 investigations were for retailing and 254 investigations were related to bank. In the research dimensions of service brand were investigated within framework of brand evidence (such as core service, staff service, brand name, service view, price, value for money, compatibility with personal impression and emotions) plus brand communication (controlled and uncontrolled). All seven hypotheses of the research were approved during dealing with positive relationship between brand dimensions and variables (satisfaction, attitude and decision-making in brand election) (Grace and Cass, 2005).

Research Hypotheses

Hence, the research hypotheses which include 6 main hypotheses are as flows:

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- Hypothesis 1: brand evidence has significant effect on client satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 2: brand evidence has significant effect on client attitude towards brand.
- Hypothesis 3: brand communication has significant effect on client satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 4: brand communication has significant effect on client attitude towards brand.
- Hypothesis 5: client satisfaction has significant effect on client attitude towards brand.
- Hypothesis 6: client attitude towards brand has significant effect on intention to repurchasing.

Conceptual Model of the Research

The model originated from Grace and Cass structural model. In 2005, they investigated service brand dimensions from aspect of consumers. In this research, service brand dimensions were investigated within framework of brand evidence such as core service, staff service, brand name, service outlook, price, value for money, compatibility with personal impression and emotions) and brand communication (controlled and uncontrolled). The model was influenced by brand equity model and Barry brand. Since the model presented by Grace and Cass has sufficient integrity, it contains variables of the research (Grace and Cass, 2005).

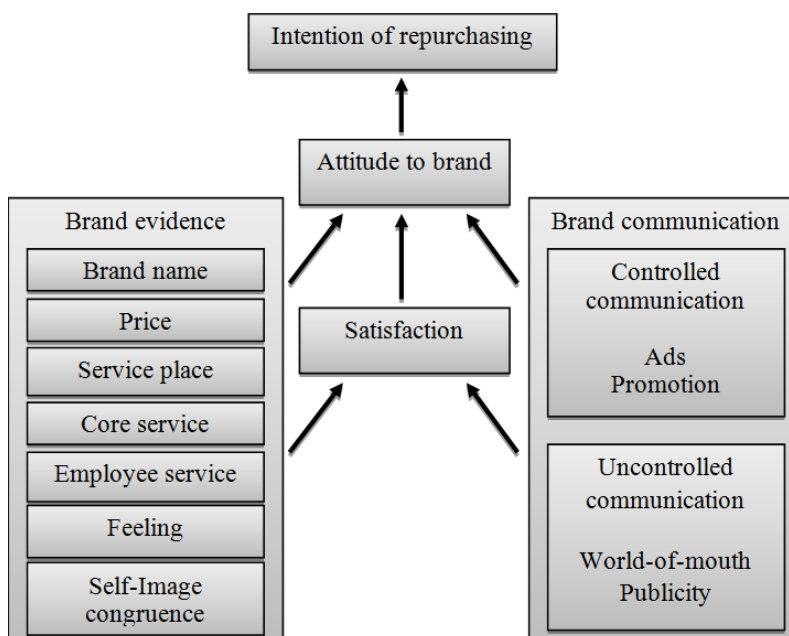


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the research originated from Grace and Cass structural model.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

The research is an applied one whose strategy is descriptive-survey. Also, in the most general division, the research method was divided into types of library and survey based on the way of gathering data both of which were applied in this research. Based on this, first aspects and study topics were investigated and explained within the framework of reviewing subject literature of the research and then by using field studies we tried to gather data and information in order to deal with the effect of brand dimensions with the aim of client’s repurchasing intention from ETKA Department Store.

Statistical Population

The statistical population of the current research will be all the clients of ETKA Department Store in Tehran.

Statistical Sample

In the current research, selective sampling method was applied. Where 6 ETKA Department Stores were selected with the idea of managers and experts in ETKA Organization in Tehran. In the current research selective approach was used.

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Sampling Method

Since statistical society is unlimited, we will use Morgan Table in order to gain sample size; for societies with more than 100000members, the sample size will be 384. We expect that some of questionnaires will not return, so 400 questionnaires will be distributed in the shops.

Data collection methods

In order to gather data, to analyze them and investigate the research questions, closed questionnaire, interview and observation were used (by using content analysis method). The research questionnaire was designed based on Likert scale. According to the research goal, questions were divided with framework of triple options (very high to very low).

Data Analysis Methods

In this research in order to investigate reliability tools of the research, Cronbach's alpha method was used. The research model was designed within framework of structural equations models (SEM) and was tested with a test-related approach. Hence, PLS Software was applied for conceptual model test of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After testing model of factors which influence on intention of repurchasing by PLS Software, conceptual model which had been tested in chart No2 was presented. Value written on the lines is in fact Beta Coefficient resulting from regression equations among variables which is route coefficient. Values (numbers) inside each circle indicating R Square value is dimension where prediction variables enter the circle through cursor. To investigate significant level of route coefficient, T value in each route should be shown.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the statistical sample

| Income | | Education | | AGE | | Marital Status | |
|---|-----|---------------------------|-----|----------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Less than 500 thousand Tomans | 10% | Diploma and under diploma | 35% | Under 30 | 22% | | |
| 500 thousand Tomans to 1 million Tomans | 39% | Associate’s degree | 20% | 31-40 | 40% | Married | 74% |
| 1 to 1/5 million Tomans | 27% | B.A. | 36% | 41-50 | 24% | | |
| 1/5 to 2 million Tomans | 13% | M.A. and above | 9% | 51-60 | 12% | Single | 26% |
| More than 2 million Tomans | 11% | | | Above 60 | 2% | | |

The test results indicate that T calculated for all the model routes of the factors which influence on intention to repurchasing is more than two ($T \geq 2$) and AVE calculated for the variables is more than 0/5 ($AVE \geq 0.5$)

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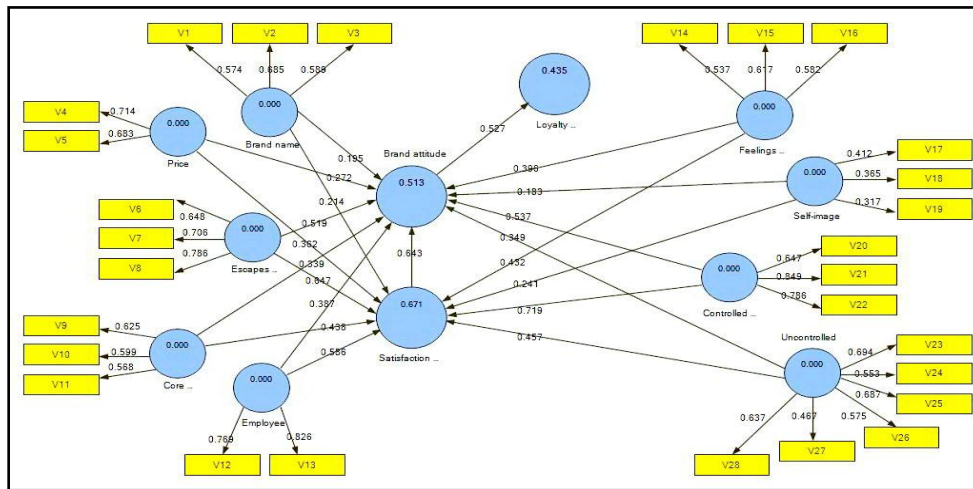


Figure 2: (coefficient and factor loads) Tested model of the research by software PLS

Hence, we can argue that estimated coefficient which was calculated in the model has fine validity and is fine to be assessed and that all the 6 research hypotheses were approved. Highest level of estimation coefficients among 12 groups of the model variables is related to influencing controlled communication on satisfaction (FL=0.719) and makes a great fitting of the relationship among variables. This indicates that it is the most important factor which influences on intention of repurchasing. Also, other route coefficients are related to working place (FL=0.647) and Employee service (FL=0.586).

Table 2: Results of route coefficients and estimated T for the model of factors which influence on the intention to repurchasing

| Routes | T | Factor loads (FL) | Result |
|---|-------|-------------------|----------|
| Brand name ⇒ Satisfaction | 3.645 | 0.214 | Approved |
| Satisfaction Price ⇒ | 5.684 | 0.362 | Approved |
| Working place ⇒ Satisfaction | 4.345 | 0.647 | Approved |
| Core services ⇒ Satisfaction | 5.612 | 0.438 | Approved |
| Employee service ⇒ Satisfaction | 4.486 | 0.586 | Approved |
| Feeling ⇒ Satisfaction | 6.149 | 0.432 | Approved |
| Self-Image congruence ⇒ Satisfaction | 5.432 | 0.241 | Approved |
| Controlled communication ⇒ Satisfaction | 5.846 | 0.719 | Approved |
| Uncontrolled communication ⇒ Satisfaction | 3.349 | 0.457 | Approved |
| ⇒ Attitude Brand name | 6.952 | 0.195 | Approved |
| Price ⇒ Attitude | 5.379 | 0.272 | Approved |
| Working place ⇒ Attitude | 4.165 | 0.519 | Approved |
| Core service ⇒ Attitude | 3.673 | 0.339 | Approved |
| Employee service ⇒ Attitude | 5.437 | 0.387 | Approved |
| Feeling ⇒ Attitude | 6.319 | 0.396 | Approved |
| Self-Image congruence ⇒ Attitude | 2.497 | 0.183 | Approved |
| Controlled communication ⇒ Attitude | 4.324 | 0.537 | Approved |
| Uncontrolled communication ⇒ Attitude | 6.649 | 0.349 | Approved |
| Satisfaction ⇒ Attitude | 5.346 | 0.643 | Approved |
| Attitude ⇒ Intention to repurchasing | 4.476 | 0.527 | Approved |

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Estimating fit Goodness Indices

To specify fit goodness indices (approval, or rejection of test), three factors were used.

Cronbach Alpha

Alpha calculated for the variables is more than 0/7; questionnaire credibility is in a good state.

AVE

AVE calculated for all the model dimensions is more than 0/5 indicating fine fitting of the model.

Multiple Reliability

The value for all the model dimensions is more than 0/65 which is fine.

Table 3: General results of the model where factors influence on the client`s intention

| Variable | Cronbach Alpha | Multiple reliability | AVE |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------|------|
| Brand name | 0.728 | 0.81 | 0.62 |
| Price | 0.761 | 0.74 | 0.58 |
| Working place | 0.873 | 0.91 | 0.77 |
| Core service | 0.853 | 0.94 | 0.85 |
| Employee service | 0.924 | 0.88 | 0.71 |
| Feeling | 0.892 | 0.93 | 0.82 |
| Self-Image congruence | 0.793 | 0.72 | 0.53 |
| Controlled communication | 0.832 | 0.86 | 0.63 |
| Uncontrolled communication | 0.817 | 0.83 | 0.72 |
| Satisfaction | 0.843 | 0.92 | 0.76 |
| Attitude to brand | 0.827 | 0.89 | 0.74 |
| Intention of repurchasing | 0.789 | 0.87 | 0.69 |

As you can observe, highest level of estimation coefficient among 9 independent dimensions of the model is related to effectiveness; controlled communication on satisfaction (FL=0/719), working place on satisfaction (FL=0/647 and staff service on satisfaction (FL=0/586) which indicates they are the most important factor which are influential on client`s intention to repurchasing. Finally, according to the information gained, generality of the model where factors influence on the client`s intention to repurchasing is approved and has fine fitting.

Discussion

The research makes significance of service brand dimensions (brand evidence and brand communication) clear and guides ETKA Department Stores to develop these dimensions.

In this research 393 questionnaires were filled in and clients and service brand dimensions were investigated. All 6 research hypotheses were approved and there was a positive relationship between dimensions and satisfaction, attitude and finally client`s intention to repurchasing which was approved.

It made it clear that uncontrolled communication in working place and staff service have more significant role in shop`s performance compared to other dimensions. The research results approved effect of services presented on satisfaction and making loyalty in clients.

The results of the research demonstrate that effect of presented working place and staff services of ETKA Department Store on their satisfaction and behavioral intention has been desirable from aspect of client and finally leads to their intention to repurchasing from ETKA Department Store.

Conclusion

Level of effectiveness of controlled communication (advertisement and selling development) on client`s satisfaction is good and also it is located in a higher level of effectiveness of uncontrolled communication

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on client`s satisfaction. Caring about communication system is that important. Communication and engagements process of shopping centers with clients should be organized so that a constant and strong image of ETKA Department Store can be reflected. Advertisement cans be used as an effective tool for making services tangible.

Caring about working place is necessary. Working place and engagement of department stores with clients during presenting services should be organized so that a constant and strong image of the department store could be reflected.

To do so, maximum profit level should be provided for clients. In this relationship we need to notice primary needs of clients regarding delivering services to them. If acceleration in delivering main services among clients is significance, we need to provide necessary facilities.

Employees should be trained regarding identity of good brand, how a brand is distributed, how to find key values regarding brands and having knowledge on their role.

ETKA Department Store should develop internal communication strategies based on understanding and applying information processing from those who work in department stores.

Employees should be aware of significance of their role in making a strong image regarding trading brand. Holding training courses for employees, salespeople (company authorities and agents of selling in companies) are needed to be aware of making a strong image regarding trading ETKA Brand.

Likewise, ETKA Staff should be equipped with tools which are necessary for responding normal or unexpected needs of clients. Employees could be trained regarding their literature with clients.

Finally, we can argue that the literature of this topic is new in Iran and too many researches must be conducted in the future.

We are grateful to ETKA ORGANIZATION for their useful collaboration.

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