EFFECTS OF ACTUAL SELF AND IDEAL SELF IMAGE ON CONSUMER RESPONSES: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF STORE IMAGE

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to investigate the relationship between (actual and ideal) self-image congruity and store image, and also its impact on the behavioral responses of consumers (such as enjoyment, trust and purchase intention). The instrument utilized for data collection was a   five- point Likert type questionnaire; the reliability of the instrument was confirmed via Cronbach Alpha and Split-half tests. The sample consisted of 384 home appliances stores' customers. Data analysis was also conducted in descriptive and analytical modes using AMOS software and through structural equations and confirmatory factor analysis. Based on the examination of the hypotheses and the findings (results), the actual self-image of individuals impacts the assessment of visual cues, navigational convenience and store atmosphere while the individuals' ideal self-image was found to influence only store atmosphere. Store atmosphere was the only factor having an effect on trust while visual cues and store atmosphere impacted enjoyment. In addition, both trust and enjoyment were found to influence purchase intention. It can also be noted that the store atmosphere factor proves all items of actual and ideal self-image, trust and (product) enjoyment, indicating the significant effect of store atmosphere on consumer behavior in regard to store image. However, navigational convenience discredits all the factors except actual self-image.*

KEYWORDS: Actual self-image, ideal self-image, store image, purchase desire.

INTRODUCTION

Today the importance of consumer behavior can be acknowledged in various industries as well as economic, social and cultural domains. Also, an in-depth understanding of the behavior of the consumer without knowledge of the factors affecting it seems unlikely. Store image can impress (influence) its audience. Thus, creating a distinct, positive of the store can go a long way in affecting businesses.

Explaining the significance of the image formed in the minds of customers, LeBlanc and Nguyen (1999) state that, "…corporate image has the potential to impact the corporation's competitive status; thus, for any organization with strategic importance, it would be impossible to continue to exist in the long run with a poor image. The store manager, therefore, should be aware of how a mental image is formed in the minds of customers and should take the necessary steps towards creating and maintaining a positive image of their store (Velze, 1999)." This study attempts to present a model for depicting the effect of mental image on and the role of ideal and actual self-images in the evaluation method of store image.

Stores can be claimed to have an effect on consumer behavior in both physical, palpable ways (store atmosphere, navigational convenience, visual cues) and psychological ways (shoppers'

feelings: interest, trust and enjoyment). In fact, store image translates into the overall excitement and an interpretation of the items mentioned above (Martineau, 1985).

Given the extensive and pervasive nature of store image effect on business development and sales enhancement on one hand, and the prominence of the impact of individuals' self-image on consumer evaluation method, it could be stated that the more store image is compatible with consumer self-image, the more noticeable its impact will be on consumer behavior and purchasing intentions (Sirgy and Doskar, 2008; Lie, Joehar and Tidwell, 2008). Moreover, creating a sense of enjoyment and trust in consumers is of more significance in their interests in initial purchases and the possibility of a recurrence in the following ones. The psychological issues related to consumers and also the effects of self-images on the level of impression and evaluation of store image have, as such, been scarcely researched (Vant, 1999). Therefore, in conducting an in-depth study of the effect of the psychological aspects perceived by consumers on an effective understanding of store (image), the present research is essential and can determine the items affecting store image.

Therefore, this research strives at introducing a model for the effect of mental image and of actual and ideal self-images on how store image is evaluated and for consumer behavioral responses. The chief objective of this article is to investigate the effect of behavioral responses that result from actual and ideal self-images with regard to store image. The results of this study indicate that the actual self-images of consumers have more effect on an evaluation of store image than do ideal self-images, and the former play an important role in defining consumer responses.

This article tests a model that a) assesses the effect of actual and ideal self-images on store image, and b) assays the factors constituting store image (i.e. store atmosphere, visual cues and navigational convenience) with regard to behavioral responses (i.e. enjoyment, trust and purchase intention). Therefore, the factors affecting store image are initially investigated in terms of consumer self-image and later incorporated with the behavioral responses of consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-image first appeared in marketing literature three decades ago, signifying a cognitive and affective understanding of who we are. Self-image is categorized as follows:

- **Actual:** The actual self-image is known with such terms as 'actual self', 'existential self', or simply 'self'. According to this view, the relationship between self congruity and store image;

- **Ideal:** The ideal self-image has been defined as the image the individual wishes to reach;

- **Social:** The social self-image indicates the expectations of others of an individual ;

- **Social Ideal:** The social ideal self-image is sometimes called 'the very social self' and expresses how individuals like others to have perceptions of them (Mohannad,2012,2).

Elsewhere Baban (2001, 6) has identified self-image as the set of perceptions about observational abilities and personal behavioral knowledge, stating that the process does not

occur haphazardly, but rather in an organized fashion with defined rules. Various self-images are created through the role an individual should play or the context wherein they should do so. In general terms, the actual self-image of individuals is defined in terms of how they actually perceive themselves (Mowen and Minor, 2009, 190-191).

Ideal self-image: Adding to the explanations heretofore, Atkinson (2006) is of the belief that humans have an 'ideal self', i.e. an impression of who they want to be or become, and the closer the ideal self is to the actual self, the more accomplished and satisfied they feel. However, a sizeable gap between the ideal self and the actual self leads to dissatisfaction and discontent.

Self-congruity

This encompasses cognitive, personal evaluations manifesting in an outstanding brand/product/service that enjoys compatibility with consumer self-image. Self-congruity includes a cognitive and affective assessment of a brand name/service/product with characteristics that are compatible with those of the consumer (Sirgy, Chebat & St.James, 2006, 1). Research indicates that an observation of the effects of consumers' self-congruity on their preferences and purchase intentions is influential (Doskar, 2008; Lie, Tidwell, 2008). Also, as Erikson and Sirgy (1981, 1997) state, self-congruity affects consumer behavior in terms of brand satisfaction, loyalty and priority. Chon (1992) and Keressmun (2006) also argue that self-congruity implies concordance between self-image (self-similarity) and user impression, identity or assumptions of products/brands/ store image.

In their research, Millan and Reynolds (2014) examined self-congruity from two perspectives: independent (individual) vs. interdependent (collective). They found that there were interactions between individual/independent (as well as collective/ interdependent) self-congruity with various promotional attractions and the behavior of consumers; those with independent (individual) self-image emphasize uniqueness and autonomy in the purchasing process, whereas individuals with interdependent (collective) self-congruity emphasize on behavior indicating acceptability and suitability with priority and symbolism (Kussen, 2000).

Lid (2012) investigated congruence between tourists' impression of destinations and their satisfaction and concluded that congruence among tourists of a particular destination has a direct influence on their level of satisfaction and loyalty. The relationship between self-image and loyalty to the destination can be explained via Social Distance theory. Hosany and Martin (2012) found that the tourist's satisfaction has a justifiable relationship with destination image congruity and with the self-image of individuals (Chun, 1992). The more the level of self-congruity is aligned with a specific destination, the higher the rate of satisfaction and return of the travelers.

Table 1: Summary of Research Record on Self-image

Authors	Independent variable	Dependent variable
Wanmo Koo, Erik Cho, Kim(2014)	• Actual self-congruity • Ideal self-congruity	• Visual cues • Information cues • Delight • Purchase
Hosany, Martin(2012)	• Actual self-congruity • Ideal self-congruity	• Cruisers' experience • Satisfaction • Intention to recommend
Yuorchizen, Park, O'Brien(2010)	• Actual self-image/ store image congruence • Ideal self-image/ store image congruence	• Store attractiveness • Intrinsic job satisfaction • Employee-store commitment • Intention to leave
St.James, Sirgy, Chebat (2006)	• Shopping center image • Social and economic status of shoppers • Type of store	• Self-congruity • Store image
Millan, Reynolds(2014)	• Independent self-concept • Interdependent self-concept	• Preference for status meanings • Preference for self-expressive and hedonic meanings • Preference for affiliation meanings • Frequency of shops' visits • Frequency of clothing purchases • Money spent on clothing
Mohannad(2012)	• Actual self-congruity • Ideal self-congruity	• Satisfaction • Loyalty to destination
Ayla Wild(2013)	• Self-congruity	• Loyalty • Brand identity • Gender
Brizel, Pander(2013)	• Perfect matches • Mismatches • Fair-weather friends • Best friends • acquaintances	• Self-congruity • Attitude toward the VRS • Attitude toward the retailer
Je Yung Ro Liv, Lid, Vang(2012)	• self-congruity	• Loyalty to destination • Satisfaction

Store Image

Store image is defined, in the mind of the customer, in part through its functional and in part through its psychological features (Martineau, 1985). It is a composite of concrete, functional factors abstract, psychological ones that the customer becomes aware of their existence. The

concrete, functional features include product selection, price range and the overall scheme of the store. The abstract, psychological features, on the other hand, include the inner feelings and excitement of customers (Lindquist, 1975). Store image consists of several constituents such as visual cues, service/product fee and quality, customer attitude,(store) atmosphere, the ambience as well as design and informational cues of the store, accessibility (navigational convenience), transactional facility, staff attitude and esthetics (Martineau, 1985). As research conducted by Javanmard and Hosseini (2014) indicates, there is a positive, meaningful correlation between merchandizing, services and marketing appeal on the one hand, and a positive mental image of the store, short distance effects, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions on the other hand.

Store Atmosphere

Store atmosphere consists of an attempt to design retail space in order to generate specific affective influences in the shoppers that increase the probability of their shopping (Kotler, 2009). Store atmosphere concerns the way managers can handle the interior designs of (store) buildings, interiors, isle decorations, the textures of carpeting and walls, and the scents, colors, shapes and sounds that the customers feel. Even the arrangement and presentation of goods, and also the placement of vaults can influence the customers' perception of the overall state of the store (Mowen and Minor, 2009). Atmosphere may also be perceived by consumers from the perspective of behavioral effect. In particular, the decoration of buildings and the designs of passageways in towns, shopping centers and stores in many cases directly influence consumer behavior (Mowen and Minor, 2009).

Visual Cues

The language of cues, in market terms, is the language of visions, one that is understood by everyone, whose alphabet consists of visual elements. It is a language wherein the visual messages are normal and comprehensible. When we encounter people whose language do not know, we resort to visual cues and imagery (Ahmadi, 1997). Visual cues, which are formed with regard to visual elements, are intriguing because of message delivery speed and also the scope and strength of the effects they have on their audiences. In such cues, an image, which may be a promotional board inside a store, depicts and embodies the topic in a simple, eloquent fashion (Abdolhosseini, 2012). Visual cues are either related to the topic in question in terms of symbolic concepts or identify it in time as an independent symbol. The visual cues relevant to stores are categorized into three groups: coloring, lighting and design.

Navigational Convenience

One of the most important attractions of stores is navigational convenience. Bakoos observes that convenience at stores reduces the essential costs of pre-purchase information collection, and at the same time enhances browsing and searching advantages by providing more offers relevant to products with low marginal costs. Regarding the significance of navigational convenience, Hosseini-Nasab (2012) states that when a product is easily accessible to the customer, s/he can find their own particular value in it. That specific value results in customer satisfaction, thus earning loyal, returning customers for the store itself. Hosseini-Nasab also enumerates the following as factors leading to navigational convenience:

Table 2: Factors leading to Navigational Convenience

1. Alignment of shelves pointing to cash register;
2. Placement of shelves pointing to entrance;
3. Placement of shelves at a 45º angle to each other;
4. Alignment of classes of goods;
5. Customer navigational convenience inside store;
6. Product close view feature;
7. Possibility of touching some goods;
8. Deployment of seasonal goods;
9. Breadth of the main isle;
10. Proper product placement;
11. Use of information boards (Mowen and Minor, 2009).

Table 3: Summary of Research Record on Store image

Authors	Year	Independent variable	Dependent variable
Wanmo Koo, Erik Cho, Gung Kim	2014	• Actual self-congruity • Ideal self-congruity	• Visual cues • Information cues • Delight • Purchase intention
Claude Massicote, Michon	2011	• Store atmosphere	• Functional congruity • Self-congruity • Store evaluation
Liza, Rosida, Sadr Ala	2014	• Store design items • Ambient factors • Social factors	• Hedonic experience • Loyalty
St.James, Sirgy, Chebat	2006	• Shopping center image • Social and economic status of shoppers • Type of store	• Self-congruity • Store image
Ann E. Schlosser	1998	• Store atmosphere	• Quality perceptions of social identity products • Quality perceptions of utilitarian products • Store image
Javanmard, Hosseini	2013	• Outlook on merchandizing • Outlook on services • Marketing appeal • Positive mental image of the store	• Short distance • Customer satisfaction • Behavioral intentions
Sayyadi	2011	• Store image	• Store ambience • Sales personnel • Facilities and navigational convenience • Store goods and services • Customer satisfaction
Rastegar, Feiz, Sabzi	2013	• Store location • Store atmosphere • Price/promotion • Product	• Store image • Loyalty • Behavioral loyalty • Attitudinal loyalty

Delight

A positive evaluation of store image results in purchase delight and enjoyment. Relishing store environment activates positive thrills and sensations such as excitement and surprise (Oliver, Rust and Warki, 1997). In experiment-minded consumers, delight serves as a great motivation and stimulus (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In other words, delight serves as a positive/negative reinforcement of the consumption experience (Hirschmann and Holbrook, 1982). Sharma and Stafford explained that the ambience of a store is capable of attracting and enticing customers to make purchases and to repeat them. Thus, store ambience can be considered as a more effective factor than the product itself in purchasing decision. Therefore, a retail store ambience possesses the extrinsic ability to influence consumers not only in cognitive terms but also in affective, excitement and delight inciting terms. Oliver (1997), Varence and Webster (2010) evinced that a customer's delight leads to positive communication, purchase intention and an affirmative evaluation of brand name/ store by him/her.

Trust

In marketing literature, trust is considered an essential prerequisite for establishing relationships with customers and it affects the purchasing behavior of consumers. Trust is multifaceted notion that encompasses behavioral, affective and cognitive dimensions. Concerning trusting stores, the following points are mentioned: security and privacy, creating a sense of respect, peace, product warranty, after sales services, method of payment (Gayer, 2009), installing licenses and citations within sight of the customers, proper inside space design, colors, music, scents, proper attitude of sales staff, product display, correct advertizing, calling cards, and finally presenting all of the information pertinent to the products (Shariatpanah, 2012).

The qualities of stores' sales staffs, service quality, warranty and after sales services all bear a direct impact on trust while design, security and privacy, affect trust indirectly through customer satisfaction (Nourbakhsh, 2014).

Purchase Desire

An investigation of the behavioral purchase desire of consumers leads to knowledge and behavioral understanding of consumption. One of the challenges encountered by marketing specialists and store managers is the conversion of purchase desire into purchase decision (Safarzadeh, 2012). Purchase desire signals the intensity of personal will and intention for meaningful, purposeful behavior in the purchasing process. Also the correlation between purchase desire and behavior indicates that in the purchasing process, individuals intend to engage in behaviors that they are inclined towards (Yaghoubi and Shakeri, 2009). Thus purchase desire may be defined as an individual's desire to prefer a product/service with favorable features for the consumer (Albayrak, 2012) such that their purchase reflects their real, actual choice (Ron, 2013). It has also been established that a desirable purchase leads to the repetition of purchases in the future (Olson, 2013), indicating the real choice of the shopper.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 displays the framework designed for this research: The variables of actual and ideal self-image are initially tested together with store image variables. Later, store image variables

are assessed in relation to behavioral responses. According to the research model, actual self-image and ideal self-image are considered as the independent variables, purchase desire is the dependent variables, and store image variables (visual aspects, navigational convenience and store atmosphere) as well as trust and delight all account for mediating variables. The initial part of the model that examines the effect of ideal and actual self-image on store image was extracted from a model presented in an article entitled, "Actual and Ideal Self-Congruity Affecting Consumers' Emotional and Behavioral Responses toward an Online Store" by Wanmo Koo, et al (2014). The second part of the model investigating the effect of store image variables on behavioral responses was extracted from another article entitled, "Influence of Congruity in Store-Attribute Dimensions and Self-Image on Purchase Intentions in Online Stores of Multichannel Retailers" by Badrinarayanan et al (2014). The two parts were subsequently integrated and presented as the model below.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, random sampling was implemented. To this end, initially of all the stores in the city of Zanjan, home electronics stores were selected, 5 of which randomly chosen for the research. Subsequently, random sampling was employed to select individuals. The stores selected were among large home appliances stores in the city of Zanjan and were located in different areas of the city. Therefore, the questionnaires were almost normally distributed in numbers among the customers.
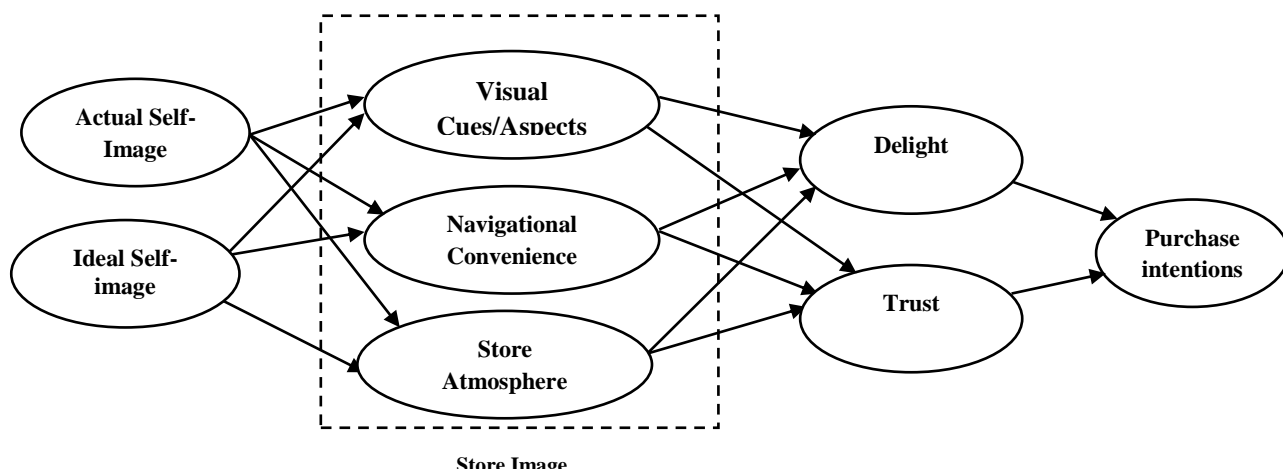
Question & Scale Development

Fig.1- Conceptual Model

In order to measure the variables used in the model, and test the hypotheses a standard questionnaire was used as the instrument. The scale has & dimensions with a total of 38 traits and 5 point Likert scale, that 6 of them are removed based on expert opinions. The devised questionnaire encompasses specific measures in order to gauge all of the structures utilized.

Pilot Study

The pilot study helped the authors to formulate the final questionnaire by testing validity & reliability of this instrument.

For this, three academic professionals in the Mk ty reviewed the questionnaire to assure content validity. And for evaluating face validity, rephrasing the vague items.

Data Collection

This study uses self-administered surveys and total of 384 students participate in the research. Date were analyzed in two- step; first, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assure whether the measurement variable reflected the latent variables second, a (SEM) was tested to test the hypotheses.

There were 384 individuals participating in this study, %62.2 of whom were male and %37.8 were female. The respondents were arranged according to age range; %2.1 of the respondents were under the age of 21, %27.6 were 21 to 30 years of age, %48.7 were 31 to 40 years old, %14.6 of the respondents were 41 to 50 years of age and finally, %7.0 were above the age of 50. In terms of marital status, %27.3 of the research participants was single and %72.7 was married.

That after, in the pilot survey reliability of the whole of the questionnaire was based on Cronbach Alpha coefficient for 30 individuals this was used to assess the internal homogeneity existing among the item scale. The Alpha coefficient calculated with the help of SPSS 18 software equals 0.898.the standardized reliability coefficient for all of measures are greater than 0.7, indicating a good level of inter-item reliability (Table4)

In addition to Cronbach Alpha coefficient, Split-half has also been utilized. The figure obtained through split-half test equals 0.940. Therefore, the questions have proper (sufficient) reliability in explaining the objectives examined, i.e. the questionnaire possesses an appropriate and sufficient coherence in order to explain and interpret the target variable.

Table 4: Questionnaire Details

Variables	Parameters	Cronbach Alpha	Mean	Variance	Source	scale
Actual self-image	• Personal characteristics • Impression and perception of appearance • Taste • Success and awareness • Trustworthiness • Activity and attraction	0.841	3.31	0.42	Ganesh (2010) Kwon & Lennon (2009) Poddar, Donthu & Wei (2009)	5 point Likert
Ideal self-image	• Success and awareness • Trustworthiness • Activity and attraction	0.890	3.32	0.856		5 point Likert

Store image	Store atmosphere	• Store design • Concrete facilities • Lighting	0.719	3.56	0.463	Ganesh (2010) Kwon & Lennon (2009) Bart, Shanker, Sultan & Urban (2005)	5 point Likert
	Visual cues	• Music • Informational cues • Promotional (advertisement) boards	0.785	3.67	0.529		5 point Likert
	Navigational convenience	• Appropriate placement in order to find goods • Placement in order to touch goods • Navigational convenience in store isles • Convenience in comparing goods	0.792	3.765	0.416		5 point Likert
Delight		• Delightful purchase • Excitation • Entertainment • Arousing emotion • Fantasy	0.782	3.11	0.535	Voss et al (2003) Holzwarth, Janiszewski & Neumann (2006)	5 point Likert
Trust		• Trustworthiness • Recommending to others for purchases • Feeling of security and confidence • Driving a sense of respect	0.811	3.39	0.453	Ganesh (2010) Kwon & Lennon (2009)	5 point Likert
Purchase desire		• Importance of the purchase in life • Necessity and need for the purchased items • Store preference	0.702	3.56	0.394	Badrinarayan (2010)	5 point Likert

Data Analysis

In order to evaluate the model and test the research hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equations modeling were employed using AMOS software. The fit indices for the independent variables "ideal self-image" and "actual self-image" were calculated as follows: PCFI=0.652, RFI=0.811, NFI=0.868, CFI=0.870, PNFI=0.644, and PRATIO=0.750. These findings affirm a good fit. The 't-value' amounts for questions 1 to 9 are greater than 1.96 and their calculated level of significance amounts are less than 0.05. In the variable of actual self-image the highest factor loading belongs to Question 6 while the

lowest factor loading pertains to Question 4. With regard to the variable of ideal self-image, it can be affirmed that Question 7 plays the greatest role in explaining the variable whereas Question 8 plays the smallest since their factor loading amounts are respectively calculated at 0.227 and 0.137.

The fit indices of the confirmatory factor analysis model of the dependent variables including the variables of store image, purchase desire, delight and trust indicate that from the obtained indexes, NFI=0.643, CFI=0.70, PNFI=0.584, PRATIO=0.909, PCFI=0.621, RFI=0.607, and the calculated figures show proper fitting. In addition, the 't' amount for questions 10 to 32 was greater than 1.96.

In this section all standardized factor loading emerged high & were fount to be significant.

Fig. 2- Structural Equations Model

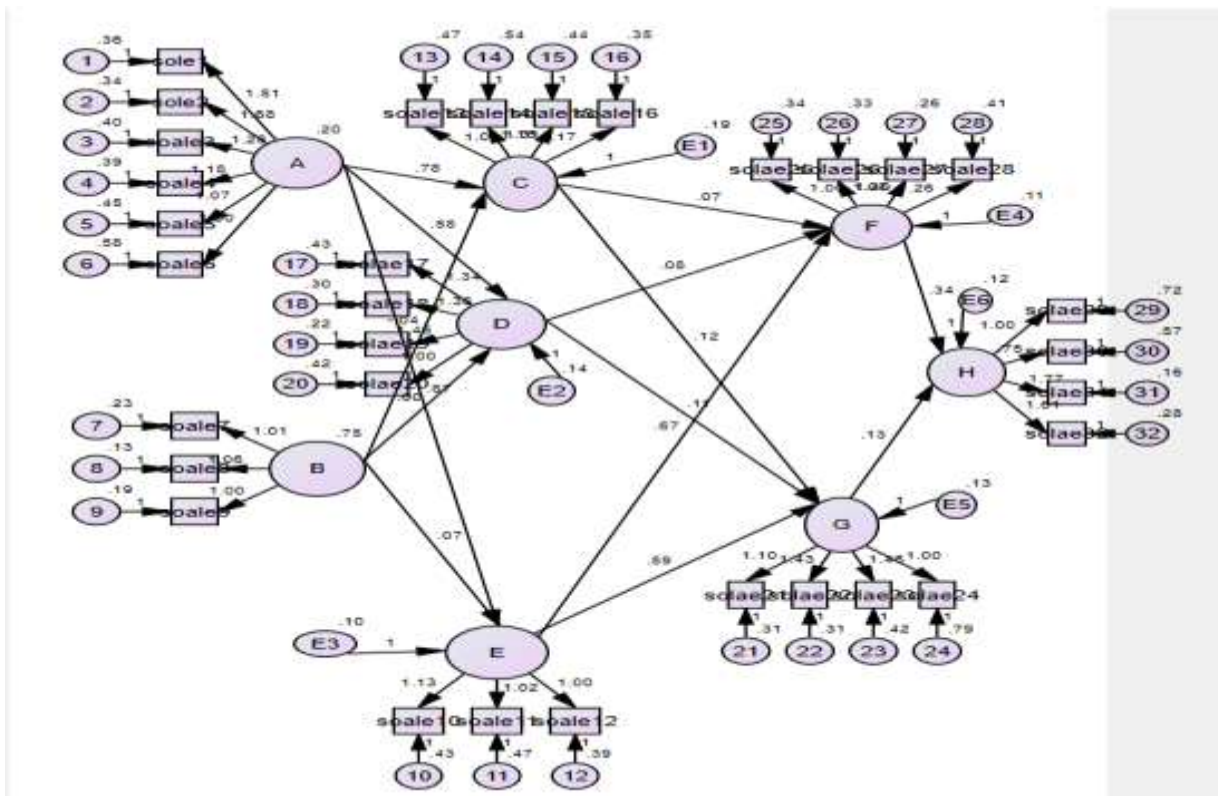The results from the model indicate a correct measurement of fitting, and the indexes measured in structural equations are as follows:

TLI=0.82, RFI=0.75, CFI=0.84, RMSEA=0.07, NFI=0.78, PNFI=0.7, CFI=0.76, PRATIO=0.9

All these figures represent an acceptable fit for the model.

The research hypotheses were investigated with the help of results from CFA and SEM, as can be seen in the table 5.

Structural Equations Model

To test the research model & hypotheses, authors have used SEM with the help of AMOS 18, because SEM is a powerful statistical tool that combines a measurement model and the structural model in one statistical test.

Table 5 - Results for Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	T Value	Factor Loading	Sig	(R^2)	Result
H_1: Actual self–image impacts the evaluation of the visual aspects of a store.	7.026	0.779	0.000	0.60	Confirmed
H2: Actual self–image impacts the evaluation of the navigational convenience of a store.	6.528	0.577	0.000	0.33	Confirmed
H_3: Actual self–image impacts the evaluation of store atmosphere.	7.654	0.867	0.000	0.75	Confirmed
H_4: Ideal self–image impacts the evaluation of the visual aspects of a store.	-1.178	-0.39	0.239	0.001	Not Confirmed
H_5: Ideal self–image impacts the evaluation of the navigational convenience of a store.	-0.052	-0.001	0.959	0	Not Confirmed
H_6: Ideal self–image impacts the evaluation of store atmosphere.	2.393	0.067	0.017	0.004	Confirmed
H_7: Visual aspects impact trust in a store.	1.142	0.065	0.254	0.004	Not Confirmed
H_8: Navigational Convenience impacts trust in a store.	1.100	0.075	0.271	0.005	Not Confirmed
H_9: Store atmosphere impacts trust in a store.	7.093	0.673	0.000	0.45	Confirmed
H_{10}: Visual aspects impact enjoyment of a store.	1.965	0.118	0.049	0.013	Confirmed
H_{11}: Navigational Convenience impacts enjoyment of a store.	1.552	0.111	0.121	0.01	Not Confirmed
H_{12}: Store atmosphere impacts enjoyment of a store.	5.847	0.586	0.000	0.34	Confirmed
H_{13}: Trust impacts the desire to make a purchase from a store.	4.751	0.338	0.000	0.11	Confirmed
H_{14}: Delight impacts the desire to make a purchase from a store.	2.209	0.130	0.027	0.01	Confirmed

Findings

Given the main objective of this research, i.e. the investigation of behavioral responses stemming from actual and ideal self-image congruity on consumer responses through store image, the items mentioned in the hypotheses have covered the main objective. According to the results, some of the hypotheses were rejected while others were confirmed. It must be noted that the rejection of the hypotheses in this research does not signify their falsehood, and they may be confirmed under other research conditions.

In general terms, the results of this study indicate that out of the 14 hypotheses introduced, 5 were rejected while the other 9 were confirmed. The 't' amounts for the rejected hypotheses are as follows: t=-0.052, t=1.142 ,t=1.100 ,t =1.552 ,   t= - 1.178. As explained above, these hypotheses were rejected since their 't' amounts were less than 1.96 and amounts for their level of significance were greater than 0.05. On the Contrary, the 't' amounts for the confirmed hypotheses were steadily greater than 1.96, and as their level of significance amounts were less than 0.05, they were confirmed with a level of confidence of 99%.

The highest 't' amount from the confirmed hypotheses in this research belongs to H_9 (t = 7.093) and lowest 't' pertains to H_{14} (t = 2.209). Based on testing the hypotheses and the findings, it is affirmed that the actual self-image of individuals impacts their evaluation of visual cues, navigational convenience and store atmosphere, while the ideal self-image of individuals merely affects their evaluation of store atmosphere, and the items related to visual cues and navigational convenience do not indicate such influence.

Concerning the effect of items relevant to store image (visual cues, convenience and atmosphere) on variables of trust and delight, the findings indicate that store atmosphere is the sole factor affecting trust; however, visual cues and navigational convenience do not prove such effect. Meanwhile, the visual cues and atmosphere influence the variable of delight whereas navigational convenience does not corroborate such an influence.

Both trust and delight are effective on the variable of purchase desire, and this indicates that trust in the store and the delight of shopping from it lead to excitement and a desire in customers to make purchases. Such excitement and trust is obtained by means of a true impression and perception of store image. It can also be stated that store atmosphere factor proves all the items of ideal and actual self-image, trust and delight, indicating the significance of the role store atmosphere plays in influencing consumer behaviors regarding store image. Furthermore, navigational convenience rejects all the factors except actual self-image, and the lack of proper understanding of this variable by the customers is due to meager adherence to it in stores.

Discussion

Considering the corroboration of the effect of actual self-image on evaluation in terms of the visual aspects of stores (H_1), marketing managers and planners are recommended to first obtain an overall understanding of the self-images of customers and their categorization into particular classes before applying adjustment of those self-images with visual cues and stimuli. They are also advised to utilize appealing cues as stimuli for consumer self-image. It is undeniably essential to implement attractive promotional elements such as interesting neon boards with moving lighting both inside and outside stores.

Moreover, given evidence of the effect of actual self-image on evaluation from the viewpoint of navigational convenience inside stores (H_2), it is recommended that store managers examine the possibility of standardizing store isles for navigational convenience, and product viewing and touching purposes. Furthermore, offering services for shipping and delivering purchased products to the doors of their buyers can further reveal navigational convenience. Proper positioning of stores can also be classified under convenience factors, and given the fact that stores selected are located in congested areas, one of the items affecting customers' ease of access and purchasing desire is proper parking spaces. It should be noted, however, that given the limitation of the selected stores in this study in terms of location and area, the

variable of store exterior convenience was not prominent and hence excluded from this research. Only items of store interior navigational convenience have been investigated.

With regard to evidence of the effect of actual self-image on evaluation from the point of view of store atmosphere (H_3), use of a relaxing atmosphere with proper peripheral design as well as modernization and correct dedication of store space impacts customers' understanding of and identification with the store. Therefore, it is recommended that store managers study consumer behavior and utilize elements attracting customers such as color, scent, music, store interior and exterior design in creating an appropriate image of store atmosphere.

Given the corroboration of the effect of ideal self-image on evaluation from the perspective of store atmosphere (H_6), the store must be so rich in items related to its atmosphere that it stimulates more than just the actual self-image in individuals and must drive the consumer closer to their ideal self-image. The shorter the gap between actual and ideal self-images, the higher consumer satisfaction and their desire to make purchases.

Since it is proven that store atmosphere influences trust (H_9), successful managers conclude that maintaining customers and establishing their loyalty can only occur through winning their trust. Therefore, a shift in marketing direction and also winning customers through winning their trust seems more of a necessity than an opportunity. In this regard, the implementation of security systems and CCTVs inside the store may impact the level of trust arising from store atmosphere. In addition, creating appropriate design cues as well as establishing proper attitude among sales staff when handling customers can further strengthen the sense of trust in customers.

As the effects of visual aspects on enjoying the store are evident (H_{10}), the use of proper lighting, dynamic and appealing advertisements, coloring and flamboyant decorations is advised. Utilizing favorable visual cues invokes a sense of delight in customers, contributing to more time spent inside the store, customer satisfaction, greater purchase desire and/ or repeated purchases.

Moreover, regarding the effect of store atmosphere on delight (H_{12}), store space could be considered more influential than the product itself in purchase decisions. Store managers not only ought to make sure that good sensations lead to positive impressions, but also ought to focus to turn negative feelings into positive ones. For some shoppers, this positivity and negativity might simply occur by store atmosphere and space. Thus, with the customer experiencing an agreeable, pleasant feeling, the store manager can encourage him/her into an enduring relationship with the store, consequent returns and future repetition of purchases. It is thus essential to create such an atmosphere that spurs a sense of excitement from the store. This is possible through smart store interior design, use of appropriate design and informational cues to create such sense, use of colors and lighting in home appliances stores, creation of a relaxing environment hinting at a peaceful life, playing suitable, and playing befitting, pleasant music. All of these are important at inciting affection and satisfying the need of consumers for delight, enjoyment and inspiration.

Concerning the proven effect of trust on the desire to make purchases from stores, since the trust variable in this research is synonymous to such words as liking, respect, admiration and security, the exploitation of after sales services may impact trust levels and consequently, purchase desire. Other suggestions aimed at generating a sense of trust in consumers include

the establishment of respect and admiration by means of factors such as sales assistants' attitude and manners and confidence in payment methods.

Regarding the effect of delight on the tendency to make purchases at a store, one could observe that hedonic values point to the affective aspects of consumption and/or purchasing. These aspects include sensations of instant delight after a purchase, excitement, fantasy, and a desire to care. Individuals who focus on hedonic values are modern consumers who tend to spend the surplus of their salaries on pleasure, satisfaction and reaching new desirable levels of consumption. Thus, inciting such a feeling in the consumer is determined through proper store image by means of the effect of atmosphere and the visual cues inside the store on customer feelings. Having music played inside the store as well as suitable lighting and décor can target the emotions of customers and influence their purchasing desires.

Suggestions for further research

This study is applicable to other dimensions of store image as well such as social cues, products, services and price. In addition, the social self-image variable can be introduced into this research. This study can be conducted on self-image at luxury stores as well. Finally, larger stores that offer various goods such as gigantic hypermarkets and chain stores (e.g. Refah, Shahrvand, etc.) can be examined for a more suitable understanding of store athmospher and navigational convenience.

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