

Managing Store Images by Discount Retailers in Korea

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〈Abstract〉

With the full liberalization of distribution sector in 1997, both multinational and domestic discount retailers have been competing to gain more market share in Korea. Increased competition among domestic and international retail stores forces marketing academics and practitioners to understand the various factors affecting discount retail store satisfaction and loyalty. This study examines how store image of a retailer influences consumers' attitudes, satisfaction and intention to re-visit that store.

The data, collected from a sample of 416 customers in Busan, Korea, indicate that store image is exerting positive influences in the formation of attitude, satisfaction. But favorable store image does not have positive impact on the intention to revisit the store. Rather the impact of store image on intention to re-visit is mediated by attitudes and satisfaction. And unlike the overall store image, attitudes have positive effect on the formation of consumers' intention to revisit, not mediated by satisfaction. And satisfaction also results in higher possibility of forming intention to revisit that same discount store. Based on these results, we provide theoretical and managerial implications, limitations of this research, and useful directions for future study.

Key Words: discount store images, store satisfaction, re-patronage intention, store attitudes

I. Introduction

Since E Mart, a subsidiary of Shinsaegae Department Store conglomerate, was first introduced in 1993 in Seoul, the retail industry has been expanded rapidly. With the full liberalization of distribution sector in 1997, both multinational and domestic discount retailers have been competing to gain more market share in Korea. Currently, Korean retail market is at the end of growth stage and confronting increased competition among

domestic and international retail stores. This urgent market environment forces marketing academics and practitioners, especially of multinational retail entities, to understand the various factors affecting discount retail store satisfaction and loyalty.

The central place theory emphasizes location to be the most important factor in attracting patrons to a shopping area(Kim and Jin, 2001, p. 236; Craig et al, 1984; Bruner and Masson, 1968; Nevin and Houston, 1980). But Burns and Warren(1995) report that the consumer may visit a more distant retailer to express his/her uniqueness. Similarly, other research

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suggests that there are more important factors associated with shoppers' selection of discount retail stores. These factors include store images(Martineau, 1958; Lindquist, 1974; Bearden, 1977; Nevin and Houston, 1980) and store attitude(Yoo et al., 1998), all of which may subsequently affect store satisfaction and store loyalty(Bloemer and Ruyter, 1998).

But relatively little research has recently directed its focus on the various dimensions of store images relevant to the discount retail environment in Korea and the hierarchical effects of store images including the overall store attitude on store satisfaction and intention to revisit. Building on previous store image studies, the purposes of this study are (1) to consolidate the basis of previous retail images relying on the cognitive structure theory on attitudes, (2) to propose the overall store attitude to be a component of retail store image, (3) to examine the causal relationships among retail store image, the overall store attitude and store satisfaction and intention to revisit in the context of the discount retail environment in the second largest city of Busan in Korea.

The next section provides literature review covering theories related to image and the overall attitude, combined with store loyalty and store satisfaction. And the hypotheses on relationships among store image, the overall store attitude and store satisfaction and intention to revisit will be proposed. And then the empirical tests of hypotheses and discussion

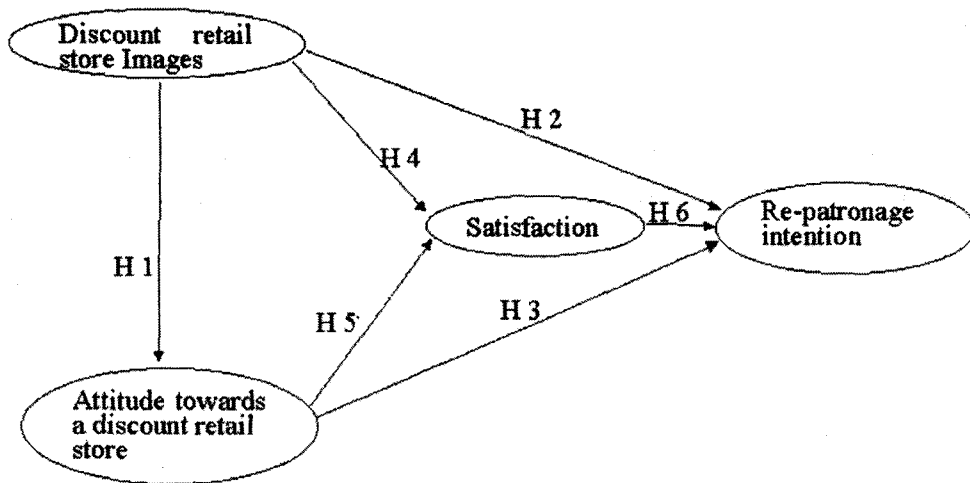
of the results will follow. And the study will conclude by addressing the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings.

II. Literature review and proposing hypotheses

The generation of committed repeat purchasers has been a primary objective of marketers for decades because retaining customers requires less marketing resources than recruiting new ones(Knox and Walker, 2001; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Reichheld, 1996; Birgelen et al., 1997). Especially, store image has been considered to be the most important factor in predicting customers' re-patronage intention.

The concept of store images in previous studies is closely related to the multi attribute model. Martineau(1958) defines store images as the way in which the store is defined in the consumer's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes. Lindquist(1974) defines store images as a "structure of some sort that is tying together the dimensions that are at work(p. 30)" and conceptualizes store images as nine key attribute categories: merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store ambience and others. In predicting retail trade, Nevin and Houston (1980) have generated 3 dimensional images of the retail stores with 14 variables:

<Figure 1> Research Model



assortment, facilities, and market posture. The most recent study on discount retailers in Korea is Kim and Jin(2001)'s, in which 6 image dimensions such as merchandising, service convenience, facility convenience, congestion, clean and spacious atmosphere, price competitiveness, fashion goods are identified and compared between local and multinational discount retailers. The studies of store images base their theoretical foundation on the cognitive structure theory(Lutz and Sway, 1977; Olson and Mitchell, 1975), which explains that the formation of attitudes of the consumers can be achieved through the formation of cognitive structure(Olson, Toy, and Dover, 1978). This theory of the cognitive structure, the multi attribute model, assumes that attitudes are a function of the associated attributes and benefits that are salient for the brand, or merely the salient beliefs on attributes(Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

More specific theoretical foundations of store image are found in theories of brand images. Brand image is defined as "the consumer's perceptions of the brand's tangible and intangible associations(Faircloth et. al., 2001, p. 64)." Aaker(1991) considers brand associations as "anything linked in memory in a brand" and brand image as "a set of brand associations, usually in some meaningful way(p. 109)." Keller(1993) conceptualizes brand image as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory(p. 3)." More specifically, brand image is brand associations consumers hold for a certain brand and consists of concrete attributes, benefit values and brand attitude(Keller, 1993, pp. 4-5; Srinivasan, 1976; Biel, 1993, Park and Srinivasan, 1994). Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a product or service, what a consumer thinks the product or service is or

has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal values consumers attach to the product or service attributes, that is, what consumers think the product or service can do for them. And brand attitudes are the consumers' overall evaluations of a brand(Keller, 1993, p. 4; Wilkie, 1986).

On the other hand, brand attitudes can also be related to beliefs about non-product-related attributes and symbolic values(Rossiter and Percy, 1987), consistent with "a value-expressive" function of attitudes in the functional theory of attitudes(Katz, 1960; Lutz, 1991). Accordingly, cognitive response theorists have developed a general component of attitude toward the brand that is not captured by the attributes or benefit values of the brand(Park and Srinivasan, 1994; Srinivasan, 1979). Park and Srinivasan (1994), for example, suggest that brand associations contribute to brand equity in two different ways: through creating attribute-based and non-attribute-based associations(p. 274). Non-attribute based brand associations are not related to product attributes. The masculine image of Marlboro Man, for example, has nothing to do with attribute, but plays major role in explaining its preference.

Moreover, Keller(1998) manifests that brand attitude is the most abstract and highest level of brand associations(Keller, 1998, p. 100), and can not be captured by specific brand attributes. And attitude can be formed by less thoughtful decision making based on simple

heuristics and decision rules(Chaiké, 1986; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). That is, if consumers lack either the motivation or ability to evaluate the product or service, they may use signals or extrinsic cues to infer product or service quality on the basis of what they know about the brand(Olson and Jacoby, 1972). According to Biel(1993), functional differences between products are becoming more trivial. He suggests that the soft concepts of brand personality and brand relationship are likely to be more effective in creating brand equity. This stream of research suggests that the overall attitude toward a discount retail store could be treated as a component of store images. And the cognitive response theory suggests that attitudes toward an object can be naturally formed by the various thoughts or more precisely beliefs, when a consumer is exposed to stimuli(Olson, Toy, and Dover, 1982). That is, when a consumer is exposed to a stimulus, consumers' cognitive responses or beliefs are formed. And these cognitive beliefs become the basis for the formation of the overall attitudes. By integrating the cognitive structure and cognitive response models, it is suggested that store image have positive impact on the overall attitudes towards a discount store.

H 1: If the consumer has favorable store image on a discount store, he will have more favorable attitudes towards that store.

By considering both attribute- and benefit-related associations and the overall attitudes towards a retail store as store images, we may be able to predict more accurately customer's behavior, i.e. re-patronage intention the same discount retail store next time he/she needs to visit a discount store. In addition, brand associations viewed from the perspective of the consumer-based brand equity theory are key in building satisfaction, preference, loyalty and possibly extending brand into other categories (Na et. al., 1999, p. 171). Most previous studies in retailing suggest a direct link between store images and retail store visiting behavior. Martineau (1958), Lindquist (1974), Bearden (1977), Nevin and Houston (1980), and James et al. (1976) show that store images of various store characteristics have direct bearings on store preference and/or patronage. Shim and Eastlick (1998) show that mall shopping behavior is directly affected by perceived attributes of a regional shopping mall. Thang and Tan (2003), adopting Donovan and Rossiter's (1982) framework of stimulus-organism-response, imply that store images can have impact on the consumers' psychological responses including behaviors (Thang and Tan, 2003, p. 194). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H 2: If the consumer has favorable store image on a discount store, he will be more likely to have an intention to revisit that store.

H 3: If the consumer has favorable overall attitudes towards a discount store, he will be more likely to have an intention to revisit that store.

But recent study suggests that the store image has indirect impact on store repeat visiting behavior mediated by store satisfaction (Bleomer and Ruyter, 1998; Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Kumar and Karande, 2000; Thang and Tan, 2003) or by emotional experiences in a retail store (Yoo et. al., 1998; Spies et. al., 1997). In other words, it is suggested that various store images may have direct impact on customer satisfaction (Na et. al., 1999, p. 171; Bleomer and Ruyter, 1998; Sirgy and Samli, 1985). Giese and Cote (2000), for example, report that three attribute dimensions of a service provider affect service satisfaction directly (p. 820). Bleomer and Ruyter (1998) also report that store image has direct influence on store visiting behavior. Based on these studies, this study investigates whether store image has direct bearing on store satisfaction.

H 4: If the consumer has favorable store image on a discount store, he is more likely to be satisfied with that store.

H 5: If the consumer has favorable overall attitude towards a discount store, he is more likely to be satisfied.

On the other hand, satisfaction has been considered as an antecedent of store visiting

behavior(Bitner, 1990; Bloemer and Ruyter, 1998; Tse and Wilton, 1988, p. 204). Na et al.(1999) view satisfaction as a resulting variable of strong brand associations or images, along with preference and loyalty. Hunt(1977) defines satisfaction as “an evaluation of an emotion(pp. 459-460)” in a service context. This implies that satisfaction reflects the degree to which a consumer believes that the possession and/or use of a service evokes positive feelings based on disconfirmation paradigm in process theory (Rust and Oliver, 1994). In relation to loyalty and re patronage intention, Aaker(1991) has identified satisfaction or more importantly dissatisfaction as a key diagnostic measure of loyalty(p. 45). Satisfaction has often been regarded as an antecedent of loyalty for various service providers(Dick and Basu, 1994; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Ruyter et al., 1997; Spreng and Mackoy, 1996). It is also verified in the retail literature that store satisfaction has positive relationship with store loyalty (Bitner, 1990; Bloemer and Ruyter, 1998; Rust and Zahorik, 1993; Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Parasuraman et al., 1994). Dick and Basu (1994) suggest that loyalty is the result of customer satisfaction, which plays a role as a catalyst for loyalty to occur. Macintosh and Lockshin(1997) report that the satisfaction has influence on store loyalty, a combined and sequential measure of store attitude, purchase intention and percent of business. Bloemer and Ruyter(1998) report in their study on the

department store consumers that store image affects satisfaction, which subsequently has impact on store loyalty. But in case of Cronin and Taylor(1992), satisfaction is hypothesized to be an antecedent of service quality in their multiple service sample. But their results show an opposite direction of effect. Based on these results, this study hypothesizes to verify the relationship between store satisfaction and re-patronage intention to visit a discount store.

- H 6: If the consumer is satisfied with the experience at a discount store, he will be more likely to have an intention to revisit that store.

III. Measurement

Most items indicating the store characteristics, the overall attitude toward a discount retail store, satisfaction and loyalty and other variables were drawn from previous literature. 5-point Likert scales were adopted to measure the concepts.

Intention to revisit a discount store has been conceptualized customer's intention to revisit the same discount retail store next time he/she needs to visit a discount retail store. In this study 4 item intention to revisit the discount retail store is adopted.

Store satisfaction is defined as “the outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen store meets or exceeds expectations(Bloemer

and Ruyter, 1998)” and measured with 3 items following Brady et. al.(2001). Even though satisfaction has been explained under the disconfirmation theory, it is measured based on the consumer’s perceptions. Because some criticism reveals that expectation portion adds “no additional information beyond which is obtained from performance perceptions alone” or “difference scores(between expectation and performance) cause problems in reliability, discriminant validity and variance restriction (Brady et. al., 2002, p. 19).”

Store image is conceptualized as “multidimensional concepts with functional and psychological factors that a consumer perceives to be present in a discount retail store (Bleomer and Ruyter, 1998; Lindquist 1974; Bearden, 1977).” 7 different measures of store images are drawn from previous studies(Yoo et al, 1998; Than and Tan, 2002; Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Brown ,1978; Mazursky and Jacoby, 1986; Samli et al. 1998; Wong and Teas, 2001; Timmermans et al., 1982; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Chowfhury et al., 1998; Kumar and Karande, 2000; Hallsworth, 1987; Nevin and Houston, 1980; Lindquist, 1974; Arnold et al., 1983; Yavas and Tunclip, 1984). The 7 store image factors are merged into a single concept utilizing the 2nd order factor analysis in order to establish theoretical base.

The overall store attitude is adopted from Yoo et al.(1998), Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) and the measurement asks whether the target discount retail store is “good bad,

like-dislike, and favorable unfavorable.”

IV. Analysis

1. Characteristics of sample population

The discount retail market in Korea is dominated by five discount stores: E-mart, Homeplus, Carrefour, Lotte Mart and Wal-Mart. Their aggregate market share accounts for about 72%(Korea Herald, 2003). The market leader, E-mart with 51 stores nation-wide, marked its sales about 5,600 billion Won for the 2002(Maeil Business Newspaper, 2003, p. 16). The second runner, Homeplus operated by British retailer Tesco with 26 stores in Korea, sold 2,400 billion Won and Lotte Mart, the third runner, operates 25 stores has total sales of 2,300 billion Won. Carrefour has 26 stores in Korea and sales volume of 1,700 billion Won, followed by Walmart Korea with 800 billion Won in its sales from 15 stores nation-wide. According to KOCHAM(2003), the retail industry is expected to enter restructuring stage in 2004 or 2005. Total sample in the main survey includes 416 patrons of discount retail stores in Busan with total population of around 4 million.

7 different discount retail stores in Busan were selected as the store context for this research. Mega Mart established its first discount retail store in Busan in 1995, and

currently operates 3 stores. E-Mart, Carrefour, and Lotte Mart operate 2 stores. Homeplus by Tesco, which opened its first Korean store in Busan, operates 3 stores. The only local company, Aram Mart, also operates 3 stores. Recently Wal-Mart opened a store in Busan. Respondents were approached by trained interviewers to respond to survey when they exit the discount retail store(mall intercept). Remuneration was given at the end. Approximately 80 to 120 patrons of 7 discount retail stores or total of 600 discount retail store patrons were asked to respond to the questionnaire. Among 600, 434 questionnaires were redeemed, resulting in 72.3% response rate. By excluding problematic and unanswered questionnaires, 416 were put into analysis, resulting in valid response sample of 43 questionnaires on Megamart, 50 on Aram Mart, 61 on Carrefour, 58 on E Mart, 61 on Lotte Mart, 51 on Homeplus, 91 on Wal-Mart. These figures show valid response rate of 69.3%.

The survey showed that 19.9% of the sample visited target stores more than 5 times for the last 4 weeks, 23.3% 2 times, 19.5% 3 times. On average respondents visited their patronized discount store 4.18 times for the last 4 weeks(once a week) and spent 66.9 minutes and 50,000 Won(\$ 40) per trip. And it took about 14.4 minutes to travel. 43.1% of the respondents used cars, 23.5% walked to go to the stores they patronize. According to Kim & Jin(2001), patrons(62%) in Ilsan and

Bundang, vicinities of Seoul, visited discount retail stores once a week using cars(57%), and took 20 minutes to travel and spent about 2 hours and 85,000 Won in shopping.

73.5% of the sample was female, and 82.9% respondents were twenties and thirties in their age. 58.7% respondents were unmarried and 36.1% earned between 1 million Won and less than 2 million. 23.3% completed junior college and 52.2% had university education. 38.1% were office workers and governmental employees, 20.4% homemakers.

2. Validity and reliability of the scales

SPSS 10.0 was utilized for the exploratory factor analyses and structural equation model(LISREL 8.0, Joreskog and Sorbom, (1993) for the confirmatory factor analyses to verify the validity of the scales. Covariance matrix was used as input matrix and maximum likelihood estimation procedure was utilized in the confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL. The confirmatory factor analyses for exogenous and latent factors were separately estimated. The 2nd order factor analysis was used for the confirmatory factor analysis for the exogenous variables, because various associations of a store consumers possess comprise the overall store image. And Cronbach alpha coefficients were cited as reliability scores.

To assess the stability of store image dimensions and other constructs, the pilot

survey was conducted employing one-to-one interview survey of approximately 77 students enrolled in a senior level brand management course during the early May 2003. More than 75 questions about the store characteristics and store satisfaction, intention to revisit, attitudes toward a discount retail store and other variables were given to the students. The results of the pilot study produced 16 factors with 55 store image scales. Among them, only after sales and in-store services, value were loaded to intended factors. The remaining items were loaded to different factors or separate factors. Based on these results, items in the main study contained 32 store image scales: 5 items for each construct of store

ambience and location, 4 scales for after sales service, value and convenient facilities, 6 items for salesmen service and merchandising, respectively. Other scales include 3 items measuring the overall attitude toward a discount retail store and store satisfaction, respectively, 4 items measuring intention to revisit a discount retail store. Other questions measure demographics, consumers' characteristics related to store visit, unaided recall measures, the most frequented discount retail store. During the scale refining process, 5 scales in both independent and dependent variables were screened out.

<Table 1> summarizes the results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the latent

<Table 1> The confirmatory factor analysis for the latent constructs

| Constructs and scales | | Factor loadings(error t value) | Standardized Factor loadings | Cronbach alpha |
|---|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Constructs | Scales | | | |
| Attitude toward a discount retail store | I like this store | 1.000 | 0.813 | .8247 |
| | I prefer this store to others | .992(0.064) 15.505*** | 0.807 | |
| Satisfaction | When I consider my experience at this store, I am satisfied | 1.000 | 0.837 | .8426 |
| | In general, when I think of this store, I am satisfied | 0.936(0.058) 16.223*** | 0.783 | |
| | When I come out of this store, I am usually satisfied | 0.950(0.058) 16.483*** | 0.795 | |
| Intention to revisit | In the future, My shopping at this mall will be very frequent | 1.000 | 0.916 | .9438 |
| | very probable | 0.992 (0.035) 28.724*** | 0.909 | |
| | very likeable | 0.947 (0.037) 25.642*** | 0.868 | |
| | very possible | 0.950 (0.037) 25.827*** | 0.871 | |
| CHI-SQUARE (d.f.=24) = 51.240 (P = 0.000982), RMR = 0.0274, SRMR=0.0273, GFI = 0.971 AGFI = 0.945, PGFI = 0.518, NFI = 0.980, NNFI = 0.984, PNFI = 0.653 | | | | |

*<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001

constructs. Final scales of dependent constructs are also found in the table. Chi-square of the model was 51 with degrees of freedom 24 (P-value=0.000982), RMR was 0.0274, standardized RMR was 0.0273 and goodness of fit and adjusted goodness of fit were 0.971 and 0.945 respectively. Based on these statistics, it is judged that data fit the model reasonably well. Attitude toward a discount retail store were measured with 3 items, one of which was loaded to satisfaction and subsequently deleted. 3 item satisfaction and 4 item intention to revisit were loaded as expected. The Cronbach

alpha scores were between .825 and .9438, all of which are within the acceptable range.

The confirmatory factor analysis for latent constructs was also conducted. The results are summarized in <Table 2>. Final scales of store image constructs are also found in the table.

The final factors included in the analysis to form store image were store ambience, location, convenient facilities, value, salesmen service, merchandising, and after sales service (see table 5-2). The model shows that the data fit the measurement model reasonably well (Chi-square 764.4(d.f.=343, P=0.00, GFI=0.88, AGFI=

<Table 2> The confirmatory factor analysis for the store image dimensions

| Constructs | Scales | Loadings(error) t value | Standardized Loadings | α score | Cronbach |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Store Ambience | R's easy to moving through the store | 1.000 | 0.635 | 0.7488 | 0.39(0.04) 0.730*** |
| | The layout makes it easy to find merchandise I want to buy | 0.948(0.068) 13.881*** | 0.602 | | |
| | R's easy to moving through the store | 0.766(0.071) 10.786*** | 0.486 | | |
| | The shelf is not too high enough to pick up merchandise with hands | 0.684(0.077) 8.917*** | 0.435 | | |
| Location | The store is quite conveniently located to meet people | 1.000 | 0.793 | 0.7148 | 0.466(0.056) 0.326*** |
| | Store is located close to my house | 0.798(0.082) 9.758*** | 0.633 | | |
| | convenient to take a public transportation to get to the store | 0.768(0.076) 10.168*** | 0.609 | | |
| | Variety of stores are located near the store | 0.555(0.068) 8.156*** | 0.441 | | |
| Convenient facilities | Parking facility at the store is very convenient and accessible | 0.524(0.071) 7.333*** | 0.415 | 0.7416 | 0.232(0.048) 0.800*** |
| | Presence of governmental offices | 1.000 | 0.742 | | |
| | Presence of many convenient facilities in the store | 0.784(0.083) 9.399*** | 0.582 | | |
| Value | convenient to do one stop shopping because of many convenient facilities | 0.715(0.079) 9.108*** | 0.531 | 0.7382 | 0.437(0.041) 10.742*** |
| | offers a lot of discounts, special sales, promotions | 1.000 | 0.618 | | |
| | offers manufacturer coupons, free samples, sales and trading stamps | 0.907(0.084) 10.798*** | 0.500 | | |
| Salesmen Service | provides special events and exhibits | 0.873(0.079) 11.057*** | 0.539 | 0.8664 | 0.388(0.036) 10.850*** |
| | Salesperson are kind in responding to my questions and inquiries | 1.000 | 0.590 | | |
| | Employees at the store are helpful and friendly and courteous | 0.970(0.059) 16.510*** | 0.572 | | |
| | Appropriateness of salesperson's explanation | 0.899(0.056) 16.020*** | 0.531 | | |
| | Employees at the store are always willing to respond to my request promptly | 0.874(0.059) 14.871*** | 0.536 | | |
| After sales service | Employees at the store give proper explanation | 0.760(0.056) 13.484*** | 0.448 | 0.8850 | 0.442(0.040) 11.172*** |
| | I can trust employees at the store | 0.720(0.055) 13.178*** | 0.425 | | |
| | The store provides appropriate delivery service | 1.000 | 0.670 | | |
| Merchandising | The store provides appropriate After sale services | 0.945(0.050) 18.994*** | 0.633 | 0.7264 | 0.306(0.038) 0.878*** |
| | The store offers relevant installation service | 0.941(0.046) 20.335*** | 0.631 | | |
| | carries diverse meat, fishery products and fresh produce | 1.000 | 0.509 | | |
| | carries many store brands | 0.979(0.066) 10.156*** | 0.499 | | |
| | sell a lot of name brands | 0.963(0.102) 9.439*** | 0.491 | | |
| | sell variety of products from many different manufacturers | 0.777(0.059) 8.879*** | 0.447 | | |

CHI-SQUARE(d.f.=343)=764.201 with P=0.0, RMR=0.0441, SRMR=0.0644, GFI=0.876 AGFI=0.853, NFI=0.829, NNFI=0.886, CFI=0.897

<0.01, *<0.001

0.853, RMR=0.0441, NNFI=0.886). The results show the discriminant and convergent validity of the constructs. Cronbach alpha scores were calculated for all factors and the results implied that all concepts are in acceptable range(ranging from .715 to .885), meaning measures are reliable. And these results are not different from the most recent study on discount retail stores in Korea(Kim and Jin, 2001). Kim and Jin(2001) identified 6 different store images: merchandising, in store service, facilities, crowdedness, clean and wide space, price competitiveness, and fashion clothes. And in the last column of the table shows that all

7 constructs constitute store image.

<Table 3> shows the average scores for the constructs adopted and correlation coefficients. Average scores of non physical service related factors such as after sales and salesmen services, value were recorded relatively higher than those of physical characteristics. Data distributions do not present any abnormality problem. The correlation coefficients show all constructs have discriminant validity, which is revealed by no correlation coefficient greater than 0.70.

<Table 3> Average values of the constructs and correlation coefficients

| Constructs | A/S Service | Store ambience | Location | Convenient facilities | Value | Salesman service | Merchandising | Attitude | satisfaction | Intention to revisit |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|-----------------------|---------|------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|
| Average | 2.9599 | 3.337 | 2.8271 | 2.6876 | 2.962 | 3.260 | 3.203 | 3.247 | 3.160 | 3.213 |
| A/S service | 1.000 | | | | | | | | | |
| Store ambience | .289*** | 1.000 | | | | | | | | |
| Location | .205*** | .278*** | 1.000 | | | | | | | |
| Convenient facilities | .306*** | .159*** | .235*** | 1.000 | | | | | | |
| Value | .247*** | .241*** | .210*** | .260*** | 1.000 | | | | | |
| Salesmen service | .308*** | .331*** | .219*** | .292*** | .283*** | 1.000 | | | | |
| Merchandising | .294*** | .346*** | .184*** | .282*** | .366*** | .342*** | 1.000 | | | |
| Attitude | .371*** | .436*** | .441*** | .241*** | .392*** | .413*** | .300*** | 1.000 | | |
| Satisfaction | .304*** | .483*** | .422*** | .366*** | .412*** | .407*** | .422*** | .663*** | 1.000 | |
| Intention To revisit | .216*** | .371*** | .481*** | .176*** | .345*** | .252*** | .311*** | .667*** | .615*** | 1.000 |

<0.01, *<0.001

3. Tests of hypotheses

To test hypotheses, structural equation model was employed using LISREL 8.0. Maximum likelihood estimation was utilized with covariance matrix as input matrix. <Table 4> summarizes the results. The model shows that Chi square value 237.39(d.f.=98) with P value significant at 0.00. RMR and SRMR were 0.026, 0.048, respectively. GFI and AGFI were 0.930 and 0.903. NFI and NNFI were 0.936 and 0.952. CFI statistics shows value of 0.961. All these statistics show that the data fit the model quite well enough to permit to test hypotheses proposed in the study. The overall model tests support the proposed conceptualization except for the hypothesis 2 and 5.

H1 tests the relationship between store image and attitude toward a discount retail store. The result shows that store image has positive impact on the formation of attitude (standardized coefficient=0.834, t=11.483). Another model with 7 image factors treated as exogenous variables was run to investigate their separate impacts on attitudes, satisfaction and intention to revisit(Chi-square 1,001.828 (d.f.=482), P=0.00. RMR=0.0396, SRMR=0.0561, GFI=0.874, AGFI=0.844. NNFI=0.910). This more detailed analysis shows that store atmosphere(coefficient=0.183, t=3.047), location(coefficient=0.401, t=5.153), value(coefficient=0.201, t=3.085), after sales service(coefficient=0.139, t=2.253) have significant influences on the formation of attitude towards a discount store. But other

<Table 4> Structural Analysis

| Parameter | | Un-standardized coefficients(error) | Standardized coefficients | t-values |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Gamma</i> | Store image → Attitude | 1.271 (0.111) | 0.834 | 11.483*** |
| | Store image → Satisfaction | 0.884 (0.162) | 0.683 | 5.469*** |
| | Store image → Intention to Revisit | 0.104 (0.297) | 0.052 | 0.349 |
| <i>Beta</i> | Attitude → satisfaction | 0.181 (0.096) | 0.213 | 1.879 |
| | Satisfaction → Intention to Revisit | 0.367 (0.178) | 0.240 | 2.057** |
| | Attitude → Intention to Revisit | 0.670 (0.141) | 0.514 | 4.736*** |
| CHI-SQUARE = 237.394(d.f.=98) with P value 0.00, RMR=0.0259, SRMR=0.0476 GFI=0.930, AGFI=0.903, NFI=0.936, NNFI= 0.952, CFI= 0.961 | | | | |

<0.01, *<0.001

images have no impact on attitude. These results suggest that locational benefit and intangible, service related image factors have more impact on the formation of the overall attitude toward a discount store. The results are in line with those of Olson, Toy, and Dover(1982), who imply that the exposure of consumers to stimuli initiates responses and these responses have significant impact on the formation of cognitive beliefs, which have influences on the formation of overall attitude toward an object. This hypothesis is meaningful to confirm the results of Yoo et al.(1998), who, in their study under the context of department stores, showed that store images have impact on the formation of the overall attitude.

H2 investigates the influence of store image on intention to revisit. The result shows that store image has no positive impact on intention to revisit(standardized coefficient=0.052, $t=0.349$). This result is not parallel with the results of early stream of studies by Martineau(1958), Lindquist(1974), Bearden(1977), Nevin and Houston(1980), who stipulate that various store images have direct influences on behavioral measures. But Yoo et al.(1998) and Bloemer and Ruyter(1998) implied that the impact of store image on behavioral measure is indirect, usually mediated by satisfaction and/or in store emotion.

H3 investigates the impact of attitude towards a discount store on intention to revisit. The result shows that store attitudes have

positive effect on intention to revisit the store(standardized coefficient=0.514, $t=4.736$). This result implies that when consumers hold positive attitude towards a discount retailer, they are more likely to revisit the same discount store. This result verifies the suggestion by Thang and Tan(2003), who have implied that the overall attitude may have direct influence on store related behaviors and confirms the general maxim stipulated by attitude theorists(Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), insisting that attitudes toward an object have positive impact on behavioral intention.

H4 investigates the relationship between store image and store satisfaction. The result shows that store image has positive impact on satisfaction(standardized coefficient=0.683, $t=5.469$). More detailed analysis shows that atmosphere(coefficient=0.199, $t=3.406$), convenient facilities(coefficient=0.216, $t=4.064$) have significant influences on satisfaction. The results suggest that such store images as atmosphere and convenient facilities should be bolstered carefully in order to promote the level of store satisfaction experienced in discount retail stores. The results confirms those derived by Bleomer and Ruyter(1998), Hirschman(1981), Sirgy and Samli(1985), Kumar and Karande (2000), Thang and Tan(2003), all of who stipulate that store image has direct positive impact on the formation of satisfaction.

H5 investigates the relationship between attitudes towards a discount retail store and satisfaction. The results show that attitude

towards a discount store has no significant impact on satisfaction(coefficient=0.213, $t=1.879$). The results indicate that even if consumers have positive attitude towards a discount retail store, they are not tended to be satisfied with the store. This result is not coincide with previous studies including Wilkie(1986), Keller(1993, p. 4). This means that attitudes, unlike the overall store image, influence directly the formation of intention to revisit the store, rather than mediated by satisfaction.

H6 investigates the relationship between satisfaction and intention to revisit. The result shows that satisfaction has significant positive effect on intention to revisit discount store (standardized coefficient=0.240, $t=2.057$). The result implies that if consumers are satisfied with the discount store, the possibility of forming intention to revisit the same store is increased. This result is not parallel to that by Cronin and Taylor(1992), but coincides with those in services industry by Ruyter et al.(1997); Spreng and Mackoy(1996) and those in retail business by Bitner(1990), Bloemer and Ruyter(1998), Rust and Zahorik(1993), Cronin and Taylor(1994).

V. Summary, discussion, and limitations

This study was (1) to consolidate the basis of previous retail store image by integrating the cognitive structure theory on attitudes, (2)

to propose the overall store attitude to be an image, (3) to examine the sequential relationships among retail store image, the overall store attitude and store satisfaction and intention to revisit in the context of the discount retail environment in the second largest city of Busan in Korea.

Considering the analyses altogether, the results are summarized as follows. It is found that store image is exerting positive influences in the formation of attitude and satisfaction. It is suggested, for example, that if consumer forms favorable store image, he is more likely to have more positive attitudes and be more satisfied. But his favorable store image does not have direct positive impact on his intention to revisit the store. Rather the impact of store image is mediated by attitudes and satisfaction. In addition, unlike the overall store image, attitudes, the most abstract form of store image, have direct effect on the formation of consumers' intention to revisit, not mediated by satisfaction. This implies that even though consumer has favorable attitudes, he may not be satisfied, but he will be visiting the same discount store next time. And if consumer who possess favorable store image, he is more likely to be satisfied, which will subsequently result in higher possibility to form intention to revisit that store.

The results imply a few theoretical implications. First, previous research suggested that various store image has direct influences on store preference and behavioral measures such as

revisiting behavior(Martineau, 1958; Lindquist, 1974; Bearden, 1977; Nevin and Houston, 1980). But this study implies that store image can have indirect influence on intention to revisit mediated by attitudes and satisfaction. This result is more in line with recent studies by Bloemer and Ruyter(1998) and Yoo et al.(1986). This proves that more recent researchers like Bloemer and Ruyter(1998) and Yoo et al.(1986) understood the retail consumers more precisely than early researchers.

Second, some researchers in retail distribution industry have suggested that location is the most important factor(Kim and Jin, 2001, p. 236; Craig et al, 1984; Bruner and Masson, 1968; Nevin and Houston, 1980). But some other researchers(Burns and Warren, 1995) have shown different perspective: consumers visit rather remote shopping stores to express their uniqueness. This study confirms that location among other image concepts is still far more important variable in selecting a discount retail store. That is, location is the most significant indicator when predicting behavioral index in discount retailing industry in Korea. It is implied that when most of the discount retail stores are located conveniently for customers to access, store image and attitudes will play important roles in attracting customers. If the store, however, is located in an area difficult to access, favorable, strong perceptions on store images and attitude will be of no use. This means that when selecting a location for discount retail store, accessibility

should be considered as the most important factor.

Third, it is also found that attitudes, the most abstract form of store image, are favorably formed through favorable store image building strategy and affects intention to revisit. It is important to note that, unlike the overall store image, attitudes exert positive impact on intention to revisit, not mediated by satisfaction. This is because attitudes attitude is formed by less thoughtful decision making based on simple heuristics and decision rules (Chaikie, 1986; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), or it could be said that attitude is a concept of summary evaluation of an object(Allport, 1967, p. 8).

These results provide several important insights in managing discount retail stores in Korea. It is first suggested in the more detailed analysis of store image dimensions that store image related to non physical characteristics have to be formed favorably in order to promote positive attitude toward a discount retail store. In other words, to form positive and favorable attitude toward a discount retail store, it is needed to improve store ambience and accessibility, value, after sales and salesmen services. Second, it is said that the level of satisfaction is promoted through increased amenity related store images. It is advised to implement policies to improve store ambience and accessibility, and increase perceived value of products and services and salesmen service to raise customer satisfaction

for discount retail store. It is also recommended to diversify merchandising to increase choice alternatives and eventually satisfaction. Especially store ambience and location play very important role in increased satisfaction. Third, it is also implied that increased satisfaction also comes from increased level of the overall attitude toward a discount retail store. That is, when favorable attitude toward a discount retail store is formed in the minds of consumers, the level of satisfaction felt by customers is increased. Combining together, improved store ambience image guide favorable attitude toward a discount retail store, which subsequently improve satisfaction. Fourth, it is also recommended that customers are more likely to revisit the discount retail store they have experienced satisfaction. This suggests that customers have to be satisfied in their previous retail experiences to be store loyal customers. This leads us to devise a strategy to satisfy customers at their first visit. Especially to induce customers' revisiting, it is advised to increase accessibility, value of products and services, favorable store ambience, rather than services of salesmen and after sales. All of these arguments imply that different strategies are to be implemented with different objectives. When a manager, for example, is obsessed with long term strategy related to promote customers' favorable attitude, he/she has to attend more to non-physical attributes of its environment. If he/she cares more about customer satisfaction,

he/she has to pay more attention on shopping amenities.

This study like many others employing survey method has limitations. The first limitation is related to sample. The sample of this study is experienced customers of various discount retail stores in Busan, Korea. Even though Busan is the second largest city in Korea, citizens of Busan may not be representative of all Korean customers. Especially, when we think that about 45% of total population in Korea is living in Seoul and its vicinities, and its socio economic data are significantly different, readers should pay more attention in interpreting the results drawn from this study.

Despite the limitation, the findings from the study suggest several useful directions for future study. First, thorough investigation on the factors of store images is needed to enhance our understanding on retail satisfaction and loyalty in different retail environments. New store image concepts may be triggered by changed consumers' preference, needs and ever-changing retail environment. This study, for example, extended store images by including the overall store attitude toward a discount retail store, a global, abstract dimension of retail images. Second, more in depth investigation of the sequential influence between store images and other intervening and resulting variables will make us better understand dynamic forces under retail environment. Researchers have proposed various intervening variables, i.e. mediator or/and

moderator variables. Yoo et. al.(1998) suggested that in store emotions are moderating between store images and store attitude. Bleomer and Ruyter(1998) imply that both motivation and ability to elaborate on the store choice, that is, shopping motives and involvement, play roles as moderating variables. Third, researchers may extend the results to cross cultural settings to determine which image determinants are important in different country environments.

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〈한글요약〉

부산지역 할인점의 점포이미지 관리전략

구 동 모* · 강 명 주**

1997년부터 국내유통시장이 개방된 이래, 국내외의 국적소속으로 국내에서 영업활동을 하는 할인점들은 치열한 시장점유율 쟁탈전을 벌이고 있다. 이처럼 할인점간의 경쟁이 격화되고 있는 시점에서 유통업계의 경영진과 이 분야를 연구하는 학자는 할인점에 대한 만족도와 충성도 등에 대한 심도 있는 이해와 이를 개선하기 위한 노력이 절실히 요망된다. 이런 맥락에서 본 연구에서는 할인점의 점포이미지가 할인점에 대한 소비자의 태도, 만족도 및 재방문의도에 어떤 영향을 미치는가를 검토하였다.

부산지역 소비자 416명을 대상으로 한 설문조사를 시행한 결과, 할인점의 점포이미지는 할인점에 대한 태도와 만족도에 영향을 주지만 할인점의 재방문의도에는 직접적인 영향을 주지 않는 것으로 나타났다. 한편, 할인점에 대한 태도는 할인점에 대한 만족도와는 직접적인 관련성이 없고 할인점의 재방문의도에 보다 직접적으로 긍정적인 영향을 주는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 할인점에 대해 긍정적인 점포이미지를 가진 소비자일수록 할인점에 대해 만족할 가능성이 높고, 이런 만족도는 할인점의 재방문의도에 영향을 주는 것으로 나타났다. 이런 연구결과에 따른 이론적 및 실무적 시사점과 본 연구의 한계점 그리고 미래의 연구방향을 제시하였다.

주제어 : 할인점이미지, 점포만족도, 재방문의도, 점포태도

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