
Challenges in the development of Image of Retail Stores in India

Hemantha Y*
Dr Arun B.K**

*(*Research Scholar, Bharathiar University,**Professor, Jain University, Bangalore.)*

Abstract

As the retail stores are spawning across the nation portraying the merchandise offering in National brands has become common phenomenon. As retailers introduced Private label brands there is a possibility that the perceived image of stores by the customers have changed altogether. In this context, the retailer has to develop the favorable response from the customer and society as a whole. Image of Retail store has been an important variable in store patronage and it is widely accepted that psychological factors have a significant role in formation of store image. Moreover; it is a way of differentiation in the retail business. In this scenario, the retailers have to design the store which affects their image positively to the customers and society as a whole. The paper intends to know more about the image of Retail Store and the significant factors affecting it.

Keyword(s): Image, Retail store, Fashion merchandise, Visual Merchandising

Brief Introduction to the Study:

The image in general is the way in which people think about an organization. In this study organization refers to Retail store. In Retail context, image of retail store is dynamic in nature as it varies from one situation to another. Retail business practices have put forth their strategies to create a favorable image to the society and the customers. The image can have positive or negative effects in the minds of the customer. The perception

towards the stores is changing and major retailers are trying to design the store which appeals to customers. Eventually, the store patronage can be increased. Major retailers in India are putting in their strategy for creating favorable image in the minds of customers.

Image of Store Retail Store can be defined as "well-designed and psychological image in the minds of consumers which is projected by the retailer that is acceptable to the target market".

Dunne and Lunsch(2005) defines Image of Retail Store or Store image as the image or impression of a store in the minds of Customers. It specifies the overall impression of the store in terms of store itself and the experience customers expect when shopping at the store. In nutshell, the store image is actually a reflection of the overall customer to store environment.

Zimmer and Golden (1988) defines Store image means a complex in total dimensions of store attributes that consumer feel and a complex means that store image consists of various attributes

According to scholar, the image of store is the psychological aspects perceived in the consumer's mind. Retailers should consistently work to build their image of store in society by providing the right merchandise/product. Basically; the image of store should carry a positive message to intended customers and to the society as a whole.

Review of Related Literature:

Bloemer and de Ruter(1998) in the article entitled 'On the relationship between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty' has defined that store image is the complex set of consumer's perceptions of a store with an array of attributes. As we know that few scholar's definitions in literatures can be in line with others as specified by Houston and Nevin(1981).

Martenson (2007) in the article entitled 'Corporate brand image, satisfaction and store loyalty: A study of the store as a brand, store brands and manufacturer brands' has mentioned that Image is an impressions which are created by the retailers to attract the customers to say something about the store. This is quite challenging task for the retail chain. Impressions can differ from one person to another. Image of retail store is a valuable both tangible and intangible in nature which helps retail store to attain loyalty towards the store.

Keaveney and Hunt (1992) in the article entitled 'Conceptualization and operationalization of retail store image: a case of rival middle-level theories' have defined Retail store image as the overall impression of a store perceived by customer (Porter and Claycomb(1997)). To be more specific, the definition of store image can be interpreted as individual's cognitive and emotions that are inferred from perceptions that are connected to particular retail stores. It has to appeal to customer or individual in general.

Lindquist (1974) in the article entitled 'Meaning of image: a survey of empirical and

hypothetical evidence' defines store image in nine dimensions which includes merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store ambience, institutional factors, and post-transaction satisfaction, while Doyle and Fenwick (1974) have given five dimensions for defining store image such as product, dimension, assortment, styling, and location.

Pierre Martineau (1958) in the article entitled 'The personality of the retail store' has described that the customers feeling associated with the retail store. This concept was developed for the first time and it describes about the customer buying behavior as a whole. In the same line, Porter and Claycomb(1997) has specified that above all, the overall impressions of the retail store can drastic impact on the shopping behaviors. Porter, S. S., & Claycomb, C. (1997) in the article entitled 'The influence of brand recognition on retail store image' have indicated that the retail store will have favourable image when merchandise mix should be composed of a relatively more number of brands which possess high brand awareness and one or more brands with a strong brand awareness. The study also indicates to brand and retail managers for effective implementation in order to develop the store image.

Rationale of the Study

The Study is being done to know about the Image of Retail Stores giving emphasis on Apparel category. To understand this, researcher is keen in knowing various aspects of Image of retail stores and Private label brands.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the concept of Image of Retail Store and elicit the various factors which constitute the dimensions of Image of Retail Store

Methodology:

After reviewing the literatures on Image of retail stores in India it is observed that empirical evidences on Image of Retail organization are limited. Looking into this aspect the methodology adapted in this study was secondary Meta analysis of existing literatures and Interview with experts.

Qualitative research was adopted and the schedule was sent to 30 respondents wherein 10 members were contacted directly and interviewed regarding Image of Retail Stores whereas for rest of the members; interview schedule was mailed to know the response. In the process, researcher considered due concerns about the factors given by the respondents.

Results and Discussions:

Interview schedule was prepared to probe more into the various aspects of Image of retail stores. After having interviewed people in Bangalore region the various factors arrived at were: After interviewing and meta analysis of existing literatures on Image of Retail Stores it was found that there is a gap in implementing Image of stores in Indian context. To know the various factors for this gap in the study researcher has arrived at factors considering the perception of customers about the stores. This paper tried to relate the existing literatures by meta analysis of collecting more information about Image of retail stores in Indian context. It is found that there are various factors which affect the image of stores in major retail chain which is given below:

- **Overall design of the store:** Most of the Respondents said that the design of store will affect the image of store. Whereas respondents who are regular visitors to the store mentioned that overall design affects the image of Retail Store.
- **Store layouts:** Respondents who are regular visitors and few respondents said that the layouts will help customers to track the merchandise easily. In this regard, researcher himself opines that the layout should be in tandem with the image of retail stores. In this context, one of the challenges for the retailers is to create favorable impressions of the store which is reflected in the layouts which is vital factor in developing image of store.
- **Store design:** Most of the respondents have mentioned in schedule that there is a difference in the image of retail stores which has National brands and Private label brands. In this context, the retail store can enhance its image by introducing own brands.
- **Visual Merchandising:** This is vital factor about the image of retail stores. The respondents have mentioned that Visual merchandise which is displayed at the entrance of the retail store will have an impact on image wherein it attracts the customer to walk into the store. Besides, it gives them idea about the merchandise offering.
- **Merchandise Mix:** This is another factor which affects the image as there are private label brands in the store. Respondents who are regular visitors will look into the merchandise line for repeat purchases.

Table 1: Results of the Interview Schedule

Respondent 1 & 2 : Regular customer to Top 5 major retailer (Chain of Store) who visits store such as Shopper's Stop, Lifestyle, Westside, Big Bazaar, Pantaloons.

Sl No.	Description	Response
1	What do you understand about the Image of Retail Stores?	It is overall design of the store. It is related to Internal store design such as layouts, visual merchandising
2	How do you perceive Image of Retail Stores	It is outlook of an independent retail store or Chain of Stores
3	According to you, how Image of retail stores helps business to grow	Yes. Perhaps, Repeat purchases are possible
4	What according to you are vital factors on Image of Retail Stores	Visual Merchandising store layouts colors styles of product, size etc.,
5	What are other factors which affects Image of Retail Stores	Social responsibility of retailers will add value to the store and green concept
6	What Image do you perceive about private label brands	Products available only in a specific retail stores or chain of stores
7	Do you think that the Image of Retail Stores differs between National brands and Private label brands	Definitely yes. National brands will have a huge shelf space and portrayed in a larger scale as compared to Private label brands. Whereas private label brands in a smaller scale but, in chain of major retailers they have gone on larger scale
8	According to you, Please list any significant aspect of Image of Retail Store which affects Private label brands	Name of retailer offering merchandise/product Store design consists of shelve space, Visual merchandising, assortments etc., Brand recognition by customers

Table 2: Results of the Interview Schedule
Respondent 3,4,5,6 (Not a Regular Customer to the stores)

Sl No.	Description	Response
1	What do you understand about the Image of Retail Stores?	Overall Design
2	How do you perceive Image of Retail Stores	It is an outlook
3	According to you, how Image of retail stores helps business to grow	It is a continuous process
4	What according to you are vital factors on Image of Retail Stores	ÉÕIJJ Í NÓENÍ İ İ Đ İ Ő KÍ NÍ ÍQ NİJİ Q İ
5	What are other factors which affects Image of Retail Stores	ÈÑ NİJÈ İ NÑH
6	What Image do you perceive about private label brands	It is a competitor product to National brand
7	Do you think that the Image of Retail Stores differs between National brands and Private label brands	Yes.
8	According to you, Please list any significant aspect of Image of Retail Store which affects Private label brands	Overall Store design is the most important factor and what society has an outlook on it.

Conclusion:

The paper gives the rudimentary aspects of the image of retail stores across the nation which houses national and private label brands in chain of retail which is more organized retailing. As there is an intense competition in retail industry in the current scenario, retailers should look into the significant factors such as Store layout, design and visual merchandise elements which constitute the internal factors of the store. At the same time they have to keep in mind in creating favorable impressions towards people and society as a whole.

References:

- Bloemer, Josee, de Ruyter, Ko. (1998). "On the relationship between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty", *European Journal of Marketing*, 32 (5/6), pg.499-513.
- Baker, J., Grewal, D. and Parasuraman, A. (1994). "The influence of store environment on quality inferences and store image", *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 22 (4), pg. 328-39
- Marks, R.B. (1976). "Operationalizing the Concept of Store Image", *Journal of Retailing*, 52, pg. 37-46
- Maronick, T. J. and Stiff, R. M. (1985). "The Impact of a Specialty Retail Center on Downtown Shopping Behavior", *Academy of Marketing Science Journal*, 13(3), Pg.292-306
- Osman, M. (1993). "A conceptual model of retail image influences on loyalty patronage behavior", *International Review Of Retail Distribution & Consumer Research*, 3(2), pg.133.

- Lindquist, J.D. (1974-1975). "Meaning of image: a survey of empirical and hypothetical evidence", *Journal of Retailing*, 50 (4), pg. 29-37
- Martineau, P. (1958). "The personality of the retail store", *Harvard Business Review*. 36 (1), Pg. 47-55.
- Jacoby, J. and Mazursky, D. (1984). "Linking brand and retailer images – do the potential risks outweigh the potential benefits?", *Journal of Retailing*, 60 (2), pg. 105-22.
- Dick, A. and Basu, K. (1994). "Customer Loyalty: toward an integrated conceptual framework", *Journal of Marketing Science*, 22(2). pg.99-113.
- Doyle, P. and Fenwick, I. (1974). "How Store Image Affects Shopping Habits in Grocery Chains", *Journal of Retailing*, 50, pg.39-52.
- Porter, S.S. and Claycomb, C. (1997). "The Influence of Brand Recognition on Retail Store Image", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 6 (6). pg.373-385.
- Houston, M.J. and Nevin, J.R.(1981). "Retail Shopping Area Image: structure and congruence between downtown and shopping centers", *Advances in Consumer Research*, 8, pg.677-81
- Keaveney, S.M. and Hunt, K.A. (1992). "Conceptualization and operationalization of retail store image: a case of rival middle-level theories". *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*. 20(2). pg.165-75.
- Mazursky, D. and Jacoby, J.(1986). "Exploring the development of store images". *Journal of Retailing*, 62, pg. 145-65.
- Martenson, R. (2007). "Corporate brand image, satisfaction and store loyalty: A study of the store as a brand, store brands and manufacturer brands". *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35(7), pg. 544-555.
- Frozen Food Age, 46(8), pg.4.
- Martenson, R. (2007). "Corporate brand image, satisfaction and store loyalty: A study of the store as a brand, store brands and manufacturer brands", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35 (7), pp.544-555.
- Zimmer, Mary R. and Linda L. Golden (1988). "Impressions of Retail Store: A Content Analysis of Consumer Images", *Journal of Retailing*, 64(Fall), pg. 265-293
- Porter, S. S., & Claycomb, C. (1997). "The influence of brand recognition on retail store image", *Journal of product & brand management*, 6(6), pg. 373-387.
- Harrison, D. (1998). "Private label evolution",