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FORMATION OF BRAND EVIDENCE IN RETAIL BANKS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The retail bankung industry has become increasingly competitive in Taiwan after the government's policy of deregulation and internationalization. Banks not only have to satisfy customers but also have to meet customers' needs and the changing preferences more effectively and effectively than their counterparts in order to maintain long-term competitive advantage. Building strong brand evidence in order to gain customers' attention has become one of the key issues in the industry. Nevertheless, relevant literature on the topic in the arena of retail banking industry, which plays an important part in the economy in Taiwan, is sparse. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of brand evidence in the context of retail banking industry in Taiwan.*

Design/methodology/approach: *The study is conducted from the customers' perspective about how they perceive brand evidence in retail banks. The methodology employed is a combination of both qualitative and quantative methods including in-depth interview, focus group interview and factor analysis.*

Findings: *A questionnaire was established based on the result. After expert opinions and pretests, 200 questionaires were then distributed. The collected data were analyzed via factor analysis. The empirical results demonstrated that brand evidence was composed of five factors including employee service, core service, self-image congruence, brand name, and price.*

Originality/value: *In the practical aspect, the study presents the dimensions of customer perceive value and thus provide directions for retail bank parctitioners to enhance the customer perceived value. In the theoretical aspect, the result helps to establish a foundation for future development of a customer perceived value measurement scale specifically suitable for the retail banking industry in other contexts. It can also provide a theoretical base for further investigation on the relationship amongst value and other constructs.*

INTRODUCTION

The banking industry was well protected by the government over the past decades, especially in developing countries. Under the government's monopolistic protection, the government-controlled banks dominated the domestic market. Until the wake of the new centry, the banking industry has experienced major deregulation reforms to remove entry barriers for bank establishment worldwide and introduce more competition. Under such operation environment, banking industry has become increasingly competitive and practitioners not only have to satisfy customers, but also to meet their needs and changing preferences to maintain competitive advantage.

Nowadays, brands play an integral part in strengthening competitive advantage and they are increasingly valuable assets and resources of differentiation (Lim and O'Cass, 2001). A brand acts as a mechanism in engaging both purchaser and seller in a long run customer-brand relationship (Davis, 2000). To the customer, a brand identifies the attribute of the product, which in turn assigns legal responsibility to the product maker, and it provides a promise or bond with the producer (Lassar, *et al*., 1995). Brand also reduces search costs of consumers, perceived risk, and signal the quality of the product (Biswas, 1992; Shimp, 1993; Erdem, 1998; and Janiszewski and van Osselaer, 2000). Therefore, the brand becomes the advantages to the consumer in term of both economic and symbolic value. To the firm, branding plays a unique role because stronger brands not only boost differentiation among rivals, but also strengthen trust, facilitate visualization, reduce research costs, minimize perceived risks, and represent high quality from a consumer's point of view (Hosany *et al.*, 2006 and Kim *et a.,l* 2008). In addition, the advantages of strong brands are not only in the marketing of physical goods, but are also in highly prevalent where services are concerned.

Today, a number of theoretical frameworks have been proposed in an effort to understand how consumers think about, and respond to brands (Keller, 1998; and de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). The marketing researches also pay a lots attentions on how buyers verdicts on service brands (Grace and O'Cass, 2005). Whereas, Keller (2002) laid out a series of steps for building brand equity, and suggesting that consumer brand relationship is the final step. The consume-brand relationship depends largely on the successful establishment of the brand meanings. These meanings can be formed directly from a consumer's experience.

Although, there are available marketing researches on how consumer perceives service brand, these researches were conducted in developed countries (Grace and O'Cass, 2005; Şahin *et al.*, 2011; and Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012), there is little research on service brand in

Asian countries. This paper aims to investigate brand evidence of services in banking industry in Taiwan, and how the construct is formulated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The service brand

Brand refers to "a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Kotler, 2006). A brand acts as a mechanism in engaging both consumer and seller in a long-term consumer-brand relationship (Davis, 2000).

In the service context, the service brand comprises multiple factors including customer perceptions of service quality, the people standing behind the service, and the quality of the supplier/customer relationship (Berry, 2000; Dall'Olmo Riley and de Chernatony, 2000). It is shown that in packaged goods, the physical goods is the primary representation of brand. However, with services, the company is the primary brand (Berry, 2000). This is argued in the literature that service is characterized by:

• Intangibility: the value delivered by the service provider is much less tangible;

• Heterogeneity: intensive interaction between the customer and the service provider makes each service encounter a heterogeneous experience;

• Inseparability: the production and consumption of service occur simultaneously and inseparably; and

• Perishability: services cannot be stocked and perish immediately after consumption finishes (Zeithaml *et al*., 1985; Bowen, 1990; Dall'Olmo Riley and de Chernatory, 2000; Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004; and Laroche, 2007).

Brand experience

Since service contains more intangible element than the physical goods counterpart, customers might search for more tangible cues inorder to evaluate the purchase. Recent research has focused on utilitarian product attributes and category experiences which provided by brands' consumption. Brakus *et al*., (2009) defined brand experience as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments.

According to Alloza (2008), brand experience is a conception of the perception of the consumers, at every moment of contact they have with the brand. This includes the brand images projected in advertising, during the first personal contact, or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive. Ambler *et al*., (2002) reported that brand experience is created when customers use the brand; talk to others about the brand; seek out brand information, promotions, and events, and so on.

Therefore, brand marketers must bond with consumers by staging holistic brand experiences (e.g., Schmitt 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The marketing strategies associated with the brand, effects the consumers "mind-set" with respect to the brandwhat they know and feel about the brand. The customer mind-set everything which exists in the customers' minds with respect to a brand (e.g. thoughts, feelings, experiences, images, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and so on) that is defined brand equity (Ambler, 2000). When consumers look for, shop for, and consume the brands, they are exposed to utilitarian product attributes.

Moreover, they are also exposed to various specific brand related stimuli, such as brand-identifying colors (Belizzi and Hite, 1992; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995; and Gorn *et al*., 1997), shapes, typefaces, background design elements (Mandel and Johnson, 2002), slogans, mascots, and brand characters (Keller, 1987; and Brakus *et al*., 2009). These brand-related stimuli are considered as part of a brand's design and identity (e.g., name, logo, signage), packaging, and marketing communications (e.g., advertisements, brochures, Web sites) and in environments in which the brand is marketed or sold (e.g., stores, events). These brand-related stimuli compose the major source of subjective, internal consumer responses, which is referred as "brand experience" (Brakus, *et al*., 2009). Hence, brand experience is defined as subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and environments.

Brand evidence

Brand evidence is the set of service brand associations experienced by the consumer during the pre-purchase and consumption stage. In the pre-purchase stage, consumers can evaluate the evidence of the service brand throughout its more tangible (or known) attributes such as the brand name and price (Janiszewski and van Osselaer, 2000). It is supported that the brand name is more important when there is a lack of available information (as is often the case with services) as the brand name becoming a surrogate for missing attribute information (Degeratu *et al*., 2000). Beside the brand name, price is another attribute of the brand that can often be assessed prior to consumption.

However, from the consumer's perspective, price is much more than just a monetary figure. It is the perception of what is given up or sacrificed to obtain a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988) and is more aptly referred to as ‘‘perceived price’’. Dodds *et al*. (1991) expand on this concept by revealing the notion of ‘‘perceived value’’ as ‘‘a cognitive tradeoff between perceived quality and sacrifice’’. In addition, perceived value has received considerable attention in the literature because of its influence on purchasing behavior of the consumer (Eastlick and Feinberg, 1999; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

Neverthe;ess, what is easily seen or known about the brand is just a part of what contributes to the consumer's overall response to the brand. For instance, the consumer's evaluation process continues during consumption. On a basic level, the service provided (core service) and the way in which the service is offered (via the behaviors of service providers) is evaluated. On a more abstract level, the feelings aroused while using the service and the extent to which the image of the service is matched with the consumer's own also influence their overall evaluation of the service brand.

At the basic level, the core service and employee service are closely related in that the core service refers to the processes by which the service is delivered whereas the employee service refers to the behaviors or performances of the employees in the delivery of the service (Johns, 1999). In terms of the core service, Danaher and Mattsson (1998) provide an example which can effect consumer evaluations that the relative degree and intensity of activities and interactions to waiting periods during the service delivery may impact on evaluations and the duration per se have an influence on rating outcomes.

At the abstract level, feelings play an important role in consumer decision-making. Babin and Babin (1999) argue that feelings have a profound effect on consumption experiences and consumer reactions. Jayanti (1995) supported that due to physical cues often being limited, the inclusion of feelings as a basis for service evaluation is warranted.

It is possible that affective responses towards service providers may explain incremental variance in service encounter evaluation compared to cold cognitions. Because most service encounters are typically characterized by lack of information, uncertainty and high perceived risk (Jayanti, 1995).

Moreover, Keller (1998) assumes that the personality and behavioral traits of both the product/service brand and the customer are reflected through the user's image, the usage situation and the brand's personality. User imagery indicates the perceptions' consumers hold of the type of person who uses the product or service (Keller, 1998). These attributes can be formed from the consumer's own experience of contact with brand purchasers or through the image portrayed via marketing communications. On the other hand, usage imagery describes the situational factors in which the brand is used, for example, time of day, month, year, location or type of activity. In summary, user and usage imagery reveal the stereotypical user of the product or service in the context within which it is used (Biel, 1993; Sirgy *et al*., 1997). This is the perceptions within these imageries that often guide the development of brand attributes (Plummer, 1984).

In summary, the brand experience and brand evidence of service brands represents much more than just the extrinsic cues (e.g., brand name, design, logo, communication, servicescape, and price). It also represents all of the brand dimensions of the service that affect the consumer's evaluation of the brand, for example, the core service provided, the behavior and appearance of employees. The degree to which the brand's personality matches that of the consumer and the feelings aroused during service usage all contribute to the consumer's perception of the service brand. These dimensions (both tangible and intangible) provide the body of brand evidence accessed by service consumers. Thus, brand evidence provides the foundation upon which consumer reacts to service brands.

From the above literature search, it is preliminarily deemed that brand evidence is made up of seven major components. They are brand name, price/value/money, servicescape, core service, employee service, feelings, and self-image congruence. Brand name was measured by two items proposed by Grace and O'Cass (2005). Employee service was measured by multiple item scales adapted from previous research (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Core service was scaled by five items from Grace and O'Cass (2005). Price/value for money was measured by four items adapted from Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Self-image congruence was used three-item scale proposed by Sirgy *et al*. (1997). Feelings measurement was adapted through Jayanti (1995) by three indicators. The result is shown below in table 1. The result can further be used to develop a questionnaire to collect consumers' perception towards the brand evidence.

Table 1: Summary of brand evidence diemmnsions

Dimension	Measurements	Sources
Brand name	This brand is famous This brand carries a sense of trust	Grace and O'Cass (2005)
Price/value/money	This brand provides a good service for the price. This brand offers value for money Using this service brand is economical.	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
Core service	The core service provided is desire. The core service provided is reliable. I can depend on this brand to provide good core service. This brand provides quality core service. The core service provided by the brand is superior.	Grace and O'Cass (2005)
Employee service	I receive prompt attention from the service employees. Employees of this service are always willing to help me. The employees of this service are never too busy to respond to my requests. I can trust the service employees I feel safe in my transactions with service employees. Employees of this service are friendly.	Cronin and Taylor (1992)
Feelings	I feel happy when using the service I feel confident when using the service I feel impressed when using the service.	Jayanti (1995)
Self-image	The image of brand name is consistent with my own self-image. Using the service of brand reflects my social status. Most customers of this brand are the same as my status.	Sirgy *et al.* (1997)

The above result is then used to formulate the questionnaire for data collection. To summarize the above mentioned, the question for this research is proposed as “What factors made up the brand evidence?” We explore this from the consumers’ perspective and use the bank customers as an example.

METHODOLOGY

The research process of this study is composed of the setting the research objective, followed by relevant literature research and adopting relevant research methodology including questionnaire design, data collection methods and data analysis. The research findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented at the end.

Quantitative research methods including factor analysis and multiple regression are utilized in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data for further analysis. The questionnaire was formulated according to the perceptual measures identified within the literature and adapted accordingly, and opinions from interviewed practitioners and consumers to make sure the comprehensiveness of the study.

In order to avoid ambiguity of the wording in the questionnaire, a pretest was undertaken before the questionnaire was finalized. Question items which were vague and not easily understood were modified or deleted. A total of 20 participants were asked to rate the questionnaires in terms of format, the measurements of all constructs, the customers information. The participants indicated minor wording issues and recommended the format to be more user friendly. The sampling frame is people who lived in the northern Taiwan area and over 20 years old prior to the interview. The sample method is snowball sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to the qualified respondents via trained personnel. A brief training and introduction on the objectives of the study to the data collection personnel were made prior to the questionnaire distribution in order to increase the response rate and make the questionnaire collection process smooth.

According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998), the sample size is suggested at the level of 5 to 10 respondents for each variable if the data set is to be factor analyzed, and the total sample size is advised to exceed 100. In addition, Hair *et al.,* (1998) also propose that the sample size to over 150 in order to be appropriate to obtain feasible solution. The questionnaire items for factor analysis are 20 and considering the possibility of no response and invalid questionnaires, we decided to use the upper bound to determine the sample size that is 200. In order to avoid invalid questionnaires, 20 more samples are included. Therefore the total questionnaires distributed were 220.

The questionnaires were delivered to customers using mall intercept approach in major business area in Taipei. The respondents were asked about their demographic information, including gender, age and occupation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The profile of respondents

There were 220 respondents took part in the survey. 200 questionnaires were considered valid. The proportion of male subjects was 47.2%, the proportion of female respondents was 53.8%. Respondents aged under 39 years old represent 69.6% of the sample. The majority of the respondents are people working in the service sector (40.3%).

Reliability

The reliability was first tested and Cronbach‘s alpha coefficient, an index to evaluate internal consistency, was calculated. Reliability analysis refers to the measurement of reliability is to measure the degree of consistency or stability. We used SPSS analysis software package to measure the value of Cronbach's alpha reliability of this questionnaire, It is suggested that the Alpha exceeds 0.7 threshold to be reliable, and lower than 0.3 indicating low reliability (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The Alpha coefficient in this study is 0.932, implying the high reliability of the questionnaire.

In order to understand the respondents' perception towards the brand evidence of retail bank, we undertake factor analysis summarize the parsimonious factors derived from the perception variables. Factor analysis is a multivariate statistical technique with an analysis of interdependence methods. It is used to summarize the information contained in a large number of variables into smaller number of factors in order to simplify the data set (Hair, Bush, and Ortinau, 2003). Before conducting the factor analysis, it is advised to know whether the data collected is suitable for factor analysis. the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was first estimated. According to Kasier (1974), if KMO is larger, it means there is more common factors among the variables and thus more suitable for factor analysis. If KMO is smaller than 0.5, it is not suitable for factor analysis. The KMO of the study is 0.929 indicating the data is appropriate to be factor analyzed. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity, a statistical test for the presence of correlations among variables, is undertaken. The chi square is 2933.798

($p<0.001$), showing statistical significance. It again means that the data set is suitable for factor analysis.

Factor analysis

To concentrate the effect of variables in research dimensions, every research variables are conducted with factor analysis. The scales were submitted to exploratory factor analysis. Using the principal component method, varimax rotation, and under the criteria of factor loading larger than 0.4 and eigenvalue larger than 1, four factors are extracted. The total variance explained is 63.253%, an acceptable level in most social science studies. The result is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Result of factor analysis

Items	Employee service	Core service	Self-image	Name	Price
I can trust the employees of this bank	.831				
I feel safe in my transactions with bank's employees	.825				
Employees of this bank are friendly	.810				
When using the service of this bank I feel happy	.801				
When using the service of this bank I feel confident	.753				
When using the service of this bank I feel impressed	.731				
Employees of this bank are always willing to help me	.566	.426			
The core service provided by this bank is reliable		.830			
I can depend on this bank to provide good core service		.819			
This bank provides quality core service		.805			
The core service provided by this bank suits my desires		.732			
The core service provided by this bank is		.713			

Items	Employee service	Core service	Self-image	Name	Price
superior					
Using the service of this bank reflects my social status			.820		
The image of this bank is consistent with my own self-image			.811		
Most customers of this bank are the same as my status			.759		
The brand name of the bank carries a sense of trust				.802	
The brand name of the bank is famous		.411		.778	
Using this banking service is economical					.751
This bank provides a good service for the price					.732
This bank offers value for money					.641

Originally, all items are deemed from six sub-constructs of brand evidence including brand name, core service, employee service, feelings, self-image congruence, and price/value/money. However, the result showed that they were extracted in five factors including employee service, core service, self-image congruence, name, and price. The only difference is that the first factor “employee service” was comprised of employee service and feelings. Factor two is core service; factor three is self-image congruence, factor four is brand name, and the factor five is price.

Convergent validity

In order to understand whether the research contains acceptable level of validity, we use a question item “Overall, I have a positive attitude towards the brand of the bank I most bank with.” as the dependent variable and the five extracted factors as the independent variables to run regression analysis. Using stepwise regression from SPSS, five models were identified and Adjusted R^2 for model 5 is 0.588 ($p<0.001$). The five models are listed as follows.

Model 1：$Q_{21}=0.376F_2+3.429$

Model 2：$Q_{21}=0.374F_2+0.337F_1+3.426$

Model 3：$Q_{21}=0.373F_2+0.335F_1+0.248F_3+3.428$

Model 4：$Q_{21}=0.371F_2+0.327F_1+0.246F_3+0.213F_4+3.422$

Model 5：$Q_{21}=0.370F_2+0.323F_1+0.242F_3+0.212F_4+0.221F_5+3.42$

Where Q_{21} represents“Overall, I have a positive attitude towards the brand of the bank I most bank with.”

F_1：employee service

F_2：core service

F_3：self-image congruence

F_4：brand name

F_5：price

The results indicate that the model was statistically significant, and the overall positive attitude towards the brand can be explained by the five factors extracted. Thus it is considered that the study demonstrates convergent validity.

Predictive validity

Using “I am willing to continue to bank with my bank” as the dependent variable and the four extracted factors as the independent variable, we run regression analysis. By using stepwise regression from SPSS, four models were identified and Adjusted R^2 for model 5 is 0.487 ($p<0.001$). The five models are listed as follows.

Model 1：$Q_{22}=0.438\ F_3+2.891$

Model 2：$Q_{22}=0.438\ F_3+0.326F_1+2.891$

Model 3：$Q_{22}=0.437\ F_3+0.326F_1+0.228F_2+2.892$

Model 4：$Q_{22}=0.436\ F_3+0.325F_1+0.226F_2+0.145F_4+2.893$

Model 5：$Q_{22}=0.436F_3+0.325F_1+0.225F_2+0.142F_4+0.111F_5+2.891$

Where Q_{22}:“I am willing to continue to bank with my bank”

F_1：employee service

F_2：core service

F_3：self-image congruence

F_4：brand name

F_5：price

The results indicate that the model was statistically significant, and the five extracted factors can be used to predict the consumers’ intention to continue their relationship with the bank. Consequently, the study demonstrates predictive validity.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The result from factor analysis showed that brand evidence is made up of five factors termed employee service, core service, self-image congruence, name, and price. The factor employee service was composed by employee service and feelings. This can be explained that banking customers appreciate employee service of a service brand thank to the two elements. Partly, the process of customer evaluations about brand evidence prior to purchase will be based on how the service is provided and the interaction between service staffs and customers. These interactions with employees, or the moment of truth, create customers' feelings. Therefore, in this research employee service and feelings were categorized under the same factor and named employee service. This result is supported by recent researches that brand evidence is created by the perception of the consumers, at every moment of contact they have with personal contact (Alloza, 2008). This also resembles the finding that brand evidence results from feelings and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's communications and environments (Brakus *et al*., 2009). It further supports the findings from the current study.

I has been observed that human interaction in service delivery is an important determining factor of customer satisfaction (Reeves and Bednar, 1996). The consumers' preferences toward face-to-face interaction versus computer transactions vary depending on demographics of the consumer and characteristics of the financial products and services (Lee, 2002). In addition, there has been a rise in professional service providers who help customers with transactions that are perceived to be "too technical, too important, or too difficult to be made oneself" (Kimball *et al*., 1997). Therefore, a professional employee service still exists as an efficient instrument to foster financial service (Schlager *et al*., 2011). In order to approach a professional employee service, the employees must be satisfied with their job so they will deliver excellent service to make customer satisfaction. Previous research has confirmed that job satisfaction can have a significant impact on service quality and, ultimately, on customer perceptions of service quality (Snipes *et al*., 2005). It is proposed some managerial implications for service brand especially for financial service.

Financial companies need to actively manage the employee service because it assists in the creation of a company's service brand. In implementing this, it is important to deliver value to employees that improve the level of employee satisfaction and result in good performance in their jobs, which will positively influence customers' experiences in the employee-customer interaction. Many managers believed the way to motivating service employees is to reward workers with money, bonuses, or raises (Timmreck, 2001).

Nevertheless, the work itself can provide job satisfaction because the task is fulfilling or enjoyable. Intrinsic job satisfaction may be psychological rewards employees get simply from doing their jobs. It may be that when service staffs are intrinsically motivated by their jobs, they look for optimal ways to serve customers. This type of motivation is quite different from extrinsic motivation which is about the material value one gets from others such as pay raises and bonuses. Although extrinsic motivations are important, they are normally not enough to keep service employees at their best (Snipes *et al*., 2005). It is suggested that managers should increase intrinsic job satisfaction as employees' perception of the job itself which may have a larger influence on service quality than other satisfaction factors. Aspects regarding to pay, contingent rewards, and operations have less of an effect on employees' service performance than intrinsic dimensions. It is explained that with extrinsic motivation, employees focus more on the rewards rather than the work itself, so work only well enough to get the rewards (Snipes *et al*., 2005). In addition, it is supported that financial services are quintessentially knowledge-intensive business (Grant and Venzin, 2009). Human resource management has to provide training opportunities to employees frequently, the environment for creativity and mentoring its.

Banks should build a social culture that focuses on friendly relationships among coworkers, adopt a "people-first" attitude, and offer interesting and challenging tasks for workers. Aforementioned, core service made up brand evidence, financial institutions should invest more to improve and expand core service. The financial products and services vary depending on customers' needs. Beside the current services such as loan, saving account, credit card, financial companies develop other services such as insurance, investment account. Insurance services should be variety with asset of basic demands such as motor vehicle insurance and homeowner's/renter's insurance; and another kinds of insurances regarding to health and income such as life insurance, disability income insurance are increasingly concerned (Lee, 2002). In term of investment accounts, financial institutions should consult those types of accounts in developed countries such as annuity accounts, retirement savings plan, asset management/investment management account, and packaged/ relationship banking accounts (Lee, 2002). In addition, financial institutions need to provide their products and services through different channels of delivery to meet the variety needs of customers (Krishnan *et al*., 1999). Since the right choice of channels of delivery can facilitate not just the marketing of products and services but also long-term relationship building (Baker *et al*., 1998). According to the results of T-test (table 5 and 6) that young generation was more appreciation the role of core service than old generation.

Therefore, financial companies should investigate a right mix of products and services to a right segment of customers to attract more purchasers. Furthermore, this is recommended that managers should indentify which types of customers desire which financial products and services and which types of delivery channels human interaction or computer transaction. The purpose here is providing the right mix of financial products and services to the right segment of customers through the right channels of delivery. In general, financial institutions should provide various their products and services to the right mix of segment customers through different delivery channels to meet the different demands of customers. The right choice of products and services with the right delivery channels can facilitate not only the marketing of products but also long term relationship building.

Self-image congruence plays an important role in determining customers' experiences. The higher congruity between brand personality, customers' self-concept and his/her image of other customers related to more stimulating, exciting, enjoyable, and interesting of brand experiences (Hosany and Martin, 2012). Financial marketers should develop distinctive brand positions reinforcing the perceived image/personality of the typical financial customers. Marketers should also develop an image closely matching the self-perception of potential customers. Financial marketers must adapt their advertising messages to target customers' self-concept. In addition, managers need to understand the role of self-image congruence, experiences in explaining word-of-mouth information. This finding suggested self-image congruence influences customers' experiences and through perception predicts intention to recommend. Creating positive impression generates higher perception levels and positively influences customers' behavioral intentions (Hosany and Martin, 2012).

The result inferred that brand name is factor of brand evidence. Therefore, understanding the driver that contribute to and detract from the strengthening of brand evidence is critical. Prior research suggested that by using an original, creative and different advertising strategy, companies can develop higher brand awareness and position perceptions of their brands (Buil *et al*., 2011). Several managerial implications arise from these results. Advertising is an important marketing communication tool for service companies influencing brand evidence. Marketing strategy should be invested to increase higher awareness of customers on brand image. Financial companies should pay attention to the design of their advertising campaigns, ensuring they are attractive and creative. Finally, managers should pay attention to the causal order among brand equity dimensions.

Managers have to first build brand awareness as a mean of anchoring the different associations consumers have of a brand such as perceived value, personality or perceived quality. Later, managers should focus on brand associations as a way of generating greater brand reputation.

Fuelled by the realization that brands contribute greatly to the overall value of firm's assets, and strengthening brand reputation is necessary in service branding context. However, to date the theme of branding in the context of banking services in emerging country has received very little attention. Therefore, in achieving empirical validation, the model about what factors made up brand evidence and how consumer perceives service quality according to demographic variables have made significant contributions to the existing service branding theory in financial sector. This model allows current understanding that employee service is important to boost brand evidence.

However, the study is not without limitations. Since the research is at its preliminary stage, it can be further strengthened by increasing the sample size and including participants in other geographical areas, considering the effect that consumption behavior may be affected by different regions. In addition, this study was only conducted towards one bank; future research can be conducted on some more banks, so the results will be compared according to rich dimensions.

CONCLUSION

In the study the dimensions of customer perceive brand evidence are explored, and thus provide directions for retail bank practitioners to enhance the customer perceived brand evidence. In the theoretical aspect, the result helps to establish a foundation for future development of a customer perceived brand evidence measurement scale specifically suitable for the retail banking industry in other contexts. It can also provide a theoretical base for further investigation on the relationship amongst brand evidence and other constructs.

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