DEPARTMENT STORE PERSONALITY: SCALE DEVELOPMENT, ANTECEDENTS AND IMPACT ON CONSUMER-BASED RETAILER EQUITY

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to i) develop and validate a scale for measuring department store personality, ii) investigate the impact of store personality antecedents on department store personality, and iii) examine the impact of department store personality on consumer-based retailer equity. Using principal component analysis with varimax rotation (n = 335) five underlying department store personality dimensions were identified namely "sophistication", "empathy", "dependability", "authenticity", and "vibrancy". Another new and independent sample set (n = 355) was used to validate the scale dimensions and examine the rest two objectives of this study.

The stepwise regression used to examine impact of store personality antecedents on department store personality dimensions showed that the antecedents including store ambience, product style and variety, general attitudes toward the retailer, and store name and carried brand name have positive significant impact on department store personality scale dimension *sophistication*. The same impact is revealed for the antecedents including store ambience, service quality of the store, word-of-mouth, general attitudes toward the retailer, and store name and carried brand name on the scale dimension *empathy*. The antecedents including store ambience, product quality, word-of-mouth, general attitudes toward the retailer, and store name and carried brand name have positive significant impact on the scale dimension *dependability*. The antecedents namely, product quality, product style and variety, service quality of the store , advertisement, general attitudes toward the retailer, and store name and carried brand name have positive significant impact on the scale dimension *authenticity*. Finally, the antecedents, namely, store ambience, product style and variety, word-of-mouth, general attitudes toward the retailer, and store name and carried brand name also have significant positive influence on the scale dimension *vibrancy*.

Finally, the results of structural equation modeling used for studying the impact of department store personality on consumer-based retailer equity revealed that three department store personality dimensions, *sophistication, empathy* and *dependability* have significant positive impact on each dimension of consumer-based retailer equity with the exception of one impact (*empathy → retailer loyalty)*. The rest two department store personality dimensions namely *authenticity and vibrancy* have no impact on consumer-based retailer equity dimensions.

Keywords: Department store personality, Scale development, Scale validation, Store personality antecedents, Consumer-based retailer equity.