The Impact of Organizational Dress on Employees' Cognition, Organizational Management and Brand Image – with Reference

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ABSTRACT

Historically, much controversy has existed for supporting and opposing the issue of " uniform." An undeniable fact is, however, that many corporations are still investing considerable money, manpower and other resources in the management of staff's uniforms in this 21st century emphasizes personal style and self ego. Financial, insurance and securities companies, in particular, are having a high proportion that adopts uniform-wearing practice. In this financial era where cross-selling is used to maximize synergy, the first impression established by front-line staff at the retail channels of banks will affect the overall brand image of the financial holdings company and the willingness their clients would continue dealing with them. The uniform that front-line staff wear is an important element of the latent clue, that is, customers will consider the uniform as an image-forming factor or clue. Therefore, this study takes retailing bank branches under financial holdings corporations as the subjects to explore employees' perception of uniform and its relation with organizational management. It also attempts to understand the effect that uniform has on brand image from the customers' perspective. For internal staff, the sample was taken from medium-ranked staff members of retailing banks under six major financial holdings corporations in Taiwan. Each bank was given 55 copies of questionnaire, totaling 330 copies. A total of 287 valid responses were collected, representing a response rate of 87%. For external customers, those who have used the services of the sampled branches of retailing banks were taken as survey targets. Two hundred copies of questionnaire were issued, and 167 were returned, -viirepresenting a response rate of 83.5%. One-sample t-test and ANOVA were conducted on survey results of employees' perception and organizational management. And the results show that uniform has a significant positive relation with self-assertiveness, group cohesiveness, group members' identity, organizational values and organizational manpower hierarchy. Significant differences between individual banks were also found for the effect of uniform on their internal staff and organizational management, which meant that different uniforms of the banks exerted different degrees of impact on employees' perception and the emergence of organizational values. For the opinions of external customers, this study made descriptive analysis of the survey results. It was found that consumers tended to " agree" with the brand association, brand awareness and brand symbolization, etc. created by the uniforms as shown by the mean values. Moreover, regardless of sex, age, income and education, etc., customers of all levels had highly consistent perception of the brand image created by the uniforms, indicating a significant impact of uniform on brand image. The following conclusions were obtained from the findings of this study: (1) Uniform has a highly significant effect on the transmission of organizational values. It is a good management tool to control employees' behaviors, to make them aware of their identity as the legal representatives of the organization, to urge them to observe the organizational code and play the role as required by the organization. The industry is recommended to put more attention on the effect that uniform has on organizational management. At the same time,-viiiemployees' satisfaction with the uniform's appearance should also be taken into consideration, which will enhance the overall effect. (2) The uniform worn by front-line staff of retailing banks is the first gist of establishing the corporate brand. It makes customers associate and be aware of the corporation. Uniform is made an extension of the company's service image, which helps achieve the objective of marketing communication. The industry is suggested to see uniform as an important activity that represents the organization, to make effective use of the uniqueness and thematic nature of uniform, so as to achieve the double objectives of brand building and organizational management.

Keywords: uniform, organizational dress, organizational management, brand image, financial holdings

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