

THE STUDY OF PRODUCT PRICE EFFICACY ON CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTION

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to study the effect of five different dimensions of price image on shopping intentions in different kinds of stores. In this study, 306 participants of three Isfahan stores were selected from a list consisted of 18 retailers. Based on these data, a multi-group analysis was done on Mplus with the use of covariance structure in order to examine the direct and indirect effects of five dimensions of product price image on shopping intentions. It shows the differences resulting from the structures of the stores. The effect of product price image is different in various stores. The results is related to some applied concepts of commodity pricing in retails. For instance, retailers should not only focus on the price level. Also, retailers should allocate different priorities to each dimensions of price image.

Keywords: Pricing, Price Image, Store, Customer's Behavior

1 Introduction

Retailers compete with each other on the price of goods. Empirical studies show that price is an important factor in selecting a grocery store (Tigert, 1983). Also, a price perception is an inseparable part of retailers' price image (Lindquist, 1974/1975).

Current development in food retail will raise the importance of the price. Particularly in Europe, traditional retailers are subject to the rapid development of auctions (Colla, 2003). From customers' point of view, auctions give lower price in relation to traditional retails (Mitchell and Kiral, 1999; Morschett et al., 2006).

Therefore, retailers will maintain their positions with introducing economical store brands (Moreau, 2006c, 2007). In such a situation, it is very important that the retail managers measure the price image of their own store. This task will help the retail managers to identify the difference between their suggested price and customers' suggested price. A measurement of price image is very important in recording the effects of different strategies of pricing (Downs and Haynes, 1984). However, retailers should not only measure the price image because one researcher showed that price image and satisfaction of price are multi parameters (Zielke, 2006). Therefore, retailers should make a decision that which dimensions are more important. Some retailers should pay more attention to the image of price level, but other ones should pay attention to the customers' perception of the money value. An image of price level will point to the customers' perception of expensive or cheap selling of a store. Money value is referred to a customer's perception of his or her payments (Price-performance ratio). Also, retailers should be aware of the effect of price perceptibility, price processing, and price evaluation certainty on shopping intentions. This study replies to the above questions with analyzing the efficacy of five dimensions of a price image on shopping intentions. Previous studies showed approximately the behavioral effects of price image dimensions (Zielke, 2006). In the previous studies, the elements were not completely developed and prices were used as a central dependent variable. Therefore, this study will expand the previous study with the use of new methods of measuring the price image and modelling the direct effects of price image dimensions on shopping intentions.

Different dimensions of a price image are in relation with each other. Therefore, if only direct effects were analyzed on the shopping intentions, the results of this analysis are illusive. For instance, a perceptibility of a price level is prior to the perceived value. This task would affect significantly the perceptibility of the price level which was moderated with the perceived value.

Therefore, being awareness of such indirect effects needs gathering information about real parameters relating to the price image. This article will study these effects. In previous studies, only the relationship between the selected price images was analyzed. Therefore, in this article, a researcher is aimed to complete those studies with analyzing some indirect effects in a comprehensive model. Analyzing these direct and indirect effects is illusive without considering the differences of store structures. Structure of different stores are different in price and pricing (Morschett et al., 2006). This study shows that the dimension effects of price image can be different in different stores. In the previous studies, researchers did not regard the moderating role of store structures. Managers should be aware of the moderating effect of the store structures. For instance, if a value perception for a shopping intention were very important in auctions, managers of such stores should use their energy on this dimension and not on the perceptibility of the price level. Therefore, this study will analyze the effect of store structures on moderating the effects of price image dimensions on shopping intention to develop the previous studies. In summary, this article will analyze the direct and indirect effects of five price image dimensions on the shopping intention in different structures of stores. In this article, the researchers expanded the previous studies with the following steps.

- 1) Finding a new way for measuring the price image
- 2) Building a model for direct effects of price image dimensions on shopping intentions
- 3) Analyzing some indirect effects in a comprehensive model
- 4) Considering the moderating effects of a store structure

2 Theoretical Background

Nystrom (1970) was the first person who studied on the price image of the retail. He defined a price image as a buyer's reaction toward a price of goods. Similarly, most researchers defined a price image with a single dimension such as a low price or an image of price level. In recent studies, a price image is defined as a multi-dimensional hidden variable (Zielke, 2006). Based on this belief, a price image is a multi-dimensional hidden variable which is included of various perception dimensions which are in relation to a retailer's prerequisites on pricing and its results. It seems that this definition shows the price image better than other definitions. Previous studies will help people in understanding the price image of retailing. In the first study, researchers showed the effect of different groups of products in price image of retailing and defined a price image as a price of stores. In the second study, researchers explained what retailers should do at the time of low prices. In this study, the prerequisites of the price image were explained in retailing. In the third study, researchers paid attention more to the analysis of structures relating to the price rather than the perceptibility of the price level. Therefore, they paid attention more to the money value (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001) or the fairness of prices (Campbell, 1999; Homburg et al., 2005 e.g. Kahneman et al., 1986). A final study was mixed with a third study in a way that the perceptibility of a price and a price image were assumed in a multi-dimensional way (Zielke, 2006).

Recent studies are based on the multi-dimensional studies specially, the results of Zielke who identified some dimensions of the price image such as the perceptibility of a price level, money value, perceptibility of a commodity price, price processing, and evaluating certainty. The present study is aimed to expand this study with improving measurement of a price image and the analysis of direct and indirect effects of price image dimensions on shopping intentions in a comprehensive model and moderating effects of a store structure.

3 Price Image Dimensions

It is essential to define these kinds of dimensions before expanding the assumptions relating to the behavioral effect of

price image dimensions. Based on over-viewing the previous studies and an empirical study, five dimensions of a price image were selected. These five dimensions were included of the perceptibility of a price level, money value, price perceptibility, price processing, and evaluation certainty. Based on the obtained results of the previous studies, other suggested dimensions such as an image of special suggestions, fairness of a price, and emotional factors were removed. The previous study showed that these parameters cannot be clearly independent of five dimensions of a price image. Five dimensions of a price image can be defined as follows:

- 1) Perceptibility of a price level means perceiving a price without considering a difference in product quality. In stores and retails, perceptibility of a price level is like the image of a price level. For one kind of product, perceptibility of a price level is obtained from comparing the product prices with a standard price which is called a reference price. This result can be in accordance with the image of a price level of retails. Most authors have suggested some rules for this case.
- 2) Money value is usually defined with a difference in received and paid goods or services (Emery, 1969; Dodds and Monroe, 1985; Zeithaml, 1988). In a domain of retailing, money value is equal to the gain and loss obtained from a product and qualitative attributes of a store. Customers may regard nonfinancial expenses of a purchase process as a loss like the price of goods (Zeithaml, 1988; Gijsbrechts, 1993; Baker et al., 2002). Although it seems that perceptibility of a price level and a money value are related to each other, a retailing store can have completely different behavior on these two dimensions. For instance, meat price seems cheap for a major buyer like an owner of a restaurant, but the meat itself is not worthwhile. However this person may find expensive drink prices of his or her favorite store acceptable.
- 3) Perceptibility of a price is as easy as accessing to the prices of goods in stores. Previous studies showed clearly the importance of price tags in improving the perceptibility of a price (Zielke, 2006).
- 4) Price processing is as easy as analyzing the prices specially, when the price of similar goods are compared (Zielke, 2006). While labeling is prior to the perceptibility of a price, price processing are dependent to the announcement of commodity prices of the stores. Therefore, if big and red price tags are used in the stores, great achievements will be obtained in the domain of perceptibility of a price. On the other hand, no achievement will be accessed in the domain of price processing.
- 5) Evaluation certainty means that how customers do the process of price evaluation (Zielke, 2006). Since the price evaluation of products is difficult for customers, overall evaluation of prices of one store is more difficult. In retailing stores, there are no clear way for evaluating the prices because the customers' knowledge of prices are not a lot and being aware of various prices is very difficult (Desai and Talukdar, 2003). If prices were perceived and processed, evaluation certainty would be weak due to the overtime changes in prices or price differences between different products. Therefore, evaluation certainty is dependent from other dimensions of a price image in retailing.

The structure of Retailing Stores

The structures of stores are defined as the special advantages that the stores give to the customers for satisfying their needs.

In Europe, auctions and different kinds of big stores are identified as retailing market. In addition, structures such as weekly markets and organic grocery stores are existent. These structures will be analyzed in the following part. As you can see, the effect of different dimensions of a price image is potentially different in auction structures, big stores, organic grocery stores, and weekly markets. In auctions, foods are sold with a very low price.

Products that are of high inventory turnover and limited categories, sizes, and brands are usually sold in the auctions. An area of these kinds of stores is less than 1500 square meters. Also, in these kinds of stores, less than 1500 products are presented to people. Sometimes, auctions are called as a big store which less various products are sold in. Some kinds of these stores are like Aldi, Dia, Lidl, and US-chain Save-a-Lot (Zentes et al., 2007). Big stores are included of different subsets. In conventional big stores, a lot of foodstuffs which are 30000 kinds are sold. The area of these kinds of stores is between 400 and 1000 square meters. There are some differences among superstores, hypermarkets, and big stores. In superstores, approximately 30000 to 40000 kinds of products are presented, but in hypermarkets, more than 40000 kinds of products are presented. The area of supermarkets is between 1000 and 5000 square meters, but the area of hypermarkets is more than 5000 square meters. Some of these stores are like Auchan, Carrefour, and Metro (Zentes et al., 2007).

Although clear differences are identified among big stores, superstores, and hypermarkets in many books, it is sometimes difficult to that in practice. For instance, retailers such as Edeka, Rewe, Swiss Coop, and Tesco use the name of their company in different kinds of stores. A difference between different kinds of stores is not clear and it is different in various sources. Organic grocery stores are stores which present specified kinds of products with a based price level. Organic products are produced with processes are adoptable with nature. These kinds of products are not included of pesticides, preservatives, and other chemical materials (Chinnici et al., 2002). Like big stores, different kinds of these stores are existent. Traditionally, a size of these kinds of stores is small. Also, these kinds of stores are controlled with independent retailers. Nowadays, more organic products are produced in industrial farms. Also, these kinds of products are sold in chain organic grocery stores (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). For instance, in Alnatatura which is one kind of Germany store and its area is 550 square meters, 6000 kinds of products are presented. In northern America and British, 20000 kinds of food stuffs are sold in stores which their areas are 3000 square meters. Anyway, in Europe, normal organic grocery stores are kinds of stores which organic products are sold exclusively in. Public markets are places which small and dependent sellers sell different kinds of products. Since these kinds of markets are held weekly, these kinds of markets are also called weekly markets. In weekly markets, some of the farmers, local producers, and independent traders sell fresh groceries like fruit, vegetable, flower, meet, fish, egg, and dairy products. Farmers' markets are one subset of weekly markets in which local farmers sell fruit and vegetables. Although the product variety of these kinds of markets is limited to fresh products, a customer can buy the products from different producers. Prices in these kinds of markets are between low prices which are identified by independent traders and based prices which are identified by the farmers of organic products. The size of these kinds of markets is based on the place that they are held in. Recent studies show the difference among four kinds of stores such as auctions, stores, organic grocery stores, and weekly markets. Table 1 shows the difference among these four kinds of stores.

Table 1. Difference among auctions, stores, organic grocery stores, and weekly markets

style	Auctions	Stores	Organic Grocery stores	Weekly Markets
Price	Very low	Low-Average	High	Low-High
The Amount of Decoration	Less	Moderate- a lot	Less-Moderate	Moderate- a lot
Variety	Less	Moderate-A lot	Less-Moderate	Less-Moderate
Size	Small	Average-big	Small-Average	Small-Big

This table can be used for stores like usual stores, superstores, and hypermarkets.

4 Assumptions

In the previous part, five dimensions of the retailing price image which were perceptibility of the price level, money value, price processing, and evaluation certainty were defined. In fact, these dimensions are not independent. This phenomenon is not unusual. Other multidimensional structures are of separated and related dimensions. In this part, these correlations are discussed and the assumptions toward these dimensions are expanded. Based on the previous studies, it seems that these five dimensions have direct effect on the shopping intention. Price level is an important criterion in selecting the stores (Tigert, 1983). Price level is now regarded a lot in Europe due to the achievements obtained in auctions (Colla, 2003). Also, these things show that the decisions are made by retailers and people who give services to people are affected by the money value. Price perceptibility and processing are related to the easiness in buying and non-cash expenses in buying process. Previous studies focus on this idea that shopping intentions are affected by the easiness in buying and non-cash expenses in the buying process. Since uncertainty will lead to the risk in buying, evaluation certainty has an effect on the shopping intention. Customers can decrease this kind of risk with buying from stores which their prices are exact.

H1: Price level, money value, perceptibility of a price, price processing, and evaluation certainty have a direct and positive effect on the shopping intention of people.

Also, a lot of indirect effects are existent in the process of forming the price image. Therefore, it seems that analyzing the relationships among these five dimensions is important. First, perceptibility of a price should have a positive effect on the money value. Such relationship is adoptable with the definition of the value and its samples can be seen in this study.

H2: Perceptibility of a price level has a positive effect on the money value.

Money value will overlap financial losses. Therefore, perceptibility of the price, price processing, and evaluation certainty will decrease moral, physical, and non-cash expenses. These expenses are the nonfinancial elements of the price. Therefore, these kinds of expenses should have effect on the money value. It should be mentioned that the previous studies were unsuccessful in studying the relationship between the non-cash expenses and the money value (Baker et al., 2002).

Also, the results of Baker and his coworkers' study should be proved in different situations. Baker and his coworkers studied these kinds of relationships on a card and gift store with the use of a CCTV camera. They understood that in these stores, there were less relationships among moral, physical, and non-cash expenses in relation to small supermarkets because economical prices are more important in small supermarkets (Babin et al., 1994).

H3: Price perceptibility has a positive effect on the perception of money value.

H4: Price processing has a positive effect on the perception of money value.

H5: Evaluation certainty has a positive effect on the perception of money value.

In addition, different relationships among perceptibility of a price, price processing, and price estimation should be discussed. In the first step, we can say that the perceptibility of a price has a positive effect on the price processing. This hypothesis was concluded from the processing model of information (Zeithaml, 1988).

H6: Perceptibility of the price has a positive effect on the price processing.

Also, it is assumed that perceptibility of the price and price processing are effective on the evaluation certainty. Difficulty in learning and processing information in relation to the price will lead to the price uncertainty. This assumption is proved with the previous writings. A researcher whose name was Zeithaml proved that brands will lead to the accuracy increase in price remind. Also, an organized list of product prices will lead to the accuracy improvement in comparison of prices. Zielke also observed the significant effect of price perceptibility and processing on the estimation certainty.

H7: Price perceptibility has a positive effect on the evaluation certainty.

H8: Price processing has a positive effect on the evaluation certainty.

One of the effects of price level image on the evaluation certainty is formulated into a hypothesis. This hypothesis is based on this discussion that low prices can be processed very easy, but the higher prices should be processed with the quality estimation of services and goods.

H9: Price level perceptibility has a positive effect on the evaluation certainty.

Previous relation will affect the price level and processing. Studies which were done on the unit price showed that the utility of the unit price will lead to the selection of an economical product and customers will buy cheaper products. Other authors proved that in the stores, the structure of shelves will affect selecting the cheaper products. Therefore, if cheap products of the stores were not hidden in the beneath shelves, the relation between the price of one product to the overall price level could be affected a lot at by the customers.

H10: Price processing has a positive effect on the perception of price level.

In figure 1, you saw a model which was build based on the tenth hypothesis. This structural model shows that there should be indirect effects as well as direct effects. Therefore, the first assumption cannot be expanded. Also, it would be considerable if the first hypothesis were rejected by some data.

H11: Price level perception, money value, price perceptibility, price processing, and evaluation certainty have great direct and indirect positive effects on the shopping intention of people.

Assumptions were already based on this idea that the dimensions of a price image have various direct and indirect effects on the shopping intention of people in retail stores.

Although some of these effects were discussed in previous studies, a comprehensive model was not prepared for all of these effects.

In addition, the effect of store structures on changing the relationships is not discussed here. It seems that the relations among dimensions of price image in different store structures like auctions, big stores, organic grocery stores, and weekly stores are different. Although we considered all of the above assumptions into our model, it would not be possible to discuss each effect in these four stores. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, it is discussed about the general idea toward the moderating effects. In auctions, the effect of price level is less than other kinds of stores. Since a low price is a main criterion of such stores, customers and people who are not customers look at this kind of stores as cheap stores. Also, in organic grocery stores, there should not be a lot of variations in the price level. Possibly, all customers think that the prices of organic grocery stores are higher than other stores. In big stores, conditions are

very different because a price level and pricing tactics are different in these kinds of stores. Weekly stores act like big stores. In big stores and weekly stores, a price level is more important than auctions and organic grocery stores. In auctions, money value is important because some of the customers have a bad view toward the relationship between the low price and the quality of goods. Therefore, this view will lead to the decrease in money value. Price perceptibility and processing is important in big stores because more stuffs are sold in these kinds of stores. Therefore, purchasing from big stores is time-consuming. Also, comparing the prices in big stores is difficult. Price perceptibility and processing are very important in weekly markets because setting a price is more unclear in these kinds of stores and a customer may be make a decision to compare a price of different sellers. Here, predicting the difference of the evaluation certainty is difficult. Therefore, these kinds of effects should be analyzed too because the effect of the parameters is a lot.

H12: Behavioral effects resulting from the price level money value, price perceptibility and processing, and evaluation certainty are different in various stores.

5 Criteria

In the previous studies, a measuring tool was used for evaluating the five dimensions of the price image (Zielke, 2006). Some of

the price dimensions are measured analytically with the measuring tools, but other price dimensions are measured structurally with the measuring tools. This subject is a little complicated because structural and analytical measurements should be analyzed differently. Therefore, researchers make a decision to expand the analytical measurements with the existent measuring tools. One of the measuring tools was expanded based on the dimensions of the price image and previous studies. In the first pretest, researchers studied the clearness of all parameters. The second pretest was conducted with 75 students. Based on the results of the second pretest, some of the parameters were amended, substituted, or removed. In the final step, all the dimensions of the price image are measured with three, four, or five parameters. Also, seven options were considered for these measurements. The first option is completely disagree and the seventh option is completely agree. Measuring tools of this example are as follows:

In sum, prices were very low (Price level). With regard to the money that I had and a commodity that I wanted to buy, prices were suitable (Money value) and very easily readably (Price perceptibility). In this kind of store, a comparison of different commodity prices is very difficult (Price processing). Therefore, I can easily evaluate this store based on its commodity prices (evaluation certainty). A complete list of measuring tools is shown in table 2.

Table 2. Measuring Tools

Price Level	In sum, Prices of goods were very low.
	In sum, prices of goods were very high.
	You can buy your groceries from here with cheap prices.
	In this store, prices are cheaper than other stores.
Money Value	In this store, prices are more expensive than other stores.
	With regard to the money that I have and a commodity that I want to buy, prices are suitable.
	With regard to the money that I have and a commodity that I want to buy, prices are high.
	In this store, money has a good value.
Price perceptibility	In this store, a ratio of a price to the store efficiency is very good in relation to other stores.
	In this store, a ratio of a price to the store efficiency is very low in relation to other stores.
	Prices are easily readable.
	You can easily understand that what the price of your product is.
Price Processing	In this store, we cannot easily identify the prices of goods in relation to other stores.
	In this store, comparing different commodity prices is very difficult.
	It takes a lot of time to find the most suitable commodity.
Evaluation Certainty	In this store, the prices are more than other stores.
	I can easily evaluate the efficiency of this store based on its commodity prices.
	I cannot easily evaluate the efficiency of this store based on its commodity prices.
Shopping Intention	In this store, evaluating the prices of goods is difficult.
	I should buy most of my stuffs from this store.
	I should buy most of my stuffs from other stores.
	I should consider this store for buying my stuffs too.
	I should not consider this store for buying my stuffs.

6 Methodology

Assumptions were examined manually. Information was gathered by the students of European university. These students interviewed with people who bought regularly groceries and considered their age, sex, the number of their family members, and their income. Also, some of the participants filled the questionnaires at home. Then, these questionnaires were gathered by the students or sent by the post to the research team. Therefore, participants could answer these questionnaires without any haste.

It is asked participants to choose three retail stores which their prices are very different in relation to other stores. Then, these participants should rank these retail stores with a measuring tool. The order of questions was in a way that they did not have any effect on the participants' answers. Also, participants did not understand of multidimensional aspect of price image. It was not obligatory asked participants to choose the stores that they know

and buy from because this task will make closer this situation to the real situation in practice. In real conditions, a customer will face some options which know some and does not know others. For instance, if a customer bought regularly his or her stuffs from one auction, he or she would have a price image from that store. Therefore, when he or she wants to buy something from that store, he or she will consider the prices of other stores. Customers should buy their stuffs from a store which their prices are suitable for them even if they buy or do not buy their stuffs from that store. Also, customers have a price image from the stores they buy or do not buy their stuffs from. Although 306 questionnaires were gathered, 918 measurements were obtained from the price image because each participant had to answer to questions about three stores. 21.7 percent of people chose the stores which they always bought their stuffs from. 27.6 percent of people chose the stores which they sometimes bought their stuffs from. 50.7 percent of people chose the stores which they rarely bought their stuffs from. Questions relating to daily and repetitive purchases show that participants have the competency

to answer the questions. The participants' age average was 36 years old. 62 percent of participants were women and 61 percent of participants were from families which their members were two or more than two persons. Participants' income average was 1 to 1.5 million Toman.

7 Results

7.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 shows the amount of average and standard deviation of five dimensions of a price image and shopping intention. Descriptive statistics shows that a perception of a price image is

very different among different structures of the stores. Considerably, auctions had the best price image and other stores were similar to each other with a little difference in their structures. For instance, the prices of big stores were identified cheaper than weekly markets and organic grocery stores. Also, a money value of these three stores is similar. From the perspective of price perceptibility and processing, weekly markets were set in the lower rank than other kinds of stores. In weekly markets and organic grocery stores, Evaluation certainty was similar, but it was less than auctions and big stores.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Dimensions of Price Image and shopping Intention

Dimensions	Total N=918		Auctions N=339		Big Stores N=364		Organic Foods N=143		Weekly Markets N=72	
	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation
Price Level	4.28	1.95	6.29	0.78	3.61	1.26	1.95	0.89	2.78	1.22
Money Value	5.01	1.32	5.94	0.90	4.47	1.22	4.42	1.29	4.57	1.04
Price Perceptibility	5.23	1.29	5.53	1.28	5.30	1.16	4.89	1.30	4.20	1.36
Price Processing	4.84	1.53	5.76	1.14	4.41	1.41	4.36	1.43	3.69	1.67
Evaluation certainty	5.14	1.43	5.86	1.05	5.05	1.24	4.17	1.62	4.13	1.57
shopping Intention	4.98	1.72	6.01	1.25	4.53	1.63	3.89	1.83	4.50	1.27

7.2 The Validity of Convergence and Separation

In the first step, the convergence validity of each price image dimension and shopping intention were confirmed with their Cronbach alphas. The validity of these dimensions were more than 0.7. Researchers such as Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) stated that an appropriate amount for price level (PL), money level (VAL), price perceptibility (PPC), price processing (PPR),

evaluation certainty (EC), and shopping intention (SI) are respectively 0.97, 0.89, 0.825, 0.86, 0.84, and 0.92. Then, the separation validity of the price image dimensions were tested with an analysis of a confirmed factor. Also, Mplus program was analyzed by the MLR estimator. Based on the writings, the amount of processing indexes are acceptable. Table 4 shows that the variance of a price image dimension is more than the correlation square of this dimension and other dimensions.

Table 4. Separation Validity

Dimensions		PL	VAL	PPC	PPR	EC
Price Level	PL	84.5				
Money Value	VAL	56.7	63.1			
Price Perceptibility	PPC	11.1	22.4	60.6		
Price Processing	PPR	32.8	39.3	35.2	67.4	
Evaluation Certainty	EC	31.1	33.9	22.2	32.6	64.3

7.3 Behavioral Relationships among Price Image Dimensions

Behavioral effects of price image dimensions were first tested without considering the store structures. Some of the separated states were removed from the list. The results were shown in the left hand side of table 5. The amount of processing indexes are very satisfied.

In addition, it was proved that all measuring models with factors of 0.74 to 0.94 are convergent. A hidden variable of R-square is 0.70 for the buying intention. There are direct, great, and positive effects for a money value (0.70), price level (0.11), and evaluation certainty (0.10). Therefore, H1a, H1b, and H1e were confirmed and H1c and H1d were rejected. It will be shown in the next part that price perceptibility and processing have indirect effects on the shopping intention. The second hypothesis was based on the positive effect of the price level on price perceptibility. This relationship is very strong. Since a standard fixed path between two structures is 0.55, the second hypothesis is confirmed. As it was said in the third, fourth, and fifth hypothesis, price perceptibility, price processing, and evaluation

certainty have an effect on the value perception. Since the coefficient of these dimensions were respectively 0.11, 0.16, and 0.13, the third, fourth, and fifth hypothesis are confirmed. Also, a price perceptibility has a positive effect on the price processing which is 0.59. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis will be confirmed with this point. In addition, the effects of price perceptibility and processing were great and positive on the evaluation certainty. Also, the amount of their effects were respectively 0.22 and 0.25. This point will confirm the seventh and eighth hypothesis. Another positive relationship which is considerable is a relationship between the price level and evaluation certainty. The coefficient of this relationship was 0.34. Therefore, the ninth hypothesis will be confirmed with this point. Finally, we talk about the effect of price processing on the price level. The effect of price processing on the price level is considerably great and is equal to 0.59. Therefore, the tenth hypothesis will be confirmed with this point. Also, the effects of five price image dimensions were examined for the purpose of studying the eleventh hypothesis. Therefore, H11a and H11e were confirmed with the effect of price level (0.56), price processing (0.49), price perceptibility (0.38), and evaluation certainty (0.19).

Table 5. The Results of a Path Model

	Total		Auctions		Big Stores		Organic Foods		Weekly Markets	
	Sigma	Beta	Sigma	Beta	Sigma	Beta	Sigma	Beta	Sigma	Beta
Direct Effects										
H1a: PL→SI	0.030	0.11	0.071	-0.24	0.115	0.12	0.066	0.13	0.001	0.34
H1b: VAL→SI	0.000	0.70	0.000	0.99	0.000	0.69	0.000	0.60	0.052	0.27
H1c: PPC→SI	0.440	-0.03	0.019	-0.20	0.464	0.05	0.209	-0.12	0.025	0.38
H1d: PPR→SI	0.953	0.00	0.860	0.02	0.668	0.03	0.692	0.05	0.228	0.18
H1e: EC→SI	0.031	0.10	0.667	-0.05	0.228	0.06	0.147	0.15	0.866	-0.03
H2: PL→VAL	0.000	0.55	0.000	0.52	0.000	0.71	0.191	0.13	0.051	0.27
H3: PPC→VAL	0.003	0.11	0.002	0.19	0.000	0.26	0.342	0.09	0.804	-0.06
H4: PPR→VAL	0.002	0.16	0.917	0.01	0.653	0.03	0.176	0.19	0.339	0.18
H5: EC→VAL	0.006	0.13	0.005	0.35	0.527	0.03	0.007	0.32	0.130	0.39
H6: PPC→PPR	0.000	0.59	0.000	0.64	0.000	0.61	0.019	0.32	0.000	0.62
H7: PPC→EC	0.000	0.22	0.031	0.17	0.004	0.31	0.229	0.14	0.015	0.40
H8: PPR→EC	0.000	0.25	0.006	0.27	0.030	0.21	0.011	0.34	0.099	0.28
H9: PL→EC	0.000	0.34	0.000	0.39	0.193	0.09	0.224	0.11	0.041	0.22
H10: PPR→PL	0.000	0.59	0.000	0.47	0.000	0.45	0.005	0.28	0.011	0.39
Total Effects										
H11a: PL→SI	0.000	0.56	0.000	0.39	0.000	0.62	0.006	0.25	0.000	0.43
H11b: VAL→SI	0.000	0.70	0.000	0.99	0.000	0.69	0.000	0.60	0.052	0.27
H11c: PPC→SI	0.000	0.38	0.001	0.22	0.000	0.47	0.391	0.09	0.000	0.65
H11d: PPR→SI	0.000	0.49	0.001	0.29	0.000	0.34	0.006	0.35	0.009	0.41
H11e: EC→SI	0.000	0.19	0.034	0.30	0.175	0.08	0.004	0.34	0.690	0.07

Price Level= PL

Value of Money = VAL

Price Perceptibility= PPC

Price Processing= PPR

Evaluation Certainly= EC

Shopping Intention= SI

7.4 Moderating Effect of Store Structure

The twelfth hypothesis was based on this fact that the amount of price image dimension effect was different in different structures of stores. This subject was studied with a multi-group analysis which there were a difference among auctions, big stores, organic grocery stores, and weekly markets. The amount of processing indexes was weaker than the overall sample.

This point can be understood easily because the variance which was made with the structure differences of stores was removed from the model. A hidden variable of R-square is 0.50 percent in auctions, 0.74 percent in big stores, 0.52 percent in organic grocery stores, and 0.73 percent in weekly markets. Researchers compared a multi-group of a confined model with an unlimited model. In a confined model, all the coefficients of a model were similar in all the structures of stores. On the other hand, these parameters were estimated separately in an unlimited model. Both models were compared with a chi-square test and the suggested method by Satorra and Bentler (2001). The results show that the difference between the chi-square test of confined and unlimited models were positive and considerable.

$$\Delta\chi^2 \frac{1}{4} 103.27 > 58.12, \Delta df = 42, p = 0.05 \quad (1)$$

Therefore, the twelfth hypothesis will be confirmed because an unlimited model is better than a confined model. After proving the differences among the store structures, patterns of the fixes were studied in three store structures. In auctions, a great effect of money value on a shopping intention will dominate the fixes of a pattern path (0.99). Also, a price level has a negative and

inappreciable effect (-0.24). Although the overall effect is positive and considerable (0.39), these observations can be understood with regard to the great effect of a price level on a money value (0.52). Therefore, the effect of a price level on a shopping intention will be done with a money value. This means that a price level cannot justify purchasing from auctions. Customers will relate the prices to the things that they want to buy. Then, they go to the auctions and buy their things. A price level in auctions has a great effect on the evaluation certainty (0.39). Therefore, it makes us to focus more on this assumption that a low price in auctions will lead to the increase in evaluation certainty. Moreover, in auctions, evaluation certainty has a great effect on the money value (0.35) and an overall effect on the shopping intention (0.30). Therefore, evaluation certainty play a serious role in price image of auctions. Although a price perceptibility has a negative and direct effect on the shopping intention (-0.20), the overall effect is positive (0.22). In auctions, big tags of prices does not lonely have effect on the shopping intention of customers. These tags would have an effect on the customers if they are used along with the money value, price processing, and evaluation certainty. With regard to the overall effect, we can understand that a money value is the most important dimension (0.99) in auctions. Then, a price level (0.39), evaluation certainty (0.30), price processing (0.29), and price perceptibility (0.22) are important.

Pattern of big stores is more different than auctions. In big stores, a money value has less direct effect (0.69) than other price image dimensions, but a price level has little positive direct effect (0.115). When we look at the overall effects of price image dimensions in big stores, we understand that an overall effect of a price level is less than a money value effect (0.69). Therefore, a money value is a moderating factor of a price level perception. Like auctions, the effect of a price level is a lot on the perception of a money value (0.71). Unlike auctions, evaluation certainty is very low. Direct effect of an evaluation certainty is very low and is equal to 0.06. Also, an effect of an evaluation certainty on a money value is very low and equal to 0.527. The overall effects of evaluation certainty is very low and equal to 0.08. The effects of price perceptibility (0.47) and price processing (0.34) are strong and considerable. Price perceptibility has a great effect on the money value (0.26), but a price processing has a great effect on the price level perception (0.45). We can easily perceive the great effect of price image dimensions on the big stores and hypermarkets because the

variety and classification of their goods is a lot. Therefore, price perceptibility and price processing are related to each other a lot. With regard to the relative significance of five price image dimensions, we can say that a money value perception is the most important dimension in big stores and hypermarkets (0.69). Then, a price level perception (0.62), price perceptibility (0.47), price processing (0.34), and evaluation certainty (0.08) are important in big stores and hypermarkets. In organic grocery stores, a direct effect of a price level and a money value are like big stores and are respectively 0.13 and 0.60, but their overall effect is different. An overall effect of a money value (0.60) is more than a price level (0.25). We can reach to this point with regarding the insignificant relationship between a price level and a money value (0.13) and an insignificant effect of a price level on the evaluation certainty (0.244). When participants evaluated a money value in organic grocery stores, they did not pay attention a lot to different elements of a price. Although a price level does not have a great effect on the evaluation certainty, its overall effect is considerable and equal to 0.004. In organic grocery stores, an effect of an evaluation certainty on the money value is a lot and equal to 0.007. Finally, a pattern of organic grocery stores can be described with an insignificant overall effect of a price perceptibility which is 0.09. Like big stores, the effect of a price perceptibility in organic grocery stores is

considerable and equal to 0.35. Small and flat shelves of organic grocery stores will justify this issue. In organic grocery stores, price perceptibility is not problematic because a price processing is problematic and a customer cannot compare the price of organic and inorganic products. In sum, we can say that a money value with an overall effect of 0.60 is the most important dimension of price image in organic grocery stores. Then, the overall effect of a price processing (0.35), evaluation certainty (0.34), a price level (0.25) and a price perceptibility (0.09) are important in organic grocery stores. In weekly markets, a price level perception (0.34) and a price perceptibility (0.38) have a considerable direct effect on the shopping intention of people. The effect of a money value is insignificant and equal to 0.27. This is like the effect of a price level perception on the money value (0.27). Anyway, both effects of money value and price level are considerable in the surface of 10 percent. Since price perceptibility has a great effect on the price processing, it has a key role in the results of a weekly market (0.62). Since price perceptibility will lead to the increase in price level perception (0.39), it has the most significant overall effect on the shopping intention of people (0.65). Then, a price level perception (0.43), price processing (0.41), money value (0.27), and an evaluation certainty (0.07) are important.

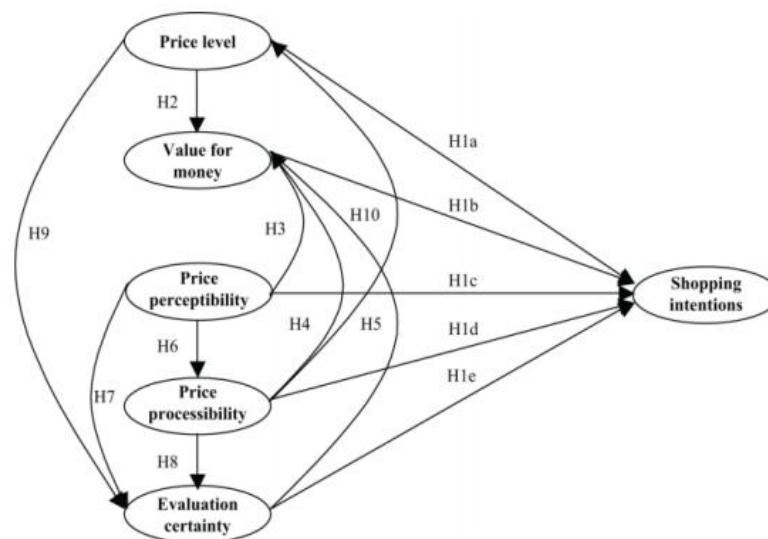


Figure 1. Structural model of Hypothesis

8 Discussion

The results of the study confirmed most of the assumptions relating to the effects in an overall model. In this study, not only the direct effects of price perceptibility and processing were identified, but also the effects of other dimensions of the price image were identified. The results of this show that disregarding the price image dimensions are a mistake. Price perceptibility and processing have indirect effects on the shopping intention and the overall effects of price image dimensions. Price perceptibility and processing will become clearer with considering the structure of big stores and weekly markets. In summary, a multi-group analysis will lead to the identification of some of the structural differences of stores in the domain of direct, indirect, and overall effects. Since we cannot study all the effects of the price image dimensions, we only point at the important and basic cases.

In auctions, the amount of price is the most important dimension of a price image. In auctions, a price level perception has stronger effect on the accuracy of price estimation. Also, the overall effect of evaluation certainty is a lot on the shopping intention of people.

In big stores, an overall effect of price level perceptibility and the amount of price are like each other. In big stores, the effect of a price level on the amount of a price is more than other stores and a price perceptibility and processing have a close relationship with each other.

In organic grocery stores, an overall effect of a price amount is more than a price level perception. There is no relation between a price level perception and the amount of a price. Also, the overall effect of the price level perception is weaker than the price perceptibility and evaluation certainty.

The results obtained from weekly markets are different in relation to other stores. Price perceptibility has a key role in justification of a shopping intention. In weekly markets, a price level perception has a direct and overall effect in relation to a price amount.

9 Management Concepts

The results of this study are related to some management concepts in retail stores. The results of this study show that the retailers should not only compete with each other in the domain of a price level. Price amount, price perceptibility, price

processing, and evaluation certainty have great direct and indirect effects on the shopping intention. Therefore, it is told retailers to measure a customer perception from a price image dimension point of view. These measurements are necessary for decreasing the price distance of different stores. Also, they are necessary for the customers' reaction toward prices. In addition, measuring different dimensions of a price image is of special importance for observing the effect of different pricing strategies on the customers' behavior (Downs and Haynes, 1984). This study will suggest a measuring tool which can be used for measuring different dimensions of a price image.

The results obtaining from a structural model will make the management relationship among different dimensions of a price image clear. The results of this study show that a price level perception has a great effect on the money value. Although a price perception, a price processing, and evaluation certainty have important direct effects on the money value, price processing has an indirect effect on the money value. Therefore, retailers can increase customers' price level perception and money value perception without decreasing the prices. Retailers can make the concept of price perceptibility and processing easier for the customers with price tags, organized lists of prices, and product arrangement. Although price perceptibility and processing will have direct and indirect effects on the evaluation certainty, a price level has more effect on the evaluation certainty. This point shows that the stores which their price levels are low are better than other stores because their prices can be easily estimated. Retailers who their price levels are medium or high should try to decrease the effect of a price level with warranting the prices of brand products or continuous amendment of a based price based on the product quality change.

Also, retailers should be aware that the relation among different dimensions of a price image will be affected by the structure of the stores. Therefore, retailers should change their own priorities toward managing the price image. In auctions, sellers should focus on the money value perception of people because money value is an important price image dimension in this kind of store. Apparently, it is not adequate to sell cheap products. Recently, most sellers in auctions are on attempt to improve the money value with servicing better food products such as organic food products (Moreau, 2006b). Sellers should pay attention to this point that they should not increase the prices with every little change in the price level. We can say that a price level is a basic element of auctions. When a price level cannot be estimated in auctions, it should be regarded. Therefore, in auctions, sellers do not need to improve their price levels, but they have to satisfy their customers' expectations. In big stores, a price level and a money value are important. In Britain, retailers were more successful than auctions with selling brand and general products (Moreau, 2006a). In addition, sellers pay attention to the efficiency of a money value too. For instance, they sell brand products which their quality is better than the internal products (Burt, 2000). This case is more important than the improvement of the money value perception in auctions. In addition, big stores' sellers should not disregard the price perceptibility and processing. If sellers put their cheap products in the beneath shelves, they cannot compete with other sellers in the plaza. In organic grocery stores, a shopping intention of people can become increased a lot with people's perceived value because price processing and evaluation certainty are of high importance in organic grocery stores. Retailers should constantly improve their prices. They can moderate actively the price differences of internal products and announce the added amounts of product prices to the customers clearly. Since price perceptibility is the most important price image of weekly markets, sellers should pay attention more to the announcement of prices specially, with a price tag. Since price level perception seems more important than the money value perception in weekly markets, sellers should improve their price levels.

10 Future Theories and Studies

This study expanded the previous studies from different aspects. In this study, different price image dimensions were measured with a clear measuring criteria and the behavioral effect of these dimensions were identified with the analysis of direct, indirect, and moderating effects of price image dimensions. The results show that disregarding the indirect and moderating effects of these price image dimensions is incorrect and illusive. Anyway, the results of this study are good for future studies. The things that should be regarded in the next studies are as follows:

First, price image dimensions should be studied from different factor point of view (Gijsbrechts, 1993).

Secondly, researchers should consider more mediating and moderating parameters of price image dimensions on the shopping intention of people. Satisfaction can be considered as a mediator (Varki and Colgate, 2001) and being awareness of prices (Drichoutis et al., 2007) can be considered as a moderator.

Thirdly, the results of this study should be generalized in the future studies with examining price image dimensions in different geographical areas and with different methods of gathering data.

Finally, this study can be done in the future in the real condition of purchasing.

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