

# “The impact of manufacturer’s brand image congruity with store’s image on customers’ loyalty”

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## The impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty

### Abstract

Recently the new trend in scientific research is emerging – the congruity of manufacturer's brand image with store's image and its impact on customer loyalty. Based on this, the aim of the article is to validate conceptually and to test empirically the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with on customers' loyalty in case of Lithuanian stores.

Manufacturer's brand image is defined with reference of Kapferer (1986, 2008) brand identity elements and brand identity prism model. Analysis of scientific literature allowed identifying the main elements that define the store image: store location, product assortment, services, and store atmosphere. The customer loyalty is defined as being composed of two dimensions: attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty. Based on the results of theoretical analysis, the conceptual model of the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty, is proposed.

The results of empirical research confirm the adequacy of the model proposed, allowing to conclude that it can be used for investigation of an impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty. It was found that store's image (as identified with manufacturer's brand image) positively influences customers' loyalty. Similarly, it was confirmed that elements of store's image are related with attitude and behavioral loyalty.

**Keywords:** manufacturer's brand image, store's image, attitude loyalty, behavior loyalty.

### Introduction

For years the manufacturer's brand decisions are conceived as one of the ways to increase consumers' loyalty. Brand image research that previously was limited to the aspects of brand identity and value, now is more often pointed to the relations between manufacturer's brand image and store's image, and to the impact this congruity has on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Vahie & Paswan (2006) suggest that identification of manufacturer's brand with trader's brand has an impact on perceived value of both manufacturer's and trader's brand. The research done by Martenson (2007) showed that identification of manufacturer's brand and trader's brand with the store's image had positive impact on customer perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty to the store. Aurier & de Lanauze (2011) suggest that manufacturer's brand congruity with store's image positively influences the perceived brand value and customer loyalty.

Anyway, analysis of scientific literature allowed identifying the issue that need further investigation: although the impact of store's image on customer satisfaction and loyalty is proved by number of studies, there is no consensus among the researchers about the elements defining store's image. Despite the abundance of elements defining store image and existing measurement instruments, they cannot be easily transferred to research in different cultures. Moreover, it should be noted that there are only few research that analyzes and confirms the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customer loyalty.

Those arguments base the need for theoretical and empirical analysis of the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty.

The problem of the research can be formulated as the following question: what is an impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty?

The aim of the research is theoretically substantiate and empirically verify the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty with examples of MONTON, MOSAIC and BALTMAN stores in Lithuania.

### 1. Theoretical approach of the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty

Scientific literature reveals that manufacturer's brand image formation usually involves the use of a brand identity prism as proposed by Kapferer (1986), composing functional and symbolic elements. Firstly, the brand has its *physical appearance*. Physical appearance is the basis of the brand and its added value. According to Kapferer (1986, 2008), brand should provide material benefit. The second identity element is *brand personality*. Communication creates the brand's character. It is a way the brand "speaks" about good or services, shows the particular human personality. Brand personality is defined and measured by the features of buyer personality that are directly related with the brand. Brand also conveys its *culture*. The aspect of culture helps to understand the difference between competing brands. The culture plays the main role in brand differentiation. It shows what kind of moral values are reflected by products and services.

Moreover, the brand is the *relationship*. According to Kapferer (1986, 2008), the brand is the voice that should be heard by customer, because the brand can survive in the market only through communication. The invisible communication is going on because of associations created. It can start among the people who seek for the same or for different aims (salesman, buyer or an employee). It is important to tune up (match) the different needs of customers and provide all necessary information, which would allow perceiving the essence of the brand. The brand is the *reflection of customer*. The customer has to be reflected in a way he/she wants to see him/herself by using the particular product. So, the brand is the *self-image of the consumer*. The brand is very closely related with the understanding of the buyers' self-image. The buyer would like that the product or the brand he/she choose, would reflect the features by which he/she defines him/herself. The self-image is important for explaining the buyer behavior, because the consumers usually buy the products that match up their self-image.

According to the research of Keller (2008), Arslan & Altuna (2010), Till et al. (2011), the manufacturer's brand image can be developed along with the elements of brand identity. Kapferer (2003) distinguishes six main elements of brand identity: product, name, character, brand founder, symbol and logotype, and communication (its content and form).

- ◆ *Product*. Brand shows the uniqueness of the product and creates its value. The stronger the brand, the bigger the possibility the new product will be seen in the market and will have a quick adaptation.
- ◆ *Name*. Brand name is one of the main elements of identity. Some brands exist ignoring their names. It is related with brand self-support.
- ◆ *Character*. Brand character describes the product personality and culture. Often a particular human or animal, having some typical features, becomes a prototype of a character. Animals stand for brand personality.
- ◆ *Founder*. Brand identity is related with the identity of the brand founder.
- ◆ *Symbol and logo*. Symbols and logos help understand the brand culture and personality. Usually they are chosen trying to relate graphic identity with brand personality and values. Symbol and logo not only help to identify the brand, the brand is being identified together with symbol and logo.
- ◆ *Communication: content and form*. Brand can speak. It can only exist if it communicates, tells something about products and services. Communication always reveals more than thought. It

reveals the sender, the source, the receiver and the relationships that are being tried to create.

Brand identity concept embraces all aspects that brings the meaning to the brand and makes it unique. Identity shows the moral face, purpose and values, and it makes the essence of individuality while differentiating the brands (Chernatony, 2010). The identity of strong brands involves emotional benefit that brings the strength to a brand. However, the brand should convey the functional benefit as well. Added value is acquired if the product gives the self-expression benefit, which reflects the self-image of the consumer (Kapferer, 1986, 2008). Based on this it can be concluded that there is a relation between the elements of brand identity as proposed by Kapferer (2003, 2008) and the internal and external elements of identity prism (Kapferer, 1986, 2008). According to Keller (2008), Kapferer (2008), Chernatony (2010), Arslan & Altuna (2010) and Till et al. (2011), those tangible and intangible elements of brand identity form the image of manufacturer's brand.

The existing research results show that manufacturers seeking to improve the image of their brands and attract more customers, use various visual means and sounds in the stores, that remind familiar advertizing campaigns for customers (Aurier & de Lanauze, 2011; Lindblom & Olkkonen, 2006, and Beldona & Wysong, 2007; etc.). The researchers suggest that stores become an efficient intermediary, which can find the way to customer and foster the awareness of manufacturer's brand at the same time. While manufacturers develop effective marketing strategies, the new opportunities for expressing brand image and strengthening the message for customers are opening. The stores become an efficient tool of development of positive manufacturer's brand image. According to Aurier & de Lanauze (2011), there is a link between various programs of sales promotion and image of manufacturer's brand as well as the image of the store. Still researchers suggest that recently the main idea of manufacturer's brand expression in the stores can be defined as not product-oriented means, through which the brand encounters the customers. Based on this approach, three different research areas could be identified in recent studies: proposition quality (product assortment, merchandising, placement in a store); communication with the stores personnel and other visual elements (like store ambience); and store's image and manufacturer's brand image. Aurier & de Lanauze (2011), based on the results of the research of Burt & Carralero-Encinas (2000), Vahie & Paswan (2006), and Martenson (2007), suggest that the store's image has an impact on the manufacturer's brand image. With reference to the research of other scientists, the

authors concluded that the concept of a store's image, similarly to the prism of brand identity as proposed by Kapferer (1986, 2008), involves functional as well as symbolic elements. The authors suggest that the store's image as the image of manufacturer's brand can be developed through functional and symbolic elements. The relation between those tangible and intangible elements bases the congruity of manufacturer's brand image with a store's image.

Analysis of scientific literature allows suggesting, that the store's image can be best described with the following elements: stores location, product assortment, services, and stores atmosphere (Martineau, 1958; Lindquist, 1974; Chang & Tu, 2005; Vahie & Paswan, 2006; Skandrini et al., 2011; Aurier & de Lanauze, 2011; etc.).

Pajuodis (2005) emphasizes that the selection of location means the selection of the environment as well (for potential buyers, competitors, accessibility, etc.). The store located in a more convenient place has more possibilities to gain better performance results, when other circumstances remain constant. Product assortment is an important factor in shaping positive image of a store. Each store while designing and implementing its assortment politics has to follow the strategy not only in the aspects of assortment width and depth, but also of product quality, level of prices, new and fashionable goods. Service politics is also an important factor for image formation. Well organized services create the atmosphere of trust among the store and the buyer, which ensures the long-term relationships. According to Vahie & Paswan (2006), Aurier & de Lanauze (2011), store service can be defined as a services related with sale of products that are provided before purchase, during purchase and after purchase, and are intended to promote and foster the product selling.

The services directly related with product selling are: home delivery, order by telephone or by other means, product selling for credit, etc. The results of the research done by Homburg et al. (2002), Srinivasan (2006) and Aurier & de Lanauze (2011) show that stores atmosphere also influence the store image. Burns & Neisner (2006) suggest that the stores atmosphere can attract new buyers, arouse the need for buying and induce the repeated visits and purchases. Aurier & de Lanauze (2011), based on the results of Srinivasan (2006), Burns & Neisner (2006), and Dupre & Gruen (2004), argue that the stores atmosphere can have bigger influence on purchase decision than the product itself and provide more satisfaction with purchase experience. Grayson & McNeil (2009) and Seock & Lin (2011) state that the important task while designing the stores atmosphere is to identify the needs of buyers, i.e., what do they want to feel in this environment, and how it could support the store's image.

Analysis of literature allows suggesting that study of customer loyalty should involve two dimensions: attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Uncles et al., 2003; Miranda et al., 2005; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2007, etc.).

Based on the research of Burt & Carralero-Encinas (2000), Vahie & Paswan (2006), Martenson (2007), Kapferer (1986, 2008), Chernatony (1999, 2005), Nguyen et al. (2007), Keller (2008), Arslan & Altuna (2010), Till et al. (2011) and Aurier & de Lanauze (2011), the conceptual model of the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers loyalty was developed (see Figure 1). The model shows the relations between the elements of the store's image and customers' loyalty, distinguishing attitude and behavioral loyalty.

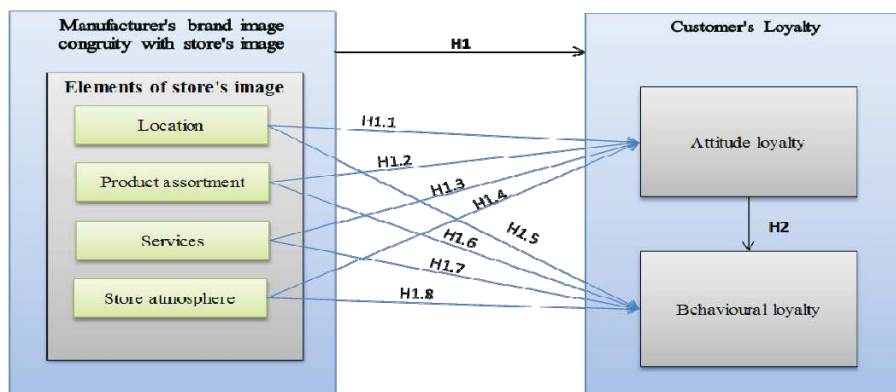


Fig. 1. The conceptual model of an impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on consumers' loyalty

## 2. Methodology

The empirical research was conducted according to a conceptual model of the impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty.

The research object is the congruity of manufacturer's brand image with the store's image and customer loyalty. The aim of the research is to measure an impact of manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image on customers' loyalty.

**2.1. Research hypotheses.** The main research hypothesis is based on the research results, provided by Burt & Carralero-Encinas (2000), Reda (2002), Vahie & Paswan (2006), Seock & Lin (2011), Skandrini et al. (2011), Slatten et al. (2009), Srinivasan (2006) and Aurier & de Lanauze (2011).

*H1: Manufacturer’s brand image congruity with store’s image influences customers’ loyalty.*

This main hypothesis can be further subdivided into several parts:

*H1.1: Location as an element of store’s image is positively related with attitude loyalty.*

*H1.2: Product assortment as an element of store’s image is positively related with attitude loyalty.*

*H1.3: Services as an element of store’s image is positively related with attitude loyalty.*

*H1.4: Atmosphere as an element of store’s image is positively related with attitude loyalty.*

*H1.5: Location as an element of store’s image is positively related with behavioral loyalty.*

*H1.6: Product assortment as an element of store’s image is positively related with behavioral loyalty.*

*H1.7: Services as an element of store’s image is positively related with behavioral loyalty.*

*H1.8: Atmosphere as an element of store’s image is positively related with behavioral loyalty.*

As customers loyalty was defined as composed of two dimensions: attitude and behavior loyalty, the following hypothesis was derived.

*H2: Attitude loyalty influences behavioral loyalty.*

**2.2. Research method.** The aim of the research predefines the research design, which has an explanatory function, as the relations between variables are intended to be established. The quantitative survey method, employing the self-administered questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate data collection method for this particular research. The questionnaire was distributed both online and in paper format. The questionnaire was developed using multi-item rating scales for store’s image (including 4 image elements) and customers’ loyalty (2 loyalty dimensions) measurement. Respondents were asked to provide their opinion on a 5-points scale, where 1 – completely disagree and 5 – completely agree.

**2.3. Sampling and sample size.** Three brands MONTON, MOSAIC and BALTMAN were chosen for the empirical research in Lithuania, as they correspond to the condition about reflecting both manufacturer and the store. The respondents for the survey were selected with the non-probability

sampling method – convenience sample that involves the most easily accessible respondents. The answers from 329 respondents were received.

**Data analysis.** Data analysis was performed with statistical data processing software SPSS 20. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and linear and multiply regression methods. The reliability of the scales was statistically verified using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (see Table 1), with indexes higher than  $\alpha = 0.6$ .

Table 1. Reliability of measurement scales

Scale	No. of items in a scale	Cronbach alpha coefficient		
		MONTON	MOSAIC	BALTMAN
Store’s image	49	0.906	0.876	0.894
Location	6	0.538	0.879	0.518
Product assortment	7	0.803	0.932	0.862
Services	8	0.802	0.912	0.808
Atmosphere	28	0.863	0.887	0.799
Customer loyalty	8	0.909	0.791	0.816
Attitude loyalty	4	0.834	0.525	0.603
Behavioral loyalty	4	0.882	0.656	0.809
Total scale	57	0.930	0.952	0.910

Table 1 shows that the coefficients of internal consistency of the total scales are high in all three cases, ranging from 0,910 for BALTMAN store to 0,952 for MOSAIC store. The results confirm high reliability of the scales developed for this research and conformity with the rules of methodological validity for research instrument.

Seeking to measure the image of the stores, the respondents were asked to evaluate such elements of store’s image as store location, product assortment, services and store atmosphere. Customer loyalty for the store was measured with 8 items, 4 of which reflect the attitudinal loyalty and the rest 4 – behavioral loyalty. In order to confirm that loyalty scale reflects 2 dimensions, the exploratory factor analysis was performed (principal component analysis with Varimax rotation method). The sample adequacy for extraction of the factors was confirmed through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The Bartlett’s test result was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the KMO value (0.859) showed that using exploratory EFA was suitable. By exploratory factor analysis 2 factors were extracted, explaining 73.4% of the total variance. Both factors consisted of the same items that were theoretically predefined and can be clearly distinguished into attitude and behavioral

loyalty. The results of methodological quality testing allow providing further data analysis as they confirm the validity of further meaningful interpretation.

### 3. Results

The results of empirical research are provided in a subsequent logical structure: (1) results of correlation analysis with separate cases of three stores:

MONTON, MOSAIC and BALTMAN; (2) results of correlation analysis with total sample; (3) results of regression analysis.

Correlation analysis was performed in order to establish the relations between store's image and customers' loyalty. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated, because the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that data were not distributed normally.

Table 2. Correlation between store's image and customers' loyalty

		MONTON attitude loyalty	MONTON behavior loyalty	MOSAIC attitude loyalty	MOSAIC behavior loyalty	BALTMAN attitude loyalty	BALTMAN behavior loyalty
MONTON image	Correlation coefficient	.571**	.472**	.416**	.439**	0.253	0.302
MOSAIC image	Correlation coefficient	.386**	0.286	.383**	.430**	0.309	0.657
BALTMAN image	Correlation coefficient	0.35	0.284	0.165	0.135	.334**	.299**

Notes: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Data shows that statistically significant relation exists ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the MONTON store's image and customers loyalty, speaking about both attitude ( $\rho = 0.571$ ) and behavioral ( $\rho = 0.472$ ) loyalty, though the relation is only of moderate strength. There is a statistically significant relation ( $p < 0.05$ ) between MOSAIC store's image and customers attitude loyalty ( $\rho = 0.383$ ) as well as between behavioral loyalty ( $\rho = 0.430$ ), but these relations are rather week. Weak but statistically significant relations were found between BALTMAN store's image and customer loyalty ( $\rho = 0.334$  for attitude loyalty, and  $\rho = 0.299$  for behavioral loyalty respectively). It is interesting to note that correlation analysis shows very clear relations between evaluations of two stores – MONTON and MOSAIC – speaking about their image and customers loyalty. Results allow suggesting that customers of those two

stores tend to evaluate them similarly, and since both brands belong to the same manufacturer, a fair number of consumers are used to visit both stores.

Generally, it can be concluded, that *there is a positive relation between store's image and attitude loyalty, and between image and behavioral loyalty.* However, the relation is moderate or lower than moderate in all three cases.

In order to reveal the relations between the different elements of the store's image and customers loyalty, correlation analysis was performed with three stores separately, embracing such relations between variables, as: store location, product assortment, services, store atmosphere and attitude loyalty, and behavioural loyalty. The results of correlation analysis are provided in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3. Correlation between the elements of MONTON store's image and customers' loyalty

		MONTON attitude loyalty	MONTON behavioral loyalty	MONTON stores location	MONTON assortment	MONTON services	MONTON atmosphere
MONTON attitude loyalty	Correlation coefficient	1	.747**	0.068	.500**	.598**	.666**
MONTON behavioral loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.747**	1	0.056	.431**	.473**	.498**

Notes: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  $N = 114$ .

Data shows that attitude loyalty has a statistically significant relation with product assortment, services and store atmosphere. Correlation coefficient ranges from 0.5 to 0.666, showing positive and moderately strong relation. The strongest positive relation is between attitude loyalty and store atmosphere ( $\rho = 0.666$ ). Relation between attitude loyalty and stores location was not being established.

The moderate significant relation exists between behavioural loyalty and product assortment, services and stores atmosphere ( $\rho = 0.431$ ,  $\rho = 0.473$  and  $\rho = 0.498$  respectively). As in case of attitude loyalty, no significant relation between behavioural loyalty and stores location was being revealed.

Analysis proves the existence of strong significant positive relation between attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty ( $\rho = 0.747$ ).

In general, it can be concluded that in the case of MONTON brand store, there is a positive relation between the elements of a store’s image – product assortment, services and stores atmosphere – and

consumers’ loyalty (attitude and behavioral loyalty). Existence of strong positive relation between attitude and behavioral loyalty was also being proved.

Table 4. Correlation between the elements of MOSAIC store’s image and customers’ loyalty

		MOSAIC attitude loyalty	MOSAIC behavioral loyalty	MOSAIC stores location	MOSAIC assortment	MOSAIC services	MOSAIC atmosphere
MOSAIC attitude loyalty	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.783**	.185	.307**	.436**	.552**
MOSAIC behavioral loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.783**	1.000	.222*	.438**	.390**	.372**

Notes: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 102.

The results in Table 4 show statistically significant relations between attitude loyalty and product assortment, services and stores atmosphere. Correlation coefficients show weak (attitude loyalty with assortment  $\rho = 0.307$ , attitude loyalty and services  $\rho = 0.436$ ) and moderate (attitude loyalty and stores atmosphere  $\rho = 0.552$ ) relations. Correlation did not confirm statistically significant relation between attitude loyalty and store’s location.

Weak and moderate, but significant relationships were established between behavioral loyalty and all elements of a store’s image. It’s interesting that in this case, the relation between behavioural loyalty and stores location was also indicated, though it was quite weak ( $\rho = 0.222$ ).

Analysis allows indicating strong significant relation between attitude and behavioural loyalty ( $\rho = 0.783$ ), what proves that those two constructs are strongly

related and should be used together when analyzing customers loyalty issues.

In summary, it can be concluded that in case on MOSAIC store, there is a positive relation between the elements of a store’s image – product assortment, services and stores atmosphere – and the attitude loyalty. At the same time it can be concluded that the positive relation exists between all the elements of a store’s image and behavioural loyalty. Results also confirm strong positive relation between attitude and behavioral loyalty.

Data in Table 5 shows that in case of BALTMAN store, attitude loyalty is significantly related with all elements of a store’s image. However, the relation in all cases is weak. The strongest (moderate) positive relation exists between attitude loyalty and stores services ( $\rho = 0.420$ ).

Table 5. Correlation between the elements of BALTMAN store’s image and customers’ loyalty

		BALTMAN attitude loyalty	BALTMAN behavioral loyalty	BALTMAN stores location	Baltman assortment	BALTMAN services	BALTMAN atmosphere
BALTMAN attitude loyalty	Correlation coefficient	1	.497**	.205*	.293**	.420**	.242*
BALTMAN behavioral loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.497**	1	0.056	.316**	.299**	.363**

Notes: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 103.

Weak but significant relation exists between behavioral loyalty and product assortment, services and atmosphere. There is no relation between behavioral loyalty and stores location.

Analysis shows moderate positive relation between attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty ( $\rho = 0.497$ ).

So it can be concluded that in case of BALTMAN store, there is a weak positive relation between all

elements of a store’s image and attitude loyalty. Also, the positive relation exists between behavioral loyalty and stores product assortment, services and atmosphere. Analysis confirms positive relation between attitude and behavioral loyalty.

Correlation between general store’s image and general consumers’ loyalty was performed, involving all three cases. The results of this analysis are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation between store’s image and customers’ loyalty

			Consumers loyalty	Attitude loyalty	Behavioral loyalty
Spearman’s rho	Store’s image	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.528**	.491**
	Consumers loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.528**	1.000	.968**
	Attitude loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.537**	.931**	1.000
	Behavioral loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.491**	.968**	.821**

Notes: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 245.

Analysis reveals that in all cases the relation between the variables is significant. Spearman rho coefficients show moderate relation between store's image and customers loyalty ( $\rho = 0.528$ ), image and attitude loyalty ( $\rho = 0.537$ ), and image and behavioral loyalty ( $\rho = 0.491$ ). Data also show the existence of strong positive statistical relationship

between attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty ( $\rho = 0.821$ ). In order to test the hypothetical relations between the separate elements of store's image and consumer loyalty, distinguished into attitude and behavioral loyalty, correlation analysis between the elements of a store's image and customers loyalty was performed. The results are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation between the elements of a store's image and customers loyalty

			Location	Assortment	Services	Atmosphere
Spearman's rho	Attitude loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.229**	.470**	.505**	.575**
	Behavioral loyalty	Correlation coefficient	.198**	.456**	.416**	.517**

The results allow confirming that *attitude loyalty is positively related with all 4 elements of a store's image*. There is a moderate relation between attitude loyalty and assortment, services and stores atmosphere ( $\rho = 0.470$ ,  $\rho = 0.505$ , and  $\rho = 0.575$  respectively), meanwhile the relation between attitude loyalty and stores location is weak ( $\rho = 0.229$ ).

The same might be said about the relation between behavioral loyalty and store's image: *behavioral loyalty is positively related with all 4 elements of a store's image*. There is a moderate relation between behavioral loyalty and assortment, services and store's atmosphere (respectively  $\rho = 0.456$ ,  $\rho = 0.416$  and  $\rho = 0.517$ ), whereas the relation between behavioural loyalty and stores location is very weak ( $\rho = 0.198$ ).

It allows confirming the hypotheses, which explain the detailed relations foreseen in the main research hypothesis H1 (H1.1, H1.2, H1.3, H1.4, H1.5, H1.6, H1.7 and H1.8).

Correlation analysis allows defining relations between the variables, but these relations are two-tailed. In order to explore the impact of independent variable (variables) on dependent variable, a linear regression analysis was performed.

Testing the main research hypothesis H1 required a regression analysis with the store's image (independent variable) and customers' loyalty (dependent variable). The obtained model R-square value is 0.292 ( $F = 100.236$ ;  $p$ -value < 0.001), what

means that model fits. But the small coefficient of determination shows that the store's image explains only 29.2 % of variance in consumers' loyalty. Still the statistics show that *store's image has an impact on customers' loyalty*. It allows confirming the hypothesis H1: *Manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image influences customers' loyalty*.

In order to test the hypothesis H2 a linear regression analysis with attitude loyalty (independent variable) and behavioral loyalty (dependent variable) was performed. The R square ( $R^2 = 0.674$ ) shows that attitude loyalty explains 67.4 % of variance in dependent variable – behavioural loyalty. So, it confirms the hypothesis H2: *Attitude loyalty influences behavioral loyalty*. Results of linear regression are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of linear regression

Model	Dependent variable	Independent variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.
1	Customers loyalty	Store's image	0.292	100.236	.000
2	Behavioral loyalty	Attitude loyalty	0.674	501.699	.000

In order to measure the impact of separate elements of store's image on attitude and behavioral loyalty, two multiply regression analyses were performed, where 4 elements of store's image are independent variables and the dependent are (1) attitude loyalty, and (2) behavioral loyalty (see Table 9).

Table 9. Results of multiple regression

Model	Dependent variable	R <sup>2</sup>	ANOVA			Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Sig.
			F	Sig.		B	Std. error	Beta	
1	Attitude loyalty	0.427	44.669	.000	(Constant)	.054	.385		.888
					Location	-.226	.088	-.148	.010
					Assortment	.144	.094	.118	.128
					Services	.159	.101	.127	.117
					Atmosphere	.982	.135	.528	.000
2	Behavioral loyalty	0.343	31.280	.000	(Constant)	-.915	.567		.108
					Location	-.342	.129	-.163	.009
					Assortment	.440	.139	.263	.002
					Services	.041	.149	.023	.786
					Atmosphere	1.098	.199	.429	.000



Results of multiply regression revealed that stores atmosphere has the strongest impact on attitude as well as on behavioral loyalty ( $\beta = 0.528$  &  $\beta = 0.429$  respectively). It's interesting that stores location also has an impact both on attitude and behavioral loyalty, but in this research, its influence is negative. The results also show that product

assortment positively influences the behavioral loyalty ( $\beta = 0.263$ ).

Figure 2 provides the summary of the identified relationships between manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image and customers' loyalty, according to a conceptual model proposed.

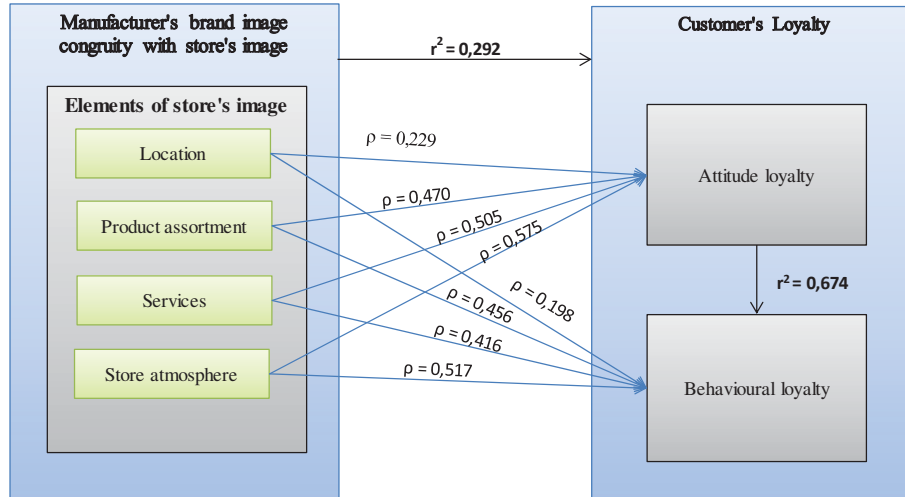


Fig. 2. Relations between manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image and customers' loyalty

The results confirms that the model is suitable for analysis of relations between store's image and customers loyalty, when the manufacturer's brand image is identified with a store's image.

**Conclusions and suggestions**

Exploration of the conceptual meaning of manufacturer's brand image allows stating that manufacturer's brand image can be developed through the elements of brand identity and associations. Results of the recent research confirm that manufacturer's brand image can be influenced by the store's image. The more positive is the store's image, the stronger trust consumer has in manufacturer's brand.

Analysis of scientific literature reveals that store's image, as well as manufacturer's brand image, is developed through functional and symbolic elements. The manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image is based on the relation between those tangible and intangible elements. It could be explained by presumption that product assortment, services and stores location reflects functional elements of store's image, the same as the product, name and logotype reflects functional elements of manufacturer's brand image. Meanwhile the stores atmosphere reflects symbolic element of store's image, as well as the internal and external elements of identity prism, proposed by Kapferer (1986, 2008).

Analysis of scientific research allows suggesting that customer loyalty can be analyzed through two dimensions: attitude loyalty and behavior loyalty.

Attitude loyalty is based on psychological commitment and buying intentions, whereas behavioral loyalty is defined as the repetitive buying in the same store and recommendations for others.

The results of empirical research provided in this article proved the positive relation between the elements of store's image and customers loyalty, as divided into attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty, though the relation is either weak or moderate. It should be noted, that the weakest relation (though significant) is between loyalty and stores location. The results allowed to confirm that store's image influences consumers loyalty. At the same time, the results showed that the attitude loyalty influences behavioral loyalty.

As the results of empirical research confirmed that stores atmosphere has the strongest relationship with attitude and behavioral loyalty, it would be advisable for stores to give more attention to exterior and interior design, sound, colours and light, and use some particular smells, while creating the stores atmosphere. Stores atmosphere can be used more intensely for creating associations and positive purchase experience, stimulate more frequent and longer visits to the store. Matching up the elements of stores atmosphere could allow achieving consumer commitment and attachment to the store, emotional satisfaction with purchase, and, consequently, loyalty.

Finally, the results of the empirical research confirmed the suitability of the conceptual model, provided in this article, for the research of

relationships between manufacturer's brand image congruity with store's image and consumers' loyalty. It works as a good research framework; nevertheless it should be further tested in different cultural settings and with more other cases of manufacturer's and stores brand congruity.

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