

IMPACT OF THE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN BRAND PERSONALITY AND CONSUMER PERSONALITY ON EMOTIONAL LOYALTY: WHAT MAKES APPLE AND SAMSUNG DIFFERENT

UTJECAJ PODUDARNOSTI IZMEĐU OSOBNOSTI MARKE I OSOBNOSTI POTROŠAČA NA EMOCIONALNU LOJALNOST: ŠTO ČINI APPLE I SAMSUNG RAZLIČITIM

M Market-Tržište
Vol. 34, No. 1, 2022, pp. 59-77
UDK 658.89:658.626(474.5)
DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.22598/mt/2022.34.1.59>
Preliminary communication

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore how brand personality (BP) traits and the congruence between consumer personality (CP) and BP affect emotional loyalty to two types of brands.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research was conducted using an online questionnaire on a sample of 287 respondents from Lithuania. The questionnaire included Aaker's Brand Personality Scale and the Big Five personality traits to assess the congruence between the matching pairs. Apple and Samsung brands were used as examples of the brands with a prevailing emotional and rational content. The empirical check was based on regression analysis.

Findings and Implementations – The findings revealed the impact of BP traits and their congruence with

Sažetak

Svrha – Cilj rada bio je otkriti kako osobnost marke (BP) i podudarnost između osobnosti potrošača (CP) i marke (BP) utječu na emocionalnu lojalnost dvjema vrstama maraka.

Metodološki pristup – Istraživanje je provedeno putem online anketnog upitnika na uzorku od 287 ispitanika iz Litve. Upitnik je uključivao Aakerovu ljestvicu za mjerenje osobnosti marke i pet velikih osobina ličnosti za procjenu podudarnosti među parovima. Marke Apple i Samsung korištene su kao primjeri maraka s prevladavajuće emocionalnim i racionalnim sadržajem. Empirijska provjera temeljila se na regresijskoj analizi.

Rezultati i implikacije – Rezultati otkrivaju kako osobine BP-a i njihova podudarnost s CP-om utječu na emocionalnu lojalnost. Utvrđeno je da različiti skupovi

CP on emotional loyalty. Different sets of BP traits were found to impact loyalty to Apple and Samsung brands. The emotional loyalty appeared to be higher for the brand with a prevailing emotional content (Apple).

Limitations – The limitations may be linked to the selection of brands since the companies implement different branding strategies. The convenience sampling method and the disproportion in terms of gender in the sample may also be seen as limitations.

Originality – The study addresses the research gap of the impact of BP traits and their congruence with consumer personality on emotional loyalty to brands that emphasize emotional versus rational aspects. Differences in the sets of BP traits affecting emotional loyalty were discovered regarding the two types of brands. This constitutes new scientific knowledge within the scope of studies on emotional loyalty to brands.

Keywords – brand personality, emotional loyalty, personality traits, congruence

osobina BP-a utječu na lojalnost markama Apple i Samsung. Emocionalna lojalnost bila je veća za marku u kojoj prevladava emocionalni sadržaj (Apple).

Ograničenja – Ograničenja se mogu povezati s odabirom maraka jer poduzeća koriste različite strategije upravljanja markom. Korišteni prigodni uzorak i nerazmjer u uzorku s obzirom na spol također se mogu smatrati ograničenjima.

Doprinos – Rad se bavi istraživačkim jazom o tome kako podudarnost između osobina BP-a i osobnosti potrošača utječe na emocionalnu lojalnost markama koje naglašavaju emocionalne nasuprot racionalnim aspektima. U odnosu na dvije vrste maraka otkrivene su razlike u skupovima osobina BP-a koje utječu na emocionalnu lojalnost. Navedeno predstavlja novu znanstvenu spoznaju u području istraživanja o emocionalnoj lojalnosti markama.

Ključne riječi – osobnost marke, emocionalna lojalnost, osobine ličnosti, podudarnost

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of consumer loyalty has been a major topic of scientific analysis for decades (Hallowell, 1996; Rowley, 2005; Fraering & Minor, 2013; Ozretic-Dosen, Brlc & Komarac, 2018; Zhang, Jun & Palacios, 2021). Having its roots in the core of the relationship marketing, the concept of loyalty has been approached in various ways by considering the characteristics of brands, consumers, and numerous forms of their attachment to brands, including such aspects as brand involvement, brand engagement, brand love (Andersen, 2005; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; Le, 2020). In addition, research directions varied depending on the type of loyalty addressed (Back & Parks, 2003; Hartel & Russell-Bennett, 2010; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilimb, 2010). Emotional loyalty has attracted a lot of attention; it has been observed that both positive and negative emotions influence consumer behavior (Razzaq, Yousaf & Hong, 2017; Bagozzi, Belanche, Casalo & Flavian, 2016). Investments in emotional loyalty are considered essential for building long-term relationships with consumers (Gallarza, Ruiz-Molina & Gil-Saura, 2016). It is agreed that emotional loyalty to a brand is a type of loyalty that may be of potentially higher importance in highly competitive settings (George & Anandkumar, 2018).

It has been observed that some brands succeed in developing an emotional connection with their consumers, while others struggle to align themselves with the emotions that drive the behavior of their customers (Magids, Zorfias & Leemon, 2015). This is largely dependent on the success of developing certain traits of brand personalities and how they apply to the preferences of consumers. These preferences are mostly linked with the personalities of consumers themselves. Therefore, Maehle and Shneur (2009) suggest that it is essential not only to create a consistent brand personality, but also to develop it in the way that will fit the personality of consumers most congruently.

The congruence between the traits of brand personality and consumer personality has been

studied from several aspects. One of the core perspectives of researchers stems from the assumption that people are more likely to choose brands that closely fit their own personalities (Aaker, 1997; Lin, 2010; Huang, Mitchell & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012; Šeimienė, 2015; Langstedt & Hunt, 2017). However, studies on the impact of the congruence on emotional loyalty to brands remain scarce and the issue constitutes a noticeable research gap. Even less is known of how congruence effects vary in reference to different types of brands that emphasize not the same traits of their brand personalities.

The current study addresses the issue by analyzing congruence between the traits of brand personalities and consumer personalities of two popular brands – Apple and Samsung. Three pairs of brand personality and consumer personality traits are taken into consideration in view of no confirmed direct correlations between brand personality and the two remaining traits of the Big Five (Aaker, 1997; Mulyanegara, Tsarenko & Anderson, 2007). The current study starts by analyzing of the impacts of congruence between the traits of brand personality and consumer personality, followed by an assessment of the impacts of traits of brand personalities on emotional loyalty. After this, an analysis of differences in relation to the two analyzed brands is performed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Emotional loyalty and brand personality traits

Emotional loyalty of consumers can be influenced by numerous factors, including commitment (Oliver, 1999; Orth, Limon & Rose, 2010), trust (Aurier & Lanauze, 2012), brand attachment (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2020), brand love (Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris, 2012), duration of the relationship with a brand (Kim & Lee, 2010), and many more. While discussing the issue of emotional loyalty to a brand, researchers typically concentrate on the effects of the already existing relationship between a brand

and a person (including trust, attachment, commitment). However, Aaker (1996) suggested that brand personality might be an essential prerequisite of the link between a customer and a brand. Having this in mind, Aaker (1997) described brand personality as the set of human characteristics associated with the brand, thus putting an emphasis on its emotional aspect. It has been observed that consumers tend to choose brands that are close to their own personality traits; the connection with a brand is largely based on the interactions between emotional relations. This is well specified by Maehle, Otnes, and Supphellen (2011), who found that customers tend to describe brands by using emotional constructs such as “related to childhood memories”, “associated with beauty”, etc. These insights suggest that brand personality traits include a lot of emotional content and thus may be important factors in predicting emotional loyalty to a brand.

While sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness are the dimensions based on the same structure meaning that reflects “sets of human characteristics” (Aaker, 1997), studies show that these traits demonstrate a different impact on various outcome variables (Sung & Kim, 2010; Udomkit & Mathews, 2015). Sincerity and competence have been found to have the strongest effects on brand commitment and brand attitudes. Moreover, compared to other dimensions, competence appears to be the one with the strongest influence on purchase behavior (Eisend & Stokburger-Sauer, 2013). While discussing the impact on emotional loyalty, an even more important finding was proposed by Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2008), stating that the dimensions of competence, sincerity, and excitement are “the most influential traits positively affecting consumer’s loyalty.” This insight leads to the core question of whether these three dimensions might be positively affecting emotional loyalty as well. This likelihood is quite strong, taking into account that the mentioned dimensions are linked directly to three of Big Five personality traits (Hanna & Rowley, 2019;

Aaker, 1997). While the connection between brand and personality is understood as an essential part of emotional loyalty, links between brand personality dimensions and customers’ personality traits are relevant criteria for choosing brand dimensions of competence, sincerity, and excitement for further research.

2.2. Personality traits of consumers in the analysis of emotional loyalty

The current study includes an analysis of personality traits of customers which suggests that there is a link between human characteristics and the tendency to develop emotional relations with particular brands. The Big Five model is used in the analysis based on two arguments: first, all the five personality traits stay stable during a lifetime; second, the personality traits directly affect the actions of a person (Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2003). These factors make the Big Five model a dominant personality analysis tool in research and typically include the personality traits of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Agreeableness reflects the ability to stay useful, collaborate, and express compassion. This trait is not only important in the emotional loyalty sphere; as studies show, emotions are stronger and more difficult to control for people with a high level of agreeableness (Finley, Crowell, Harmon-Jones & Schmeichel, 2016). Also, persons described as “agreeable” are keen on maintaining positive relationships in their social environment (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). From this perspective, agreeable people have a few similarities with those who have high scores in extroversion: it has been noted that extroverts demonstrate a positive attitude towards the social world as well (Gerber, Huber, Doherty & Dowling, 2011). In addition, extroversion manifests itself in gregariousness, robustness, activity. People with high scores in extroversion demonstrate a strong potential for leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000; Bartone, Eid, Johnsen, Laberg &

Snook, 2009). According to a study by Bartone et al. (2009), a tendency towards leadership might be noted only in the case of extroversion or conscientiousness, which is being analyzed in this paper as well. Conscientiousness consists of discipline, organization, goal-orientation (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck & Avdic, 2011). There is evidence of conscientiousness having a positive correlation with self-centered perfectionism (Stoeber, Otto & Dalbert, 2009) even though the differences between high conscientiousness and perfectionism are quite obvious: while persons who have high scores in perfectionism do not feel satisfied with the results achieved and are usually motivated by the fear of failure, those with strong conscientiousness are motivated by the drive for success and demonstrate satisfaction with completed tasks (Hewitt & Flett, 2007).

2.3. Congruence between brand personality and consumer personality traits in the diversity of brands

The concept of brand personalities allows modelling the relationships between the traits of brand personality and its effects, including emotional loyalty (Nikhashemi & Valaei, 2017). On the other hand, there are numerous studies using human personality traits as predictors for several outcomes, including loyalty (Lin, 2010; Vazquez-Carrasco & Foxall, 2006; Choi, Ok & Hyun, 2017). The fit (congruence) of these two starting points – the dimensions of brand personality and the personality traits of consumers – may have an additional important effect on the emotional loyalty to a brand; congruence between brand traits and consumer personalities plays a significant role in selecting the preferred brands (Huang et al., 2012; Langstedt & Hunt, 2017). However, this relationship is rather complicated and can hardly be assessed in a linear manner, similarly to other congruences or fits that are important in marketing (Dagyte-Kavoliune, Adomaviciute, & Urbonavicius, 2020). One of the reasons for this is the valence of the congruence variable.

The most natural way to measure congruence between the traits of a brand and human personality is to assess the difference between the two (Šeimienė, 2015; Erdoğan & Büdeyri-Turan, 2012). When measured this way, the indicator measuring congruence is a u-shaped line having the minimal difference between the estimates of two traits, with the highest congruence achieved in the middle. Both “sides” mean a decline from the highest congruence and may be assessed as absolute numbers. However, in this case the valence of congruence being closer to brand personality or to human personality is totally ignored (Liu, Mizerski & Soh, 2012). This might be relevant, depending on the aim of a study, but does not allow a deeper analysis of the effects of brand personality, together with human personality, on the studied variables. The importance of the valence of congruence between brand personality traits and human personality traits was initially conceptualized as the “direction of identity” (Šeimienė, 2015). However, this was not elaborated further using a specific measurement scale.

The current paper extends this aspect by suggesting a variable of dynamic congruence that essentially removes this imperfection. It not only reflects the congruence between the brand and human personality traits, but also the closeness of the variable score to either one or another of them. The variable is presented in detail further on in the text, in the section describing measures.

Another difficulty rendering the assessment of congruence difficult is rooting from the differences of measures of brand personality traits and the traits of human personalities. One of the ways to cope with this includes the use of the same measures for both, which allows for the calculation of the differences on an item-by-item basis (Šeimienė, 2015). However, the best instruments that are used for the assessment of brand personalities and human personalities differ among themselves both in terms of the content of the specified traits and in relation to the items used to measure them in the corresponding scales. The latter can be overcome

rather easily by calculating the differences on the means rather than on the item-by-item basis. To deal with the differences in the content (essence) of the measured items, the conceptual trait-by-trait comparison is applied. Based on this essence of each personality trait, Aaker (1997) suggested how they relate to brand personality traits used in the Big Five model: “agreeableness and sincerity both capture the idea of warmth and acceptance; extroversion and excitement both connote the notions of sociability, energy, and activity; conscientiousness and competence both encapsulate responsibility, dependability, and security.” Neuroticism is not proposed to be used in the analysis of the congruence due to its high unpredictability (Robinson & Tamir, 2005). Given that the trait of openness differs from others by being inseparable from the concept of intelligence (McCrae, 1993; DeYoung, Quilty, Peterson & Gray, 2014), it can hardly be linked to any specific trait of a brand personality either. However, the traits of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness taken from the Big Five model appear quite suitable for assessing their congruence with the matching traits of a brand personality (sincerity, excitement, and competence, respectively).

On the other hand, brands are very different among themselves in terms of their personalities (Chung & Park, 2015; O’Cas & Lim, 2002). Since the number of combinations in terms of the development of their traits is considerable, researchers, consumers, and companies tend to aggregate them into the types that are defined on the basis of one or several strongly developed personality traits. This allows the stereotypes of personalities of emotional or rational types, luxury and economy types and many others (Sung, Choi, Ahn & Song, 2014; Heine & Trommsdorff, 2010; Pandey & Kumar, 2012). In the majority of these instances, it is expected that one of several key traits of a brand personality will generate the main impact on consumers in terms of positive attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Sung & Kim, 2010). Naturally, this is based on the assumption that a brand personality of a certain type is aimed at

the segment that appreciates this type of combination of personality traits (Swaminathan, Stille & Ahluwalia, 2009; Langstedt & Hunt, 2017). Toldos-Romero and Orozco-Gómez (2014) suggest that the personality of the brand is formed by the “consumer’s experience with the brand and by advertising,” which means essentially the authentic relation between the consumer and the brand. In other words, it is indirectly expected that different brand personalities will generate consumer loyalty as a result of different personality traits. Traits of a more emotional content such as sincerity and excitement are expected to have a stronger impact on emotional loyalty towards brands; that may be a strong element of differentiation among brands. One of the greatest examples of emotional traits-based branding is Apple, having a brand personality focused on imagination, innovation, passion. The Apple brand is described as humanistic, because of its focus on the emotions of clients (Bonetti, 2013). While Apple has been observed in other studies as being “fashionable”, “feminine/sexy” brand, its competitor in mobile telephones Samsung is perceived as “rugged” and “sophisticated” (Ajilore & Solo-Anaeto, 2016). It is relevant to assume that these differences stem from different interaction of brand traits and their congruence with consumer traits and that impact emotional loyalty differently.

3. HYPOTHESES

This study aims to assess how brand and consumer personality traits impact emotional loyalty when considering different types of brands that emphasize different traits of their personalities. This has been assessed by using two types of antecedents: the congruence between the matching brand personality traits and human personality traits (sincerity and agreeableness, excitement and extroversion, competence and conscientiousness), and individual brand personality traits.

There is an agreement on the importance of the congruence between the traits of brand

personality and the personality traits of consumers regarding numerous outcomes from a consumer side of the attitudinal and behavioral nature (Aaker, 1997; Huang et al., 2012; Šeimienė, 2015; Langstedt & Hunt, 2017). This allows the following prediction: congruence has a positive impact on the emotional loyalty of consumers. Since it is expected that brands address the most matching segments in the market, the effect of the congruence should not be dependent on specific brands under consideration. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H1: Emotional loyalty is impacted by a congruence between the matching traits of brand personality and human personality.

This hypothesis may only be tested by testing its individual sub-hypotheses:

H1a: Congruence between sincerity and agreeableness positively impacts emotional loyalty.

H1b: Congruence between excitement and extroversion positively impacts emotional loyalty.

H1c: Congruence between competence and conscientiousness positively impacts emotional loyalty.

It has been widely noted that personality traits impact consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors: recent studies point to a significant relationship between brand personality and brand commitment (Ali khani & Mokhtarian, 2021), satisfaction (Lee, Back & Kim, 2009), and even purchase intention (Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2014). Also, brand personality traits influence the resistance to negative information about a brand (Bairrada, Coelho & Lizanets, 2018) and positively impact customer loyalty (Lin, 2010; Sop & Kozak, 2019; Zentes et al., 2008; Fournier, 1998). Bearing in mind that in the context of brand personalities “brands can convey symbolic associations, they can add meaning to the consumer’s life” (Zentes et al., 2008), the emotional relations between brand and customer might be essential. Becheur, Bayarassou, and Ghrib (2017) support the idea by providing the insight that strengthening the personality of a brand is a way to a long-term relationship with

customers. Since emotion-based, long-lasting relations rooted in the brand personality concept are associated with emotional loyalty (Kim & Lee, 2010), it is expected that brand personality traits would directly influence emotional loyalty. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H2: Emotional loyalty is impacted by brand personality trait.

Again, the hypothesis is segregated into three sub-hypotheses:

H2a: Brand personality trait of sincerity positively impacts emotional loyalty.

H2b: Brand personality trait of excitement positively impacts emotional loyalty.

H2c: Brand personality trait of competence positively impacts emotional loyalty.

Brands themselves have been noted to be clusters of emotional and functional (rational) values that promise a unique positive experience (Lynch & de Chernatony, 2004). This introduces the idea that some brands are well developed with the means of emotional branding while others position themselves with the help of rational (functional) arguments. In marketing, these brands are categorized as symbolic (emotional) and functional (rational) (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Esmaeilpour, 2015). In addition, the findings of Elsässer and Wirtz (2017) suggest that emotional and rational associations with the two types of brands are based on different sets of their dimensions. Extending this logic, we predict that emotional loyalty to the two types of brands may be impacted by different sets of brand personality traits as follows:

H3: Sets of brand personality traits that impact emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content are different from that with a prevailing rational content.

Studies have noted that brand personality traits are associated with different approaches – symbolic or functional. For instance, in their research Ramaseshan and Tsao (2007) found that, compared with other brand personality traits, excite-

ment and sophistication are “positively related to the perceived quality when the brands have symbolic and experiential brand concepts”. In general, such differences in consumer perceptions lead to the topic of brand stereotypes.

Brands attributes sum up into brand personalities and predict the content of brand stereotypes; they can be reflected in warmth and/or competence (Kolbl, Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic & Zabkar, 2020). The extension of this observation allows stating that each trait of brand personality could be attributed either to the warmth-emotional or to the competence-functional background. Research conducted by Davies, Rojas-Méndez, Whelan, Mete, and Loo (2018) found three dimensions of brand personalities that are based on emotional appeal – sincerity (e.g., warm, friendly, and agreeable), and three others based on rational appeal – competence (competent, effective, and efficient). Since emotional brands are more strongly based on emotional appeal and emotional brand personality traits, it is expected that emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content is stronger too than to those with a prevailing rational content.

H4: Emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content is higher than to that with a prevailing rational content.

4. METHOD AND MEASURES

Two brands of mobile telephones (Apple/iPhone and Samsung) have been selected for the study and their users were employed as a source of data for the study. This was based on several assumptions. First, brands needed to be well known and widely used; their use needed to be relatively independent based on demographic characteristics. Second, the two selected brands needed to be different in terms of their stereotyped images in a market: i.e., one brand needed to be better known because of its emotion/image aspect and the other because of its prevailing rational/practical aspects of brand personality. Both these assumptions have been

addressed in a pilot study assessing the popularity and image of mobile phones used in Lithuania. In terms of the awareness, an online convenience sampling survey first ranked four mobile phone brands with the largest market shares in Lithuania: Samsung, Apple, Huawei, and Xiaomi (StatCounter Global Stats, 2021). In this survey, Apple brand has been used rather than iPhone, since the comparison has been done between the brands that could be known not just within the category of mobile phones, but also because of the products of other categories (parent brands). The choice of Apple instead of iPhone allowed its comparison with Samsung in terms of the full context of the brand image, including the logo of the company, the associations with other products, the history of the brand, etc.

The two most popular brands showed the strongest associations with prestige (Apple) and with quality/performance (Samsung), which made them the most suitable for the analysis. The choice was additionally supported by the existence of other similarly designed studies (Huang et al., 2012) and managerial insights, with Apple and Samsung being considered competing “Tech Giants” that differ in emotional engagement with consumers: according to 2018 data, Apple had 16% more positive sentiment than Samsung (Crimson Hexagon, 2018).

A self-administrated online survey based on convenience sampling was used to collect the data for the main study. The sample included only respondents who owned either a Samsung or an Apple mobile phone during previous three years. Data was collected in Lithuania in the period of September–December 2021. After the removal of 11 unengaged respondents, the analysis was performed on 287 questionnaires. In all, 51.2% of the respondents were users of the Apple (iPhone) brand, and the others of Samsung; they responded to survey questions about brand personality traits and emotional loyalty to the respective brands. The sample population included 18 to 70-year-olds, with the majority of the respondents were below 30

years of age (68.5%). The sample was not balanced in terms of gender either, with 78.4% of female and 21.6% of male respondents. However, there was no significant difference in the means of any variable observed, which made the sample appropriate for the analysis.

The research instrument (questionnaire) was developed by including widely accepted scales. The consumer emotional loyalty as an outcome variable was measured on a 5-item scale used by Bobâlă, Gătej (Bradu), and Ciobanu (2012). The reliability of this scale in the current study was 0.92, which was appropriate for the analysis. The three elements assessing the personality traits of consumers have been measured with the help of the Big Five Inventory personality traits scales. In all, 26 items measuring extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were used. The use of the sub-scales of the individual dimensions is widely accepted (Miller, Gaughan, Maples & Price, 2011; Oehler, Wendt, Wedlich & Horn, 2017). In the current research, Cronbach's alpha of agreeableness was 0.637, extroversion 0.839, conscientiousness 0.770, which is within the appropriate limits (Khalid, Hilman & Kumar, 2012). Brand personality traits were assessed with Aaker's (1997) brand personality scales of three dimensions: brand sincerity (11 items), excitement (11 items), and competence (9 items). This research strategy (including only the dimensions of the necessary subscales) is a common practice in similar studies (Puzakova, Kwak & Bell, 2015; Xue, Zhou, Zhang & Majeed, 2020). The reliability of these scales was appropriate: sincerity 0.858; excitement 0.936; com-

petence 0.862. All variables were measured by using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree."

This study aims to avoid the imperfection of congruence assessment by using a concept of dynamic congruence and by measuring congruence as a dynamic congruence variable. The variable was calculated as follows: it was received by subtracting the value of the consumer personality trait from the matching brand personality trait and adding 7 (the maximum value of a scale) in order to avoid negative numbers and zero value that would make the interpretation of the findings inconvenient. In this case, the higher obtained values meant a closer relationship with a brand personality trait. Since the scales for consumer personality traits and brand personality traits included different numbers of items, it was impossible to make calculations for each pair of items. This was resolved by calculating the variable from the means for brand personality traits and consumer personality traits.

5. ANALYSIS

The first hypothesis (Emotional loyalty is impacted by a dynamic congruence between the matching traits of brand personality and human personality) was tested by linear regression that included three antecedents representing the congruence between the three pairs of traits and linking them with emotional loyalty. The linear regression model was appropriate ($F=15.298$; $p<0.001$ and $R^2 = 0.140$) and disclosed two significant effects (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Effects of congruence on emotional loyalty

	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant		3.320	0.001
Sincerity-Agreeableness Congruence	0.169	2.747	0.006
Excitement-Extroversion Congruence	0.198	3.106	0.002
Competence-Conscientiousness Congruence	0.117	1.718	0.087

The findings show that two effects are significant at the level $p < 0.05$ and one at the level $p < 0.1$. Considering the sample size and the nature of the variables, this is sufficient to conclude that all the three sub-hypotheses of H1 are accepted. The findings indicate that in all three cases the increase of a brand personality trait compared to consumer personality trait positively impacts emotional loyalty to a brand.

Hypothesis H2 (Emotional loyalty is impacted by brand personality traits) was also tested using linear regression on its sub-hypotheses. The linear model was appropriate ($F=26.541$; $p < 0.001$ and $R^2 = 0.220$) and disclosed two significant effects (Table 2).

TABLE 2: Effects of brand personality traits on emotional loyalty

	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant		4.592	0.000
Sincerity	0.162	2.459	0.015
Excitement	0.261	3.468	0.001
Competence	0.135	1.544	0.124

The results allow for a confirmation of sub-hypotheses H2a and H2b while rejecting H2c (Brand personality trait of competence positively impacts emotional loyalty). One of the interpretations could be that the competence trait is differently reflected in the two analyzed brands, so the effects of the two brands produce a blurred result. A more precise answer to this question is provided by the test of the next hypothesis, H3: Sets of brand personality traits that impact the emotional loyalty to a brand with a

prevailing emotional content are different from that with a prevailing rational content.

In the current analysis, Apple represents a brand with a prevailing emotional content, while Samsung represents a brand with a prevailing rational content. The sets of brand personality traits that are linked with each of these brands are assessed by means of linear regression, using the backwards stepwise method.

In the case of Apple, two steps (models) were needed, of which the final model ($F=32.452$; $p < 0.001$ and $R^2 = 0.311$) included two remaining antecedents: sincerity ($\beta=0.224$; $t=3.043$, $p=0.003$) and excitement ($\beta=0.439$; $t=5.958$, $p < 0.001$). For Samsung, the backwards procedure included three models, the last one ($F=21.920$; $p < 0.001$ and $R^2 = 0.137$) of which included one antecedent of emotional loyalty – the competence brand trait ($\beta=0.370$; $t=4.682$, $p < 0.001$).

These results show that the sets of brand personality traits that impact emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content (Apple) differ from that with a prevailing rational content (Samsung) given that the former includes sincerity and excitement, while the latter includes competence. Thus, H3 is confirmed.

Finally, H4 predicted that emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content is higher than that with a prevailing rational content. This hypothesis was tested with the help of One-way ANOVA. The model ($F=9.104$; $p=0.003$) showed that loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content (Apple) is significantly higher (5.6097) than that of a brand with a prevailing rational content (Samsung): 5.1771, confirming hypothesis H4. The results of the testing of all hypotheses are presented below (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Results of hypotheses tests

No.	Hypothesis	Test result
H1a	Congruence between sincerity and agreeableness positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Accepted
H1b	Congruence between excitement and extroversion positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Accepted
H1c	Congruence between competence and conscientiousness positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Accepted
H2a	Brand personality trait of sincerity positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Accepted
H2b	Brand personality trait of excitement positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Accepted
H2c	Brand personality trait of competence positively impacts emotional loyalty.	Rejected
H3	Sets of brand personality traits that impact emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content are different from that with prevailing rational content.	Accepted
H4	Emotional loyalty to a brand with a prevailing emotional content is higher than to that with a prevailing rational content.	Accepted

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the current study add to the empirical evidence on the impact of brand personality traits and contribute to the knowledge on the issue in several aspects. First of all, the study confirms the findings of other studies reporting on the importance of brand personality traits as antecedents of loyalty (Zentes et al., 2008). However, the current study focuses specifically on the emotional loyalty to brands, expanding on the former knowledge and enriching it by leading to the conclusion on the importance of the brand personality traits as antecedents of emotional loyalty. The study also shows that all the examined congruences have an impact on consumers' emotional loyalty, thus complementing the findings of previous studies (Lin, 2010; Vazquez-Carrasco & Foxall, 2006; Choi, Ok & Hyun, 2017). It is important to note that the scope of the current study was concentrated specifically on the impact of congruence on emotional loyalty, while the abovementioned studies linked it to loyalty without specifying its emotional dimension. This is a novelty of the current study.

The analysis of the relationship between the traits of brand personality and emotional loyalty based on two brands differ in terms of their personalities contributes to determining that the level of emotional loyalty created for them is not the same. A brand that emphasizes the brand personality trait of competence and is generally stereotyped as a more rational brand (Samsung) develops a lower level of emotional loyalty than Apple, which is known to be a more emotional brand (Ajilore & Solo-Anaeto, 2016; Bonetti, 2013). Studies looking into their brand personality found interviewees saying that "they buy Apple products for what the company represents and the emotional value that comes from owning and using Apple products" (Pinson & Brosdahl, 2014). Some researchers not only found higher loyalty in the context of Apple but also stated that Apple has a cult-like sentiment towards it; Samsung, on the other hand, is mainly reputed for its wide range of products and prices (Almeida, Sousa, Rodrigues, Candeias & Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2021). This contributes to the understanding of how a different image of a brand (rational/emotional) could become a key to its differentiation in the market and extends the knowledge on the analyzed brands (Crim-

son Hexagon, 2018). The current study attempted to elaborate on the reasons for this difference and found emotional loyalty to these brands to be generated by different personality traits of the brands themselves. This allows us to conclude that emotional brand personality traits (sincerity and excitement) generate a higher level of the loyalty than does competence, as a more rational trait of brand personality. However, this needs to be researched further because the current study does not answer whether a higher emotional loyalty to Apple is a result of the nature of personality traits (more emotional versus more rational) or their number (two traits in case of Apple and just one for Samsung).

The third important conclusion is about the relevance of using the measure of dynamic congruence. Instead of assessing just the level and valence of congruence between the matching traits of brand personality and human personality (Liu et al., 2012), it allows the assessment of the closeness of the congruence either to brand personality or human personality. This indicator needs further conceptualization and empirical testing in future studies; however, its applicability has already been justified.

The contribution of this study is wider than the insights into the two specific brands. The brands used in this study represent examples of the types of brands that are more oriented towards either emotional or rational images. The study helps seeing the brand personality traits that contribute to the development of emotional loyalty to such types of brands and emphasizes the importance of the congruence between the brand personality traits and consumer personality traits.

6.1. Managerial implications

The study suggests several managerial implications. It links brand personality traits with emotional loyalty and emphasizes the importance of each trait for that loyalty. This can be almost

directly used in the process of brand management because the study outlines the traits that are more important for the brands emphasizing emotionality versus rationality. The managerial application of the congruence between brand personality and consumer personality might seem less straightforward, but the study well emphasizes the way in which psychographic segmentation information needs to be linked with the traits of brand personality and how that affects emotional loyalty.

6.2. Limitations

The study evidently has several limitations. First of all, there is always an issue of what brands are used for the study. As branding strategies for the two brands examined differ, the use of Apple is not exactly the same as the use of Samsung. The Samsung company focuses on the umbrella brand (blanket name) and phone models, while Apple emphasizes the iPhone brand for mobile phones and only then its models. This could have some impact on the overall results although the closeness of the perception of Apple and iPhone have been tested in the pilot study. Another issue of the use of Apple and Samsung brands in the study may be a result of the overall strength of these specific brands that are market leaders. On the one hand, the use of leading brands for analysis is very strongly justifiable: they are well known, have strong images, and generate strong emotional responses. However, this might limit generalization of the findings to brands that are less famous than these two. One more limitation of the study is associated with the sample type and its structure. While there is no need to achieve representativeness in similar studies, more demographically balanced proportions within the sample could be helpful. This suggestion may be extended to a proposal to replicate research in a different cultural context given that personality traits and perceptions of brand personality traits are culture-sensitive.

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APPENDIX 1

Scales

Variables	Items	Cronbach's alpha
<p>Brand Personality <i>Aaker (1997). Dimensions of Brand Personality)</i></p>	<p>Imagine that the (Apple/Samsung)-branded mobile phone is a person. What qualities would you attribute to this person?</p>	
<i>Sincerity</i>	family-oriented small-town down-to-earth sincere honest real wholesome original cheerful sentimental friendly	0.858
<i>Excitement</i>	trendy daring exciting cool spirited young unique imaginative up-to-date independent contemporary	0.936
<i>Competence</i>	reliable hard-working secure intelligent technical corporate successful leader confident	0.862
<p>Big Five personality traits <i>John, Naumann, & Soto (1991). Paradigm shift to the integrative Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues)</i></p>	<p>I am someone who...</p>	

Variables	Items	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Agreeableness</i>	... tends to find fault with others ... is helpful and unselfish with others ... starts quarrels with others ... has a forgiving nature ... is generally trusting ... can be cold and aloof ... is considerate and kind to almost everyone ... is sometimes rude to others ... likes to cooperate with others	0.637
<i>Extroversion</i>	... is talkative ... is reserved ... is full of energy ... generates a lot of enthusiasm ... tends to be quiet ... has an assertive personality ... is sometimes shy, inhibited ... is outgoing, sociable	0.839
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	... does a thorough job ... can be somewhat careless ... is a reliable worker ... tends to be disorganized ... tends to be lazy ... perseveres until the task is finished ... does things efficiently ... makes plans and follows through with them ... is easily distracted	0.770
<i>Emotional loyalty</i> (<i>Bobâlcă, Gătej (Bradu) & Ciobanu (2012). Developing a Scale to Measure Customer Loyalty</i>)	<p>Think back to the (Apple/Samsung)-branded mobile phone you have/had and the circumstances of its purchase. Thinking about the (Apple/Samsung) brand, rate the extent to which each of the following statements 1 – not at all suitable, 7 – perfectly suitable apply.</p> <p>I bought this brand because I really like it. I am pleased to buy this brand instead of other brands. I like this (mobile phone) brand more than other brands. I feel more attached to this brand than to other brands. I am more interested in this brand than other brands.</p>	0.920