

# *Store Attachment*

Marco Galvagno  
*University of Catania*

**10<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
MARKETING TRENDS  
Paris 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

# Foreword (1/2)

Relationship between customer and store. Two main perspectives till now

1. Purchase satisfaction as *dependent variable* (Bitner, 1990).

2. Purchase satisfaction as *independent variable* – among others – influencing a long term relationship between buyer and seller (Oliver 1999, De Wulf *et al.*, 2001)

# Foreword(2/2)

Satisfaction is not enough to gain loyalty (Arnold *et al.* 2005; Ahuvia, 2005; Carroll e Ahuvia, 2006)

Functional Loyalty vs. Emotional Loyalty (Barnes, 2005; Kim e Lee, 2010).

It seems that one should create a strong emotional tie between a firm and its customers – an *attachment* (Yim *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2006).

# Objective

To apply the *attachment* construct to stores and any commercial location (Borghini e Zaghi, 2006; Debenedetti, 2008; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010).

By defining *store attachment* as a strong emotional tie between consumer and store.

To show that *store attachment* doesn't rely on physical features or purchase satisfaction

# Theoretical Background (1/2)

## *Place Attachment* (Environmental Psychology ):

- People often give meanings to a place
- Places have different values for different people.
- People tend to maintain proximity to a place they are attached to

## *Emotional Attachment* (Marketing):

- Consumers can develop strong *emotional attachment* with objects, brands, products, firms
- *Emotional Brand Attachment* is related to *brand commitment, brand loyalty, brand image, and trust*

# Theoretical Background (2/2)

## *Place Attachment* (Environmental Psychology):

- Many definitions
- Multidimensional Construct
  
- Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989
- 2 dimensions:
  - *PLACE IDENTITY*
  - *PLACE DEPENDENCE*

## *Emotional Attachment* (Marketing):

- Many definitions
- Multidimensional Construct
  
- Thomson *et al.*, 2005
- 3 dimensions:

*AFFECTION*  
*PASSION*  
*CONNECTION* } *Emotional*

# STORE ATTACHMENT

A person is "attached" to a store/commercial site where:

- a. his self-concept is congruent with the image of the store (*Store Identity*)
- b. the store meets its functional needs (*Store Dependence*)
- c. has feelings of sincere affection for the store (*Store Affection*)

# Research Questions

1. Find out whether *store identity*, *store dependence*, and *store affection* emerge as distinct constructs in reference to a store, checking reliability and validity.
2. Find out whether *store attachment* is a reflective first-order or second-order construct, checking reliability and validity.

# Research design

1. Qualitative Analysis (march 2010): 8 interviews of consumers (8 ss., 50% M/F, age 18-30)

2. Structured survey (may 2010).

- Sample: 290 students were asked to answer all the questions thinking to a commercial site they were particularly attached to

272 valid questionnaires (51.8% female; av. age= 21.7, std dev.= 2.45)

# Measures (1/2)

*Store Identity* and *Store Dependence* were measured using 8 items from Williams & Roggenbuck (1989) *place attachment scale* (5-points scale)

*Store Affection* was measured using 5 items from Yim *et al.* (2005) *firm-customer attachment scale* (5-points scale)

1 item was eliminated after the verification of reliability ( $\alpha$  and ITC) for each scale.

At the end of this phase, all the measurement scales had an  $\alpha > 0.74$  and all of the indications were that  $ITC > 0.45$ .

# Measures (2/2)

**Total variance explained: 67% - KMO=0.85**

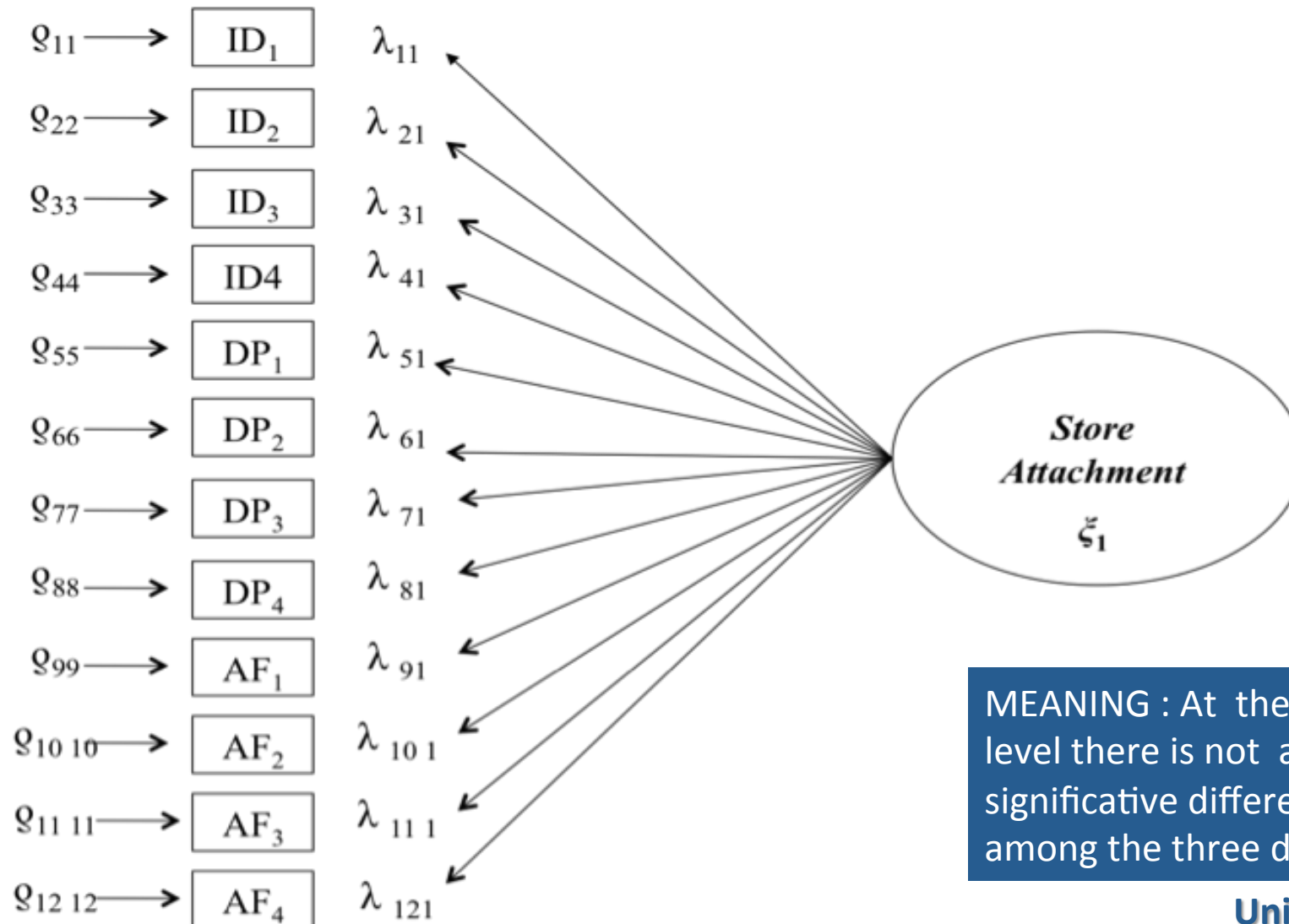
<i>Item<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b><i>Store Identity</i></b> ( <i>Variance explained= 43.8% <math>\alpha = 0.86</math> e <math>ITC \geq 0.62</math></i> )		
ID <sub>1</sub> This store is part of me	2.95	1.177
ID <sub>2</sub> I identify a lot with this store	3.26	1.124
ID <sub>3</sub> I'm very attached to this store	3.43	1.071
ID <sub>4</sub> This store is very close to what I am	3.02	1.199
<b><i>Store Dependence</i></b> ( <i>Variance explained= 12.1% <math>\alpha = 0.74</math> e <math>ITC \geq 0.45</math></i> )		
DP <sub>1</sub> This store is the best among those of the same kind	3.85	1.066
DP <sub>2</sub> To visit this store satisfies me more than any other place	3.50	1.049
DP <sub>3</sub> I would not change this store for another	3.11	1.139
DP <sub>4</sub> I never thought about changing this store with another of the same type	3.14	1.236
<b><i>Store Affection</i></b> ( <i>Variance explained= 11.1% <math>\alpha = 0.91</math> e <math>ITC \geq 0.78</math></i> )		
AF <sub>1</sub> Buy from this store makes me feel good	3.87	0.992
AF <sub>2</sub> Buy from this store makes me happy	3.72	1.084
AF <sub>3</sub> I love to buy from this store	3.79	1.017
AF <sub>4</sub> Buy from this store is a real joy	3.48	1.110

# Data Analysis

3 models were tested:

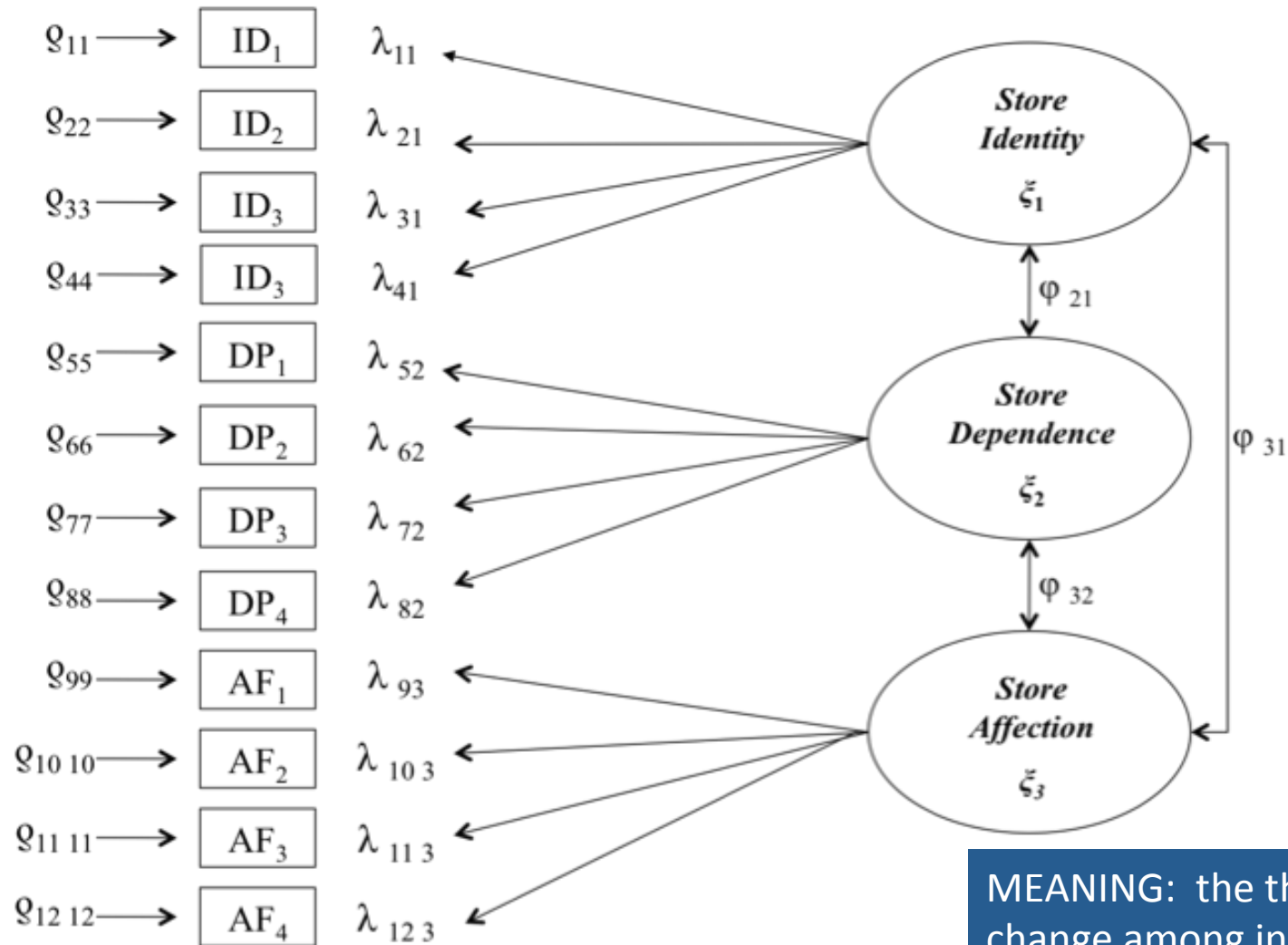
- A. a single factor model where 12 items loaded onto one dimension of *store attachment*;
- B. a first-order, three-factor correlated model that allowed the three dimensions of store attachment to differ within individuals;
- C. a second-order model consisting of three first-order factors loading onto a single second-order factor.

# Model A



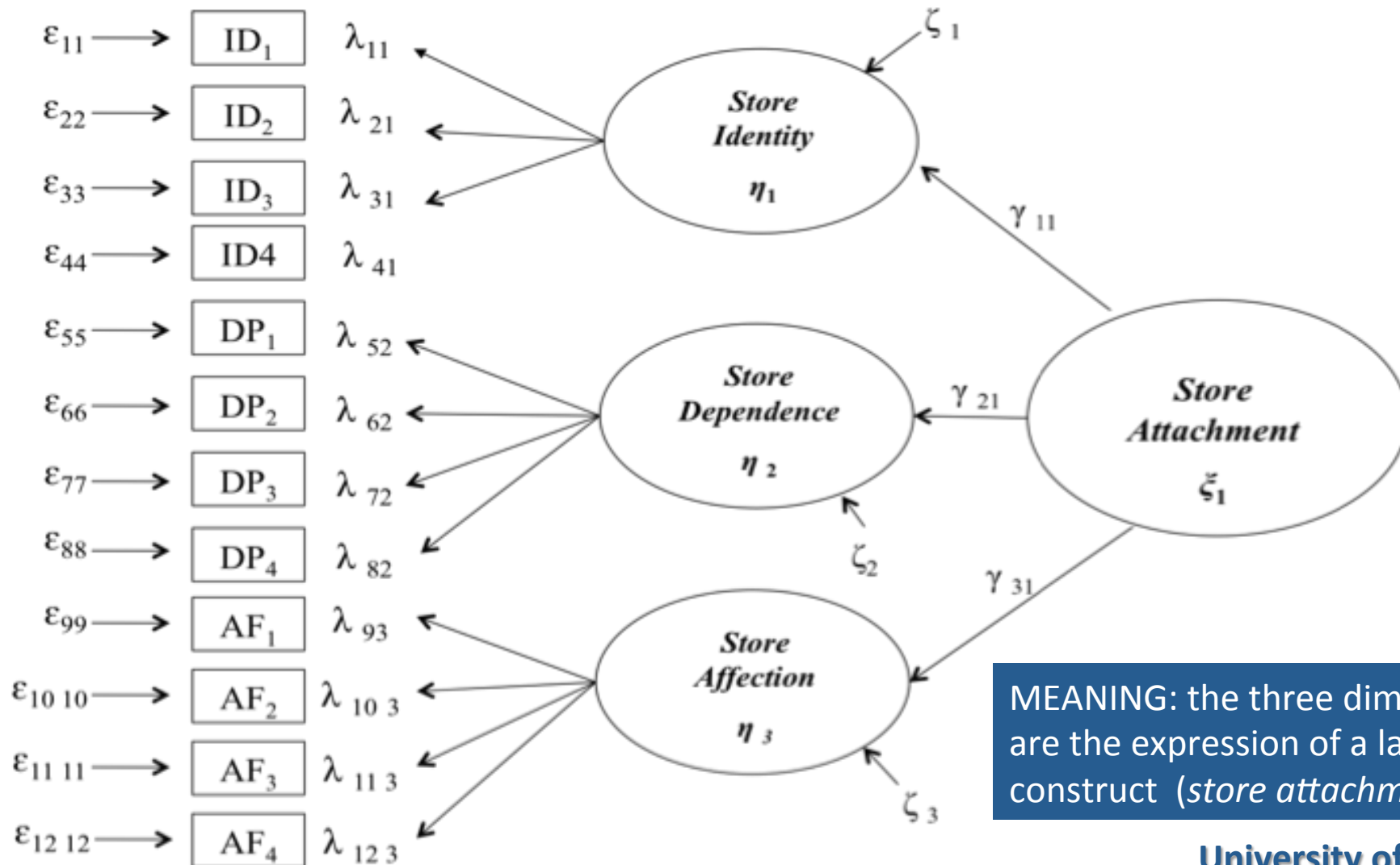
MEANING : At the individual level there is not any significant difference among the three dimensions

# Model B



MEANING: the three dimensions could change among individuals

# Model C



MEANING: the three dimensions are the expression of a latent construct (*store attachment*)

# Method

Confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL 8.80)

Model superiority was based on goodness-of-fit indices and the chi-square difference test for nested models

Convergent validity was tested through *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* and *Composite Reliability* (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

# Results (1/3)

## Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Competing Models Tested

Model	Indices					
	SB $\chi^2$ (df)	CFI	SRMSR	RMSA (90% C.I.)	NNFI	CAIC
A	665,859 (54) <sup>***</sup>	0,81	0,11	0,20 (0,19 - 0,22)	0,77	824,36
B	122,267 (51) <sup>***</sup>	0,98	0,05	0,07 (0,06 - 0,09)	0,97	300,62
C	122,267 (51) <sup>***</sup>	0,98	0,05	0,07 (0,06 - 0,09)	0,97	300,62

The goodness-of-fit indices for the first-order, three-factor correlated model (Model B) and the second-order model (Model C) were superior to the single-factor model (Model A)

# Results(3/3)

## Confirmatory Factor Analysis

<i>Item<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Extim.</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Comp. Rel.</i>
<b><i>Store Affection</i></b>			
AF <sub>2</sub> Buy from this store makes me happy	.877	.71	.91
AF <sub>4</sub> Buy from this store is a real joy	.848		
AF <sub>1</sub> Buy from this store makes me feel good	.827		
AF <sub>3</sub> I love to buy from this store	.824		
<b><i>Store Identity</i></b>			
ID <sub>3</sub> I'm very attached to this store	.866	.61	.87
ID <sub>4</sub> This store is very close to what I am	.865		
ID <sub>1</sub> This store is part of me	.707		
ID <sub>2</sub> I identify a lot with this store	.674		
<b><i>Store Dependence</i></b>			
DP <sub>1</sub> This store is the best among those of the same kind	.920	.46	.76
DP <sub>2</sub> To visit this store satisfies me more than any other place	.650		
DP <sub>4</sub> I never thought about changing this store with another of the same type	.542		
DP <sub>3</sub> I would not change this store for another	.507		

# Conclusions

*Store attachment* is a reflective first-order construct and *Store Identity*, *Store Dependence* and *Store Affection* emerge as distinct constructs.

Contribution: *store attachment* is important to measure long term relationship between customer and store.

Contribution: findings suggest that the meanings individuals associate with stores can extend beyond the importance of physical characteristics or attributes of the store and beyond purchase.

Managerial contribution: different cluster of customers who are attached to a store because of congruity between self-identity and store image; or satisfaction of functional needs, or affection.

# Limitations & Future Directions

## Limitations:

- Explorative study
- Sample
- No external validity

## Future directions:

### (actually ongoing)

- Testing *store attachment* in a real store/retail context.
- Studying relations between *store attachment* and other variables as word of mouth, loyalty, share of wallet, etc.

### (Future projects)

- To study the antecedents of store attachment

Thank You  
Q&A

[mgalvagno@unict.it](mailto:mgalvagno@unict.it)