

## PERSONALITY TRAITS AND THEIR EFFECT ON BRAND COMMITMENT: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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*The proliferation of new brands, increased use of sales promotions, the explosion of alternative forms of distribution and a reduction in advertising impact, make maintaining brand commitment, increasingly difficult. This study empirically examines the roles of personality traits on brand commitment. More specifically, this study investigates the effects of personality traits of preference for consistency (PFC), resistance to change, agreeableness, introversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness on consumers' brand commitment. Based on our study, the elemental trait of conscientiousness was found to be positively related to preference for consistency but no significant relationship was found between preference for consistency and resistance to change, however a significant relationship was found between resistance to change and brand commitment. Hence, it is suggested that in order to maximize returns, it is necessary to have brand-committed customers.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Customer loyalty can give an important competitive advantage to companies (Dick and Basu 1994). In markets, which are becoming increasingly competitive, building loyalty in consumers is becoming a key factor in winning market share (Lowenstein 1997; Heere and Dickson 2008), and the key to long term, sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker 1996; Chakraborty, Srivastava and Marshall 2007). Loyal customers lower a firm's acquisition costs, as the cost of acquiring a new customer is much higher than the cost of retaining an old customer (Kotler 2000). In addition, highly loyal customers account for a significantly higher percentage of a firm's revenues. For example, in one study of paint purchasers, highly loyal customers accounted for 26 percent of the firm's customers, but 43 percent of the firm's revenues, while the low loyalty group accounted for 23 percent of the firm's customers, but only 4.5 percent of revenues (Owens, Hardman and Keillor 2001).

In spite of the said advantage, the dynamics and psychology behind the development of customer loyalty is not well understood, with

potentially multiple conditions or cognitions at work within the loyalty construct (Jacoby and Kyner 1973; Shapiro 1990; Owens, Hardman and Keillor 2001; Hill and Alexander 2006). Loyalty measures, based on repeated purchase decisions, do not distinguish between true or spurious loyalty to one brand because of many reasons such as there might be no other brand readily available, a brand offers a long series of deals, has a better shelf or display location, etc. (Day 1969). These spuriously brand loyal buyers may lack any attachment to the brand and they can be easily attracted to another brand that offers a better deal, a coupon, or enhanced point of purchase visibility (Day 1969). For example, one comprehensive study across 27 brands found that after a year only 53 percent of "high loyalty" users remained highly loyal to the brand (Baldinger and Rubinson 1996).

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

#### Brand Commitment

A brand loyal consumer nearly always purchases the same brand, while a non-loyal consumer typically switches brands based on availability, convenience, price, or a brand promotion. Acknowledging the realities of the

marketplace, Totten and Block (1994) note that it is rare for a consumer to purchase only one brand, and therefore define brand loyal consumers as those who usually purchase a particular brand. Also, it is possible to buy a brand again and again, but not be committed to it. Hence, the concept of commitment provides an essential basis for distinguishing between brand loyalty and other forms of repeat purchasing behavior (Jacoby and Chestnut 1978). Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) suggest that brand loyalty has been viewed and measured as an attitudinal concept, a behavioral concept, and simultaneously as a behavioral and attitudinal concept. To distinguish between these different brand loyalty constructs, the construct of brand commitment will be used within this study. Brand commitment is an attitudinal construct (Dick and Basu 1994).

When individuals are more concerned about their purchases within a product category, they are inclined to establish strong preferences and develop brand loyalties more readily. Empirical evidence for this linkage comes from the positive linkage between perceived risk and brand loyalty (Jacoby and Chestnut 1978). Also, Beatty, Kahle and Homer (1988) proposed that ego involvement is a precursor of product involvement, which in turn precedes brand commitment. On the other hand, Warrington and Shim (2000) found negligible correlation between product involvement and brand commitment.

Day (1969) noted that consistency in a person's purchase behavior does not necessarily mean that he/she is brand loyal. Brand attitude should to be assessed as well as brand behavior. Day (1969) viewed brand loyalty as consisting of repeated purchases prompted by a strong internal disposition. Individual's dispositional basis for repeat purchase and appraisal of the target is seen as inseparable from the notion of loyalty (Jacoby and Chestnut 1978). As repeat purchase is premised on choice within the set of alternatives, a consumer's relative appraisal of targets within the relevant set is likely to assume significance. Attitude serves as an object appraisal function. Attitudes have been

related to behaviors, but one may hold a favorable attitude toward a brand but not purchase it because of greater attitudinal extremity toward another brand. Hence the nature of relative attitude is likely to provide a stronger indication of repeat patronage than the attitude toward a brand determined in isolation (Dick and Basu 1994). Two dimensions, the degree of attitudinal strength and the degree of attitudinal differentiation, seem to underlie an individual's relative attitude toward a brand. Relative attitude will be highest for strong attitude strength and clearly differentiated attitude toward brand and will be lowest for weak attitude strength and no perceived differentiation. Customer loyalty is defined as the relationship between relative attitude and repeat patronage (Dick and Basu 1994; Heere and Dickson 2008). Evidence in different research domains shows that holding strong commitment to specific objects/events/issues demonstrates enhanced resistance to persuasion attempts (change). Many in the marketing field have also defined loyalty as a composite blend of brand attitude and behavior, with indexes that measure the degree to which one favors and buys a brand repeatedly (e.g., Day 1969; Pritchard et al. 1999). Commitment differs from this composite definition as it is generally considered in purely cognitive terms that assess consumer attitudes of attachment to a brand. Morgan and Hunt (1994) describe commitment as an enduring desire to continue an attachment.

Psychologists defined commitment as decisions or cognitions that fix or bind an individual to a behavioral disposition (Kiesler 1971). Crosby and Taylor (1983) provided a definition of commitment as a stable preference that was bound by an attitude of resistance to change. They argue that the need to maintain a consistent informational structure helps maximize one's resistance to change (informational process). This is related to maintaining cognitive consistency regarding brand knowledge and information and the confidence in the brand's consistent performance. Another process deals with personal attachment and whether people identified with important values and self-image

linked to a preference (identification process). The more strongly consumers identified with the values and images embodied by a particular brand, the greater their sense of resistance to change that preference (Pritchard et al. 1999). The identification of values and images associated with a brand, may assume an increasingly important role in developing commitment, given that products in today's marketplace are often differentiated more on their symbolic values than on their physical attributes and functions. The third process refers to people's perception that their preferences are free (volitional process). When people sense that their choices are unhindered, the resulting commitment is likely to be stronger and more deeply held (Salancik 1977). This perspective specifies information, identification, and volition as antecedent processes of commitment that facilitate resistance to change.

Commitment to a relationship is a relatively stable, strong, and intense psychological state or attitude towards maintaining the relationship (Allen and Meyer 1993; Chakraborty, Srivastava and Marshall 2007). States of commitment may arise from different motivations (Geyskens et al. 1996). Affective commitment exists when one has the desire to maintain the relationship based on a generalized sense of positive regard for, a liking of, and an enjoyment of the relationship (Matilla 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Calculative commitment, on the other hand, occurs when one needs to maintain a relationship due to the significant anticipated costs associated with leaving the relationship (Matilla 2006). In the consumer market, since both the buyer and the seller often have numerous alternatives at the individual level, the market relationship is generally characterized by low buyer-seller interdependence and low costs associated with leaving the relationship for either party. As a result, consumers' commitment to the brand tends to be more affective than calculative (Matilla 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Crosby and Taylor (1983) provided a definition of commitment as a stable preference that was

bound by an attitude of resistance to change. In this paper, brand commitment is defined as the degree to which the consumer is attitudinally loyal to a particular brand in a product class. It is the strength of the individual's belief system toward a brand, and is different from calculative commitment often observed in other relationship domains (Matilla 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006). As per the definition, preference for consistency should have positive impact on resistance to change and brand commitment.

### **Preference for Consistency (PFC)**

Preference for consistency (PFC) of a person is the desire to be consistent within his/her own responses termed as "internal consistency," the desire to appear consistent to others, "public consistency," and the desire that others be consistent, "others' consistency" (Cialdini et al. 1995; Bator and Cialdini 2006). Individuals with high PFC decide how to respond to incoming information by taking into account its relationship with already established information and factors; they are likely to be receptive and responsive to the new information to the degree that it fits with the implications of existing variables. PFC measures a tendency to be consistent with existing information, not the information of any sort. Cialdini et al. (1995) found a positive correlation between low-PFC and the personality trait of openness. Also they found evidence of the relatively greater extraversion of low-PFC participants. Low-PFC individuals may like people, especially strangers, more than high-PFC individuals. Cialdini et al. (1995) found a positive relationship between consistency-based effects, such as foot-in-the-door effect and cognitive dissonance, to high-PFC scores. PFC is the tendency to respond to incoming stimuli in a way that integrates these stimuli with existing variables. High-PFC individuals weight these prior entry variables (e.g., commitments, choices, previous expectations) to a considerable degree, adjusting their subsequent responding accordingly (Cialdini et al. 1995; Bator and Cialdini 2006). Low-PFC

individuals on the other hand, do not weight the implications of such variables so heavily in their response decisions.

There are several possible meanings of consistency like *uniformity*, which implies invariance, or *regularity*, which implies lawfulness. But the most frequent meaning used by social psychologists is *coherence*, which implies a high degree of agreement or a fit between a particular element and other relevant elements. Cialdini et al. (1995) argued that individuals who identify themselves as consistent choose to make their attitudes fit with the implications of the established rather than the new. Consistency motivation may best be defined as an inclination toward *adherence* - adherence to the implications of what has happened before.

### Other Personality Traits

The elemental trait of *introversion* is the tendency to reveal feelings of bashfulness and shyness (Mowen 2000). This should relate *positively* with PFC as PFC is a tendency to be consistent with existing information. Hence an individual high on introversion should show indication of maintaining consistency. The trait of *openness to experience* is defined as the need to find novel solution (Mowen 2000), should relate *negatively* with PFC as people with high need for experience will always look for new things. The trait of *agreeability* is the need to express kindness and sympathy to others (Mowen 2000) and should relate *negatively* with preference for consistency as an individual high on agreeability will tend to agree with others and will not remain consistent in his/her responses. The elemental trait of *conscientiousness*, which is defined as the need to be organized, orderly, and efficient in carrying out task (Mowen 2000) should relate *positively* with PFC. A person who is organized and efficient should make their attitudes fit with the implications of the established rather than new information and hence should be high on PFC. Finally, the elemental trait of need for arousal should be *negatively* related to PFC because a person with

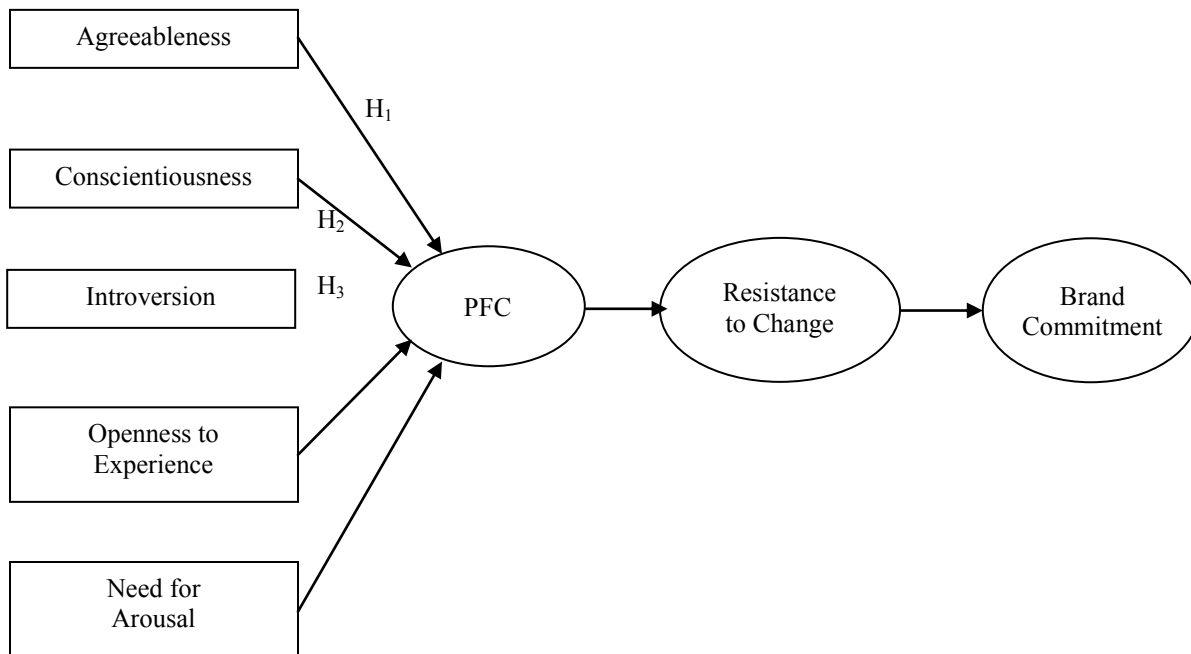
high need for arousal is drawn toward risk taking and new experiences with risks.

As mentioned earlier, brand commitment is defined as the degree to which the consumer is attitudinally loyal to a particular brand in a product class. It is the strength of the individual's belief system toward a brand, and is different from calculative commitment often observed in other relationship domains (Matilla 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006). This affective commitment can often be manifested through an enduring preference for a particular brand over other brands, continuing to use the brand, recommending the brand to friends, and resistance to competing brand's switching inducement (Aaker 1991; Bettencourt 1997; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996). Many authors contend that commitment differentiates true brand loyalty from other repeat purchase behaviors that have been termed habit, inertia, or spurious loyalty (Beatty and Kahle 1988; Dick and Basu 1994). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed (Please see Figure 1 for the model):

### Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>:** *Agreeableness* will be *negatively* related to *preference for consistency*.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** *Conscientiousness* will be *positively* related to *preference for consistency*.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** *Introversion* will be *positively* related to *preference for consistency*.
- H<sub>4</sub>:** *Openness to experience* will be *negatively* related to *preference for consistency*.
- H<sub>5</sub>:** *Need for arousal* will be *negatively* related to *preference for consistency*.
- H<sub>6</sub>:** *Preference for consistency* will be *positively* related to *resistance to change*.
- H<sub>7</sub>:** *Resistance to change* will be *positively* related to *brand commitment*.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Brand Commitment Model**



**METHODS**

**Sample**

This study was conducted at a large mid-western university in the USA. The study dealt with soft drink consumption. The primary target market for soft drinks is people under 35 years of age. According to the National Soft Drink Association (NSDA), consumption of soft drinks is now over 600, 12-ounce servings per person per year. Since the late 1970s the soft drink consumption in the United States has doubled for females and tripled for males. The highest consumption is in the males between the ages of 12 - 29; they average 1/2 gallon a day or 160 gallons a year. Thus college undergraduates are appropriate match for the topic area under study. Students who were enrolled in undergraduate business courses at a large mid-western university participated in this study. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires randomly. The personality traits were measured approximately two weeks before measuring brand commitment and resistance to change. The participants

responded to brand commitment and resistance to change measures in reference to the most favorite brand of soft drink. The total sample size consisted of 125 participants including 54 males (43 percent) and 71 females (57 percent). Average age of males was 21.3 years and of females 21.8 years with overall average age of 21.6 years.

**Measures**

All measures for the study have been used in previous studies and have been well established for their reliability and validity. Items for personality traits agreeableness, conscientiousness, introversion, openness to experience, and need for arousal, were taken from scales developed by Mowen (2000). These scales were employed because of their high reliability and validity. In addition, the scales are short and averaged four items in length. The use of short scales is supported by Burisch (1997), who found in a series of studies that carefully developed scales of two to four items can outperform longer scales. To assess the traits, respondents were presented with

short phrases and asked, “How often do you feel/act this way.” Responses were taken on a nine-point Likert scale anchored by “never-always.” Items for brand commitment were taken from scales developed by Beatty and Kahle (1988) and Muncy (1983). It consisted of five items. The four items resistance to change scale was adopted from scale developed by Pritchard et al. (1999). The seven items brief scale of Preference for Consistency (PFCB) was adapted from Cialdini et al. (1995). Respondents provided answers to nine-point Likert-type statements anchored by “strongly disagree-strongly agree.” Appendix 1 contains the measures employed in the study.

**ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**Measurement Model**

Before performing the hypotheses testing, we conducted a series of analyses to evaluate the properties of the measurement scales. As recommended by Gerbing and Anderson (1988) examining the scales of a study for composite reliability and convergent and discriminant validity is of utmost importance. We first performed an exploratory factor analysis on the scale items, taking one scale at a time to see if the items for a construct share a single underlying factor (i.e., unidimensionality). In every case, only one factor was extracted, using an eigen value of 1.0 as the cut-off point. Next, consistent with the approach advocated by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we estimated a measurement model to examine model fit and unidimensionality (confirmatory factor analysis). We used AMOS 18.0 (Arbuckle 2009) to estimate the models. We divided the variables of the model into two subsets: independent variable group (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Introversion, Openness to experience, Need for arousal) and dependent variable group (PFC, Resistance to change, Brand commitment), and then performed a measurement model estimation for each of these groups. We expected the variables within each of these groups to correlate with one another. Considering our sample size and the number of constructs in the current study, we

took this approach following Bentler and Chou (1987) and Moorman and Miner (1997).

Given the sensitivity of chi-square and its unreliability in the case of assessing the model fit in SEM, we relied on a variety of other fit indices and standards to assess model fit. The estimation results of the measurement model provided a reasonable model fit to the data: the five personality trait independent variables (exogenous) ( $\chi^2_{(160)} = 299.1, p < .01, CFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.08$ ) and the three dependent (endogenous) variables ( $\chi^2_{(87)} = 201.8, p < .01, CFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.10$ ). Taken collectively, the values of fit indices (CFI, IFI, TLI) exceeded or were close to the standard of 0.90 for model fit (Hu and Bentler 1999; Kelley, Longfellow and Malehorn 1996), which also confirmed the unidimensionality of each construct in the model (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Kohli, Shervani and Challagalla 1998).

We next assessed the convergent and discriminant validities of our constructs. Convergent validity is established if each loading is greater than twice its standard error (Anderson and Gerbing 1988), which also suggests that each loading is significant at  $t = 0.01$  level (Gefen et al. 2000). Table 1 shows that all ratios of loading to standard error were exceeding this minimum criterion. All loadings were significant at  $t = 0.01$  level. We also calculated composite reliability (CR) for each of the constructs. Analogous to coefficient alpha, CR assesses the internal consistency of a measure. We calculated CR using the following equation (Fornell and Larcker 1981, p. 45):

$$CR = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1} \lambda_{yi}\right)^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1} \lambda_{yi}\right)^2 + \sum_{i=1} Var(\epsilon_i)}$$

The numerator in the above equation is the square of the sum of standardized factor loadings, whereas the denominator is numerator plus the sum of the variance due to random measurement error for each loading. Variance

due to random measurement error is computed as 1 minus the square of each loading. As shown in Table 1, the CR values range from 0.847 to 0.933. These findings give robust support for convergent validity of the items in each scale.

Next, we assessed the discriminant validity. We calculated average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the amount of variance captured by a construct in relation to the variance due to random measurement error, using the following equation (Fornell and Larcker 1981, p. 46):

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1} \lambda^2_{yi}}{\sum_{i=1} \lambda^2_{yi} + \sum_{i=1} Var(\epsilon_i)}$$

The numerator in the above equation is the sum of the square of the standardized factor loadings, whereas the denominator is the number of items. Table 1 presents the AVE values for different constructs. All AVE values were more than the 0.50 limit (ranged from 0.530 to 0.777) suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Also, performing a confirmatory factor analysis using Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation in AMOS 18.0, we noted that all items loaded significantly on their corresponding latent construct, with the lowest *t*-value being 6.08 (*p* < .01), thereby providing evidence of convergent and discriminant validity.

**Hypotheses Testing**

After checking the measurement model, we tested our hypotheses by investigating the relationship of five personality traits with the trait of preference for consistency, as well as relationships between PFC and resistance to change, and between resistance to change and brand commitment, using multivariate regression. We also used structural equation modeling for testing our hypotheses to compare differences between regression and structural equation model.

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to confirm the relationships between different constructs. The elemental trait of agreeableness was found to be positively related with PFC (*t* = 1.79, *p* = 0.07), which was in the opposite direction of Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> when analyzed as only independent variable but was not significant when all elemental traits were entered as independent variables, rejecting H<sub>1</sub>. The elemental trait of conscientiousness was positively related with PFC (*t* = 2.07, *p* < 0.05), supporting H<sub>2</sub> significantly. No significant relationship was found between the trait of introversion and PFC, the trait of openness to experience and PFC, and the trait of need for arousal and PFC. Hence H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> were *not* supported. Also, no significant relationship was found between PFC and resistance to change. Hence H<sub>6</sub> was *not* supported as well. A significant negative relationship was found between introversion and resistance to change (*t* = -3.392, *p* < 0.01). Resistance to change and brand commitment were significantly related (*t* = 9.812, *p* < 0.01). Therefore, H<sub>7</sub> was significantly supported. Table 2A provides standardized estimates and *t*-values.

We also ran a structural equation model using AMOS 18.0 to check if results differ. The overall model was satisfactory and similar relationships were found significant. The relationship between elemental trait of agreeableness and PFC was found to be not significant (*β*= .144, *t* = 1.37, *p* = 0.17), not supporting Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>. The elemental trait of conscientiousness was positively related with PFC (*β*= .222, *t* = 2.07, *p* = 0.038), supporting H<sub>2</sub> significantly. No significant relationship was found between the trait of introversion and PFC (*β*=-0.051, *t* = -0.52, *p* = 0.604), the trait of openness to experience and PFC (*β*= -.160, *t* = -1.37, *p* = 0.171), and the trait of need for arousal and PFC (*β*= -.040, *t* = -0.34, *p* = 0.734). Hence H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub> were *not* supported. Also, no significant relationship was found between PFC and resistance to change (*β*= -0.027, *t* = -0.29, *p* = 0.774). Hence H<sub>6</sub> was *not* supported. Resistance to change and brand commitment were significantly

**TABLE 1**  
**Measurement Properties**

Construct	Items	Std. Loading	S.E.	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	AVE
Introversion	Intro 1	0.911	--	0.924	0.92	0.752
	Intro 2	0.924	0.060			
	Intro 3	0.794	0.073			
	Intro 4	0.833	0.062			
Conscientiousness	Consc 1	0.924	--	0.859	0.86	0.618
	Consc 2	0.935	0.072			
	Consc 3	0.709	0.064			
	Consc 4	0.490	0.076			
Openness to Experience	Open 1	0.830	--	0.918	0.91	0.738
	Open 2	0.810	0.070			
	Open 3	0.924	0.077			
	Open 4	0.869	0.085			
Agreeableness	Agree 1	0.810	--	0.847	0.84	0.586
	Agree 2	0.730	0.081			
	Agree 3	0.573	0.102			
	Agree 4	0.910	0.103			
Need for Arousal	Arous 1	0.913	--	0.933	0.93	0.777
	Arous 2	0.802	0.064			
	Arous 3	0.908	0.063			
	Arous 4	0.899	0.067			
Preference for Consistency	PFC 1	0.570	--	0.892	0.90	0.586
	PFC 2	0.702	0.215			
	PFC 3	0.719	0.201			
	PFC 4	0.716	0.196			
	PFC 5	0.895	0.234			
	PFC 6	0.933	0.231			
Resistance to Change	Resist 1	0.794	--	0.917	0.91	0.735
	Resist 2	0.963	0.098			
	Resist 3	0.834	0.100			
	Resist 4	0.828	0.102			
Brand Commitment	BComm 1	0.676	--	0.848	0.85	0.530
	BComm 2	0.666	0.151			
	BComm 3	0.699	0.176			
	BComm 4	0.834	0.177			
	BComm 5	0.751	0.162			



**TABLE 2A**  
**Results of Hypotheses Testing**  
**Hierarchical Regression Analysis**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	PFC		Resistance to Change		Brand Commitment	
	$\beta$ (S.E.)	t-value	$\beta$ (S.E.)	t-value	$\beta$ (S.E.)	t-value
Agreeableness	.137 (.10)	1.436	.046 (.20)	.491	.005 (.15)	.073
Conscientiousness	<b>.186 (.07)</b>	<b>2.07<sup>a</sup></b>	-.106 (.14)	-1.189	-.002 (.11)	-.024
Introversion	-.025 (.06)	-.272	-.308 (.12)	-3.392 <sup>a</sup>	.016 (.10)	.217
Openness to Experience	-.074 (.08)	-.788	.087 (.17)	.947	-.033 (.13)	-.463
Need for Arousal	-.109 (.06)	-1.175	.079 (.11)	.863	-.113 (.09)	-1.586
<b>PFC</b>			.005 (.18)	.055	.069 (.14)	.989
<b>Resistance to Change</b>					<b>.703 (.07)</b>	<b>9.812<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.08</b>		<b>.132</b>		<b>0.48</b>	
<b>Model F</b>	<b>1.98</b>		<b>2.98</b>		<b>15.34</b>	
<b>P-Value</b>	<b>.08</b>		<b>.009</b>		<b>.000</b>	

Note: a – Significant at p<.05 level

**TABLE 2B**  
**Results of Hypotheses Testing**  
**Structural Equation Model**

	Hypothesis	Std. Estimate	S. E.	t-value
AgreeablenessàPFC	H <sub>1</sub>	0.144	0.077	1.37ns
ConscientiousnessàPFC	H <sub>2</sub>	0.222	0.126	2.07
IntroversionàPFC	H <sub>3</sub>	-0.051	0.460	-0.52ns
Openness to ExperienceàPFC	H <sub>4</sub>	-0.160	0.059	-1.37ns
Need for ArousalàPFC	H <sub>5</sub>	-0.040	0.052	-0.34ns
PFCàResistance to Change	H <sub>6</sub>	-0.027	0.221	-0.29ns
Resistance to Change àBrand Commitment	H <sub>7</sub>	0.834	0.096	6.97

(Goodness-of-Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2_{(543)} = 916.4, p < 0.01$ ; RMSEA = .074; CFI = 0.882; IFI = 0.885; TLI=0.863).

positively related ( $\beta=0.834$ ,  $t=6.97$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).  $H_7$  was supported. Table 2B provides path coefficients and t-values.

Since no significant relationship was found between PFC and resistance to change and PFC and brand commitment, as an exploratory purpose, a moderation analysis was conducted to examine if PFC moderates the relationship between resistance to change and brand commitment. But, no significant moderation effect was found.

## DISCUSSION

The model received strong support for the hypothesized path from resistance to change to brand commitment. The lack of any relationship between PFC and resistance to change is interesting. Perhaps this relationship is moderated by other variables. Also as more than half of the respondents scored below the midpoint of the scale, the data suggest that college students do not seem to care for consistency. It is also possible that most of the non-significant relations between personality traits and PFC were due to the small sample size. Another possibility is that the scale used to measure PFC which was a brief scale consisting of only seven items and these seven items might not have been able to capture the whole construct of PFC.

True loyalty is commitment based, and must be distinguished from non-commitment based spurious loyalty. Loyalty measures such as repeat purchase can be misleading because they overlook factors such as inertia and habit. Hence measure for a brand's loyal consumer base should take brand commitment into consideration. We can distinguish between those who buy products strictly from habit or convenience and those who make repeat purchases based on genuine attachment.

Brand commitment should be viewed as a long-run end pursued to achieve long-run competitive advantage. It is a good predictor of loyal consumers and positively influences the customer retention rate. Promotional efforts

should be used as a strategic tool to improve customers' commitment to the brand and enhance their retention over time (Martin and Goodell 1991). Lowenstein (1997) has also placed commitment based loyalty in the top tier of the "Customer Loyalty Pyramid<sup>SM</sup>". As per Hofmeyr and Rice (2000) "Committed customers are the backbone of the value of a brand." Brand-committed consumers will stick with the brand even when the brand changes its attributes within certain limits (Aaker 1991). In a given product category, they are expected to use and purchase the particular brand exclusively, whenever possible.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Generalization of these results beyond the product category of soft drink should proceed with caution. The product category utilized here was selected because it represented a frequently purchased product. Limitation lies in the nature of the data because of the product category and sample profile. The student sample, though representing an important consumer group, is a limitation due to potential differences between students and nonstudents as consumers. Future research should examine the relationships in other product categories using more representative samples and through multiple studies. Also the model presented here consists only of a small set of preference for consistency, resistance to change, and brand commitment correlates. Future research should develop a more comprehensive model with a larger set of antecedent and consequences. Non-significant relationship between PFC and resistance to change was interesting and may be moderated by other variables. Future research should try to investigate these variables. Also, instead of brief scale of only seven items, the full scale of PFC should be used to measure the construct. Finally, importance of this research lies in a better understanding of how increased brand commitment could stem the growth of a more promiscuous customer base.

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## APPENDIX

## Measurement Scales of the Study

**Brand Commitment (9 pt. Likert type “strongly disagree/strongly agree”)**

1. If my preferred brand or type of soft drink were not available at the store, it would make little difference to me if I had to choose another brand. (r)
2. I consider myself to be highly loyal to one brand of soft drink.
3. When another brand is on sale, I will generally purchase it rather than my usual brand. (r)
4. To me, XYZ is the same as other soft drinks. (r)
5. I try to use XYZ soft drink because it is the best choice for me.

**Resistance to Change (9 pt. Likert type “strongly disagree/strongly agree”)**

1. My preference to use XYZ brand of soft drink would not willingly change.
2. It would be difficult to change my beliefs about XYZ brand of soft drink.
3. Even if close friends recommend another brand of soft drink, I would not change my preference for XYZ soft drink.
4. To change my preference from the XYZ soft drink would require major rethinking.

**Preference for Consistency (9 pt. Likert type “strongly disagree/strongly agree”)**

1. It is important to me that those who know me can predict what I will do.
2. I want to be described by others as a stable, predictable person.
3. The appearance of consistency is an important part of the image I present to the world.
4. I typically prefer to do things the same way.
5. It is important to me that others view me as a stable person.

6. I make an effort to appear consistent to others.
7. It doesn't bother me much if my actions are inconsistent. (r)

**Elemental Traits (9 pt. “never/always”)****Introversion**

1. Feel bashful more than others.
2. Introverted.
3. Quite when with people.
4. Shy.

**Openness to Experience**

1. Frequently feel highly creative.
2. Imaginative.
3. Find novel solutions.
4. More original than others.

**Agreeableness**

1. Tender hearted with others.
2. Agreeable with others.
3. Kind to others.
4. Softhearted.

**Conscientiousness**

1. Precise.
2. Efficient.
3. Organized.
4. Orderly.

**Need for Arousal**

1. Drawn to experiences with an element of danger.
2. Seek an adrenaline rush.
3. Actively seek out new experiences.
4. Enjoy taking more risks than others.