# Brand Loyalty vs. Repeat Purchasing Behavior

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Brand loyalty is first distinguished from simple repeat purchasing behavior and then conceptually defined in terms of six necessary and collectively sufficient conditions. An experiment designed to test this conceptualization provided strong empirical support for the distinction as conceptualized.

# Brand Loyalty Vs. Repeat Purchasing Behavior

The construct of brand loyalty has intrigued investigators for at least three decades, and a sizeable body of literature has evolved. However, reviews of this work [20, Chapter 26] reveal that inconclusive, ambiguous, or contradictory findings are the rule rather than the exception. Brand loyalty research has thus far failed to contribute significantly to our understanding of consumer decision processes.

One explanation for these results stems from the fact that there are at least eight major approaches to operationally defining brand loyalty [28], some of which contain a variety of specific brand loyalty indices (e.g., Brown [7], McConnell [38], and Tucker [48] each used different "sequence" definitions). "So many definitions make it difficult and hazardous to compare, synthesize, and accumulate findings" [32, p. 329]. For example, a 12-trial purchase sequence of AABAACAADAAE would qualify a consumer as being loyal to Brand A according to the percent-of-purchase definitions [12, 37], but not according to most sequence definitions which require three or four consecutive purchases of the same brand as the criterion of loyalty [38, 48]. Moreover, another operationalization [21] would maintain that there were different degrees of loyalty if the identical sequence and percent-of-purchase data were based on only two brands (AABAABAABAAB) rather than five brands, as above.

Regardless of which measure an investigator selects, a single unidimensional measure is probably insufficient for measuring such a complex multidimensional phenomenon as brand loyalty. Only recently have there been attempts to incorporate more than one operationalization in the same study. Massy, Frank, and Lodahl [37] factor-analyzed a variety of purchase variables and found that their brand loyalty measures all loaded heavily on the same factor. Burford, Enis, and Paul [8] intuitively derived a brand loyalty index which incorporated three different operational approaches.

In an attempt to examine the construct validity of brand loyalty, Olson and Jacoby [43] administered 12 specific brand loyalty measures to 177 toothpaste purchasers. The optimal factor-analytic solution accounted for 67% of the variance and yielded four factors labeled Behavioral Brand Loyalty (27%), Attitudinal Brand Loyalty (17%), Multibrand Loyalty (14%), and General Brand Loyalty (9%). Relatedly, both Day [15] and Jacoby [26, 27, 29] suggest that brand loyalty consists of both behavioral and attitudinal components. Using other subject populations, other inexpensive nondurable products, and incorporating other brand loyalty measures, Jacoby and Olson have obtained comparable factor-analytic solutions.

Another explanation offered for the inconclusive findings is that, while operational definitions abound, there are no conceptual definitions of brand loyalty [20, p. 584; 28]. Regardless of how sophisticated the operationalization, before a phenomenon can be measured one must clearly define what it is and what it is not. According to the logic of modern science [6], such conceptual definitions ought to precede and determine one's operationalizations rather than vice versa. Moreover, while operational definitions may be sufficient for specifying how to measure brand loyalty and may, under certain conditions, enable one to make reasonably good predictions regarding future buying behavior, they are quite arbitrary and provide nothing more than a surface understanding. Almost all are based entirely on overt purchase acts. As such, attention is focused almost exclusively on the *outcome* of, rather than the *reasons* for, behavior [20, p. 606; 28].

For example, is the woman who always buys Brand A because it is the cheapest "loyal" in the same sense as the woman who buys Brand A because she prefers

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it? And what of the woman who buys Brand A because it has the most favorable shelf space or because it is the only nationally advertised and distributed brand carried by the store in which she shops [15]?

Clearly, if they are to be intelligent and maximally useful, marketing strategies developed to generate or modify repeat purchase behavior must consider the reasons underlying such behavior. Just as clearly, if brand loyalty involves something more than simple repeat purchasing behavior, then application of the commonly used stochastic [33] or proportion-of-purchase definitions [12] are, when used alone, inadequate for assessing brand loyalty.

Based on a comprehensive examination of the brand loyalty literature and considerable logical and intuitive analysis[1], a conceptual definition of brand loyalty was developed [28] which is based on the premise that brand loyalty is but one form of repeat purchasing behavior. As with all conceptual definitions, it specifies what must be measured, not how (i.e., via which procedures and operations) this should be done. The purposes of this article are: (1) to present briefly and describe this definition, and (2) to describe a study which empirically verified this conceptualization.

### *A Conceptual Definition of Brand Loyalty*

The definition is expressed by a set of six necessary and collectively sufficient conditions. These are that brand loyalty is (1) the biased (i.e., nonrandom), (2) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision-making, evaluative) processes.

More specifically, if brand loyalty were a random event, there would be no purpose in making it the object of applied scientific inquiry. Random events, though interesting, defy prediction and control.

Verbal reports of bias (i.e., statements of preference or intention to buy) are insufficient for defining brand loyalty. Such loyalty requires that statements of bias be accompanied by biased purchasing behavior. A mother who repeatedly says that she likes Brand X disposable diapers better than any other available diaper and intends to buy some, but always buys something else instead, is not brand loyal.

Nor does a single, biased behavioral act constitute brand loyalty. The term "loyalty" connotes a condition of some duration, and it is therefore necessary to have the purchase act occur at at least two different points in time.

The phrase "decision-making unit" implies that the decision maker need not be (a) the user or even the purchaser of the product, although he probably is, or (b) an individual, but can be a collection of individuals (e.g., a family or organization). To illustrate, consider the husband, too busy to shop, who tells his wife what brand of shampoo to buy for him and she obligingly does so time after time. It is he, the decision maker (and, in this instance, the user), not she, the actual purchaser, who is brand loyal. In this regard, Davis and Silk [14] report that housewives frequently purchase the brands that their husbands request. As another example, assume that this husband decides his children should use Brand X toothpaste regularly despite the fact that they prefer Brand Y. Again, it is the father, not the purchaser-mother nor user-children, who is the brand loyal decision maker.

These distinctions are far from trivial. Consider their implications for both measurement and the search for brand loyalty correlates and determinants. It would probably be impossible to understand the psychological dynamics and causative factors underlying brand loyalty using data collected on purchasers who are not the decision makers.

The fact that the decision-making *unit* may entail more than one person also has important measurement implications. To adequately understand the psychodynamics involved, one must insure that the measurements are based on all who participate in the decision-making process, particularly when the purchase represents a compromise. This could explain why individuals are sometimes not loyal (in their purchase behavior) to their most preferred brand.

The fifth condition—brand loyalty involves selecting one or more brands out of a set of brands—also has important implications. First, it recognizes that individuals can be and frequently are multibrand loyal, i.e., loyal to two or more brands in a product category. This possibility did occur to early investigators [7, 12], but has been more often ignored than explored. Recent exceptions are the empirical work of Massy, Frank, and Lodahl [37], Ehrenberg and Goodhart [19], Jacoby [29], and the Howard and Sheth [25] conceptualization of "evoked set."

Second, brand loyalty is essentially a *relational* phenomenon. It describes preferential behavior toward one or more alternatives out of a larger field containing competing alternatives. Brand loyalty serves an acceptance-rejection function. Not only does it "select in" certain brands, it also "selects out" certain others. Before one can speak of being loyal, one must have the opportunity for being disloyal; there must be a choice. While practitioners may be primarily interested in the "select in" aspect, scientific inquiry requires that all aspects of a phenomenon, including its inverse, be studied in order to reach a comprehensive understanding.

The sixth condition notes that brand loyalty is a function of decision-making, evaluative processes. It reflects

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a purchase decision in which the various brands are psychologically (perhaps even physically) compared and evaluated on certain criteria and the "optimal" brand (or brands) is (are) selected. Optimal is here defined in the sense of being most rewarding, all relevant decision criteria considered. Preference for a particular brand is only one factor which individuals consider in making purchasing decisions, and is sometimes not the most important factor. For example, price may dictate that brand-loyal behavior be manifested toward *a* preferred brand rather than *the most* preferred brand. Indeed, it is possible for brand loyalty to involve no positive affect toward the selected alternative. Directing attention toward the set of salient decision criteria and away from the traditional preference measures emphasizes that the psychological processes underlying brand loyalty are more complex than might be assumed from simple "I like Brand X best" kinds of statements.

As a result of this decision-making, evaluative process, the individual develops a degree of commitment to the brand(s) in question; he is "loyal." The notion of commitment provides an essential basis for distinguishing between brand loyalty and other forms of repeat purchasing behavior and holds promise for assessing the relative degrees of brand loyalty.

The six criteria presented are considered necessary and collectively sufficient for defining brand loyalty. However, definitions are arbitrary and good only to the extent that they are useful and can be verified. In that it illustrates problems inherent in the strictly operational definitions, clarifies certain aspects of the phenomenon, and suggests certain measurement guidelines, the definition already demonstrates some degree of utility. The purpose of this article is to subject it to empirical test.

### *Experimental Rationale*

Since the definition maintains that all six criteria must be satisfied before we have brand loyalty, verification requires demonstrating that, while brand loyalty and repeat purchasing behavior may appear from overt purchasing data to be one and the same, the underlying dynamics are indeed different, so that satisfying five or fewer conditions will result in nonloyal brand selection behavior under conditions which test for loyalty. Accordingly, an experiment was devised in which three of the criteria were met, a fourth assumed to be operating, and the remaining two conditions either satisfied or not, depending upon the experimental treatment.

Specifically, the procedures of the study guaranteed the presence of (1) a decision-making unit (a single subject), (2) who made a comparative evaluative judgment, and (3) then engaged in a series of purchase trials. The existence of biased responses could not be guaranteed prior to the experiment; it was assumed that it would manifest itself, based on what others had found in similar situations [38, 46, 48]; and this was later substantiated. The two conditions manipulated were that there be a behavioral response (Condition 2) and that there be a set of brand alternatives (Condition 5).

The general hypothesis was that loyalty would be manifested only by those subjects who had made prior selections under conditions where (1) more than one brand had been available in the product category, and (2) choice had been expressed behaviorally rather than by merely stating an intent to purchase.

## *METHOD*

### *Design*

Various facets of the study were pretested in four separate pilot studies employing a total of 97 subjects [34]. Subsequently, a 2 × 2 factorial experiment ($n$ = 20 per cell) was conducted which consisted of two levels of the number of brands available (1 vs. 2) and two levels of the expression of brand selection (overt behavior vs. stated intent) as the independent variables. These four cells will hereafter be abbreviated as follows: BE-2A (behavioral expression-two alternatives), NBE-2A (nonbehavioral expression-two alternatives), BE-1A (behavioral expression-one alternative), and NBE-1A (nonbehavioral expression-one alternative). According to the conceptualization, BE-2A subjects (Ss) should manifest substantially different brand choice and brand evaluative behavior under conditions which test for loyalty than Ss in the other cells, with these latter groups of Ss displaying equivalent nonloyal behavior.

"Numerous successful predictions dealing with phenotypically diverse 'criteria' give greater weight to the claim of construct validity than do . . . predictions involving very similar behavior" [11, p. 295]. Accordingly, six different dependent measures (two assessing attitudinal brand loyalty and four assessing behavioral brand loyalty) were employed independently to provide seven separate tests of this hypothesis.

### *Subjects*

Ss were 80 6- to 9-year-old children randomly divided by sex and age and assigned to treatment conditions. Chi-square analyses determined that the distribution of both males and females across treatment was not disproportionate ($p > .70$ and $p > .80$, respectively). Likewise, although 6- and 9-year-olds were underrepresented in the total sample, they were approximately equally distributed across treatment groups ($p > .30$ and $p > .20$, respectively).

Several considerations led to selecting children as Ss. First, social scientists generally agree that much adult behavior is a function of childhood experiences. Similarly, many associate the years of middle childhood with the important first lessons as a "consumer trainee" [24, 39]. Surprisingly, however, there have been relatively few investigations directed toward understanding childhood consumer experiences. Second, American children represent an economic force of considerable conse-

quence. Based only on an assumed average weekly allowance of 40¢ for the almost 20 million children ages five to nine in the United States, the potential expenditure of this age group in one year is over $400 million. Moreover, children exert considerable influence over expenditures made by other family members [10, 16, 40, 42, 52]. Third, it was easier to select a product and create a laboratory situation capable of inducing motivation comparable to "real world" motivation for children than for adults.

It should be noted that children are both brand-conscious and knowledgeable about which brand their parents use and/or consider best [39]. They also "discriminate between brands and base their loyalty on actual experience with the brand" [49, pp. 35–8]. Finally several studies [34, pp. 122–7; 36] indicate that children of this age normally have had experience with money, have acquired a basic knowledge of what it can buy on a relative basis, and do, with some frequency, spend money. They therefore have a sufficiently adequate concept of the value of money to justify their use in such studies.

*Product and Brand Name Selection*

The product utilized was candy bars since children have considerable experience and knowledge regarding this product [39]. Children often use over two-thirds of their spending money on such snack items [36]. Furthermore, all 41 children so tested in pilot studies reported having purchased candy bars for themselves at least once, and none refused to purchase one from the interviewer when given the opportunity.

Since experience with actual brands would have confounded the results, fictitious brand names were chosen from five consonants (H, L, N, S, and V). Twenty-six children evaluated the "fittingness" and "appropriateness" of these letters as candy bar names [31] and also provided data on feeling tone of the preconceived associations with each of these letters. L and S were selected based on their relative freedom from preconceived associations, their relative neutral feeling tone, and their approximately equivalent fittingness and appropriateness ratings.

*Procedure*

The experiment was conducted in three phases. Phase I insured that a comparative evaluation of brands did occur and that the S developed a more preferred (MPB) and less preferred brand (LPB). Phase II attempted to generate repeat purchasing behavior under the four different experimental conditions. Phase III tested the hypothesized brand loyal vs. non-brand loyal differences using the six dependent measures. All Ss were treated identically in Phases I and III, and differently in Phase II. The experiment required approximately one hour for each S and was conducted in a small laboratory room containing a TV monitor, a candy vending machine, and two work tables.

*Phase I.* Each S sampled both brands and then indicated his preference for each using the Smiling Faces Scale (SFS) and Method of Constant Sum (MCS). The former is a special 7-point Likert-type technique developed for use with children [51], while the latter requires the S to divide and allocate ten pennies to the two brands so as to represent his preference for each [2]. To eliminate potential confounds due to actual composition differences, the candy bars were identical in every way except for the assigned letter, which was alternated for each session to control for left-right position effects on the table.

*Phase II.* Next, all Ss watched the same specially prepared TV cartoon show which included five different 15-second commercials appearing one every four minutes. These commercials were identical except for insertion of Brand L at appropriate points in one version and Brand S in the other. Each S viewed five commercials for his MPB (as determined in Phase I) designed to produce repeat purchasing behavior for that brand.

Each commercial was followed by a brief pause (trials 1 to 5) during which the S was given 10¢ and could make either an actual purchase by operating the vending machine (BE) or could only state an intention to purchase (NBE). Half the subjects in each of these conditions had both Brands L and S available in the vending machine (2A), while the other Ss found only their MPB available (1A).

While both brands were always visible through the vending machine windows, the experimenter told the 40 Ss in the 1A condition that he accidentally forgot to bring one brand from home that morning to refill the machine. An "empty" sign was taped over that brand's window. This ruse was utilized instead of telling the S that the brand was sold out, since this might have made the unavailable brand seem more desirable [22]. Post-experimental manipulation checks indicated that: (1) all 40 BE Ss correctly believed that they would keep the candy bars they selected; (2) all 40 NBE Ss believed that they could only express an intention to purchase and did not expect to receive any candy bars; and (3) none of the 1A Ss disbelieved the ruse nor had negative affect as a result of it.

Because of potentially confounding demand characteristics [44] and psychological reactance [4], the commercials were brief and designed to be relatively unobtrusive and only mildly persuasive. Postexperimental manipulation checks indicated that while 85% of the subjects "liked the commercials okay," only 10% could recall one commercial for their MPB. Concern over these potential confounds was further minimized by the knowledge that children enjoy commercials [39] and view them as part of a program's entertainment [23].

*Phase III.* Following the fifth commercial and purchase trial, the TV program continued four additional

minutes, after which all Ss viewed a 30-second commercial containing a strong persuasive message for their LPB. The experimenter then sounded a hidden buzzer, asked the S to wait a moment, and excused himself. He returned almost immediately carrying two boxes of candy bars marked L and S and, for 1A Ss, explained that his wife had just brought these from home. All Ss were told that they would now start to play a shopping game and each was made aware of the fact that he could now purchase either L or S with the money provided him and that he would be given all such purchases to take home with him at the end of the game.

## *DEPENDENT MEASURES*

The six dependent measures were then collected in the following order:

1. Counter Persuasive Shifting (CPS). This was a dichotomous behavioral measure based on whether the S purchased his favorite brand or switched to his LPB in the face of the counter persuasive message on trial 6.

2. and 3. Smiling Faces Scale (SFS) and Method of Constant Sum (MCS). These two Phase I attitudinal measures were readministered.

4. Premium Variable (PV). This behavioral index [45] measures the S's resistance to inducements to switch away from his MPB as the price of his LPB is systematically decreased 2¢ over five trials (i.e., 8¢, 6¢, . . . , 0¢). The greater the inducement an S requires to switch to his LPB, the stronger his loyalty. A pilot study [34, pp. 128–36] had earlier established that comparable children were capable of comprehending such price increase and decrease "specials."

5. Lottery Tickets (LT). Ss were next permitted to purchase from 0 to 25 lottery tickets at 1¢/chance with the 25¢ given to each as payment for participating in the study. The drawing for the prize, a box of 50 candy bars (L or S) of the winner's choice, was held at the end of the experiment. As the S purchased each ticket, a penny was removed from his stack of 25 pennies, his number printed on that ticket, and it was placed into a covered fish bowl in front of him.

6. Delayed vs. Immediate Receipt (DvIR). Finally, each S was shown packages of Brands L and S and told that he could either have a package (of five candy bars) of his MPB with a week's delay or his LPB immediately. Preferring to wait for one's MPB is analogous to Cunningham's [13] operationalization of brand loyalty. A calendar was used to demonstrate how many days wait a week would be.

Manipulation checks were then administered. In addition to those noted above, other results indicated that: (1) all Ss accurately perceived the number of alternatives available to them in their treatment condition; and (2) when asked about the experiment's purpose, Ss showed no insight regarding the hypotheses nor the reason for the study other than to say that it had something to do with "watching cartoons and tasting candy bars."

## *RESULTS*

### *Phase II: Brand Loyalty vs. Repeat Purchase Behavior*

"One cannot define without implying distinctions, and the verification of these distinctions is an important part of the validation process" [9, p. 84]. Therefore, it is critical to demonstrate that brand loyalty differs from simple repeat purchasing behavior. While both may appear the same from overt behavior, the underlying determinants are probably different for the BE-2A Ss than for Ss in the other treatments.

Probably the most frequently used operational definition of brand loyalty is the percent- or proportion-of-purchases devoted to one's most often purchased brand [12]. Accordingly, the proportion of times each S chose his MPB over the five Phase II trials was calculated and then averaged for each treatment group. As expected, this traditional brand loyalty measure did not differentiate between the four treatment groups ($p > .55$). Ss in all four groups devoted a relatively high proportion of their selections (or stated intentions) to their MPB: 79% for BE-2A, 84% for NBE-2A, 100% for BE-1A, and 93% for NBE-1A. The greatest brand switching occurred in the 2A and BE groups; however, the differences were nonsignificant. Thus, had the experiment been terminated at the end of Phase II when the overt purchasing behavior was virtually identical across all four groups, it would have appeared that all subjects were equally loyal. Note that almost any of the standard operational definitions which could have been applied to these data would have led to the same conclusion.

### *Phase III: Testing the Hypothesis*

Rephrased in terms of the specific measures used, the general hypothesis may be stated in two parts. (1) Ss in the BE-2A group, in contrast to Ss in the other groups, will manifest: less counter persuasive shifting (CPS) in the face of a counter persuasive message; increased preference for their MPB and decreased preference for their LPB as assessed via the Smiling Faces Scale (SFS) and the Method of Constant Sum (MCS); greater resistance to brand switching in the face of steadily decreasing prices (PV) for their LPB; greater commitment to their MPB as manifested by the number of lottery tickets (LT) purchased; and will be more likely to wait a week for their MPB rather than accept a package of their LPB (DvIR). (2) Subjects in NBE-2A, BE-1A, and NBE-1A conditions would not differ significantly from each other on these dependent variables. Overall: BE-1A > NBE-2A ≃ BE-1A ≃ NBE-1A.

The four behavioral (CPS, PV, LT, DvIR) and one attitudinal (MCS) dependent measures provide five separate tests of the general hypothesis. Because the MPB

## Table 1

TREATMENT GROUP MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON THE DEPENDENT MEASURES[a]
($n$ = 20 per group)

| *Measures* | *BE-2A* | *NBE-2A* | *BE-1A* | *NBE-1A* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CPS | .05 | .10 | .40 | .20 |
| | *.22* | *.31* | *.50* | *.41* |
| PV | 7.00 | 4.70 | 4.50 | 3.70 |
| | *2.38* | *2.27* | *2.82* | *2.18* |
| LT | 19.85 | 12.90 | 11.65 | 7.60 |
| | *6.67* | *7.59* | *7.62* | *5.86* |
| DvIR | .80 | .35 | .45 | .20 |
| | *.41* | *.49* | *.51* | *.41* |
| MCS | 1.00 | .15 | .10 | .20 |
| | *1.26* | *1.14* | *.91* | *.89* |
| SFS (MPB) | .85 | −.05 | .40 | .05 |
| | *.88* | *1.23* | *.50* | *.22* |
| SFS (LPB) | −1.30 | −.20 | −.15 | −.25 |
| | *1.13* | *1.28* | *.88* | *.72* |

[a] Standard deviations are italicized.

CPS = Counter Persuasive Shifting; PV = Premium Variable; LT = Lottery Tickets; DvIR = Delayed versus Immediate Receipt; MCS = Method of Constant Sum; SFS (MPB) = Smiling Faces Scale (more preferred brand); SFS (LPB) = Smiling Faces Scale (less preferred brand).

BE-2A = behavioral expression-two alternatives; NBE-2A = nonbehavioral expression-two alternatives; BE-1A = behavioral expression-one alternative; and NBE-1A = nonbehavioral expression-one alternative.

and LPB are evaluated separately on the SFS, this technique provides two independent tests of the general hypothesis.

Table 1, which presents the treatment group means and standard deviations on each dependent measure, shows the following. Subsequent to the counter persuasive commercial, fewer than half the Ss in each treatment group purchased their LPB on trial 6; one out of 20 for group BE-2A, two in group NBE-2A, eight in group BE-1A, and four in group NBE-1A. Group BE-2A required a mean reduction of 7¢ before they would switch to their LPB whereas Ss in the other groups switched at about 4¢. BE-2A subjects spent nearly 20¢ of their 25¢ payment to purchase lottery tickets; subjects in the other groups typically spent between 7¢ and 13¢. Most (80%) BE-2A subjects chose to wait a week for a package of their MPB rather than receive a package of their LPB immediately. Less than one-third of the subjects in the other groups did so. Upon reevaluating the brands in Phase III, BE-2A Ss allocated a full penny more to their MPB (and, conversely, a full penny less to their LPB), whereas the other groups increased their MPB allocation by .2¢ or less. Finally, BE-2A Ss reevaluated their MPB upward by almost one full scale point and their LPB downward by more than one full scale point on the 7-point SFS, while Ss in the other groups hardly changed their evaluations of either their MPB or LPB.

Table 2 summarizes the results of seven separate

## Table 2

SUMMARY RESULTS OF NEWMAN-KEULS SEQUENTIAL RANGE TESTS APPLIED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE BETWEEN GROUP MEANS ON THE DEPENDENT MEASURES

| | *Column A* | | *Column B* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Measure* | *(BE-2A · · ·)* | *p* | *(NBE-2A; BE-1A; NBE-1A)* | *p* |
| CPS | ≈ (NBE-2A) | n.s. | (NBE-2A) > (BE-1A) | < .05 |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .05 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| PV | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| LT | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) > (NBE-1A) | < .05 |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| DvIR | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .05 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| MSC | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| SFS (MPB) | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | n.s. | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| SFS (LPB) | > (NBE-2A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (BE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (BE-1A) | < .01 | (NBE-2A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |
| | > (NBE-1A) | < .01 | (BE-1A) ≈ (NBE-1A) | n.s. |

CPS = Counter Persuasive Shifting; PV = Premium Variable; LT = Lottery Tickets; DvIR = Delayed versus Immediate Receipt; MCS = Method of Constant Sum; SFS (MPB) = Smiling Faces Scale (more preferred brand); SFS (LPB) = Smiling Faces Scale (less preferred brand).

BE-2A = behavioral expression-two alternatives; NBE-2A = nonbehavioral expression-two alternatives; BE-1A = behavioral expression-one alternative; and NBE-1A = nonbehavioral expression-one alternative.

Newman-Keuls Sequential Range Tests applied (subsequent to obtaining significance using ANOV techniques) to determine the significance between group means on each of the dependent measures. This test automatically adjusts significance levels for multiple comparisons among a set of $n > 2$ means. Of the six specific intermean comparisons possible in a set of four means, three are required for testing the first segment of the general hypothesis and the other three are needed to test the second segment. Accordingly, the results are organized into sections (Columns A and B) which reflect the two portions of the general hypothesis.

That segment of the hypothesis which says that BE-2A Ss would manifest significantly greater commitment to their MPB (i.e., brand loyalty) than would Ss in the other treatment groups is overwhelmingly supported: all data are in the predicted direction, 18 of the 21 specific intermean tests are statistically significant, and 16 of these are highly significant ($p < .01$). That segment of the hypothesis which says that Ss in the NBE-2A, BE-1A, and NBE-1A groups would not differ significantly from each other on the dependent measures also finds strong support. Nineteen of the 21 specific intermean tests failed to reach acceptable levels of statistical significance; two are significant at only the .05 level. Even with Newman-Keuls tests adjusting for multiple comparisons, it is entirely possible that at least one of the two statistically significant relationships is simply a chance result.

## *DISCUSSION*

While examination of behaviorally-based purchase data may suggest that simple repeat purchasing behavior and brand loyalty are one and the same, the results obtained overwhelmingly support the hypothesis that their underlying dynamics are different, so that failure to satisfy all six conditions for brand loyalty results in nonloyal behavior under circumstances which test for loyalty. These findings refute the assertion that "no consideration should be given to what the subject thinks or what goes on in his central nervous system; his behavior is the full statement of what brand loyalty is" [48, p. 32].

Moreover, the findings are not surprising in terms of the relevant social psychological literature. It has been repeatedly demonstrated [3, 17, 35, 41] that as expression of choice becomes more overt and behavioral as opposed to being private or simply a stated intention, the more accurate it is as an indicator of actual subsequent behavior.

Similarly, the greater the number of attractive alternatives in a choice situation, the greater the amount of cognitive dissonance [5, p. 373]—this proposition also finds support in the consumer context [1]. Having once experienced the discomfort of dissonance, it seems plausible that the consumer, in his attempt to avoid its recurrence, will adopt brand loyalty as a purchase strategy.

Assuming that subsequent investigations substantiate these findings, there are several implications emanating from the six-point conceptualization. First, simple repeat purchasing behavior and brand loyalty are functionally different phenomena and are mediated by different underlying dynamics. Relatedly, there is no way of knowing what proportion of the previous "brand loyalty" literature employed measures of and is concerned with actual brand loyalty, repeat purchasing behavior, or both. Finally, and as evidenced in this investigation where the brands were unfamiliar to the subjects prior to the experiment, the conceptualization provides some understanding of the causative factors underlying the development of brand loyalty.

Certain aspects of the procedures and results should be noted. First, the effort to translate the brand loyalty phenomenon (specifically, the condition experienced by the BE-2A group) into a laboratory context without altering the actual processes involved required that a pragmatically limited evoked set [25, p. 27] be provided to the subjects. Inasmuch as the conceptualization specifies a set of brands, any situation consisting of two or more brands satisfies this criterion.

In a logical sense, there are at least $N + 1$ alternatives available in such choice situations, where $N$ equals the number of brands. The final alternative is "not purchasing anything at all." Thus, some may argue that the one brand condition was actually a two-alternative situation, and hence, subjects in this condition should have also manifested loyalty. However, the conceptualization specifies "one or more alternatives out of a *set* of such *brands*," and "buy nothing at all" does not constitute a second brand. Moreover, as demonstrated in the pilot studies [34], the strong desire by the subjects for the product suggested that the "buy nothing at all" alternative had a response likelihood near zero for all conditions. Indeed, it never appeared during the 300 Phase II trials for the BE-2A, BE-1A, and NBE-2A subjects (60 Ss × 5 trials each), while the NBE-1A Ss, who could only express an *intent* to buy or not and this with respect to only one brand, chose the "no buy" alternative only 7% of the time. In effect, both Ss and product were judiciously selected so as to insure that the one brand condition was, for all intents and purposes, a true one alternative situation. Of course, future work should explore sets of $N > 2$ brands so that the dynamics underlying multibrand loyalty [29] could be studied.

Two of the three relationships which failed to reach significance as predicted involved the CPS measure. One explanation for this may be that, while the other dependent measures were all significantly intercorrelated ($p < .01$), indicating that they were probably all measuring the same thing, CPS was only significantly correlated with the PV variable. Moreover, data from the posttest manipulation check revealed that only 40% of the subjects remembered the counter persuasive message for their LPB, despite the fact that they were tested just a

few minutes after being exposed to it. McNeal [39] reported that children of this age group tend to mistrust television advertising, and Ward, Robertson, and Wackman [50] reported that their attention level drops during commercial time. Perhaps a different form of counter persuasion (e.g., advice or actions of a peer group member [18, 39]) would have provided a better test of resistance to brand switching.

Thus, the counter persuasive commercial may have been too weak and brief (30 sec.) to produce the desired effect. Indeed, less than 20% (15 Ss) switched brands on trial 6, and more than half of these were from the BE-1A group. After five consecutive purchases of their MPB, BE-1A Ss might have been expected to engage in exploratory behavior on their first opportunity to purchase another brand. In comparable fashion, while more than 80% of the BE-2A Ss selected their MPB on trials 1, 3, 4, and 5, more than 50% tried their LPB on trial 2. Such behavior provides indirect support for the notion of brand loyalty as a "relational phenomenon" (Condition 5), i.e., loyalty develops out of the opportunity to be disloyal. It would have been interesting to follow the BE-1A Ss on subsequent trials to see whether brand loyalty began to emerge as a result of this opportunity to be disloyal.

Another methodological consideration concerns the notions of realism vs. experimental control. Even though the vast majority of the subjects were led to believe that L and S were different brands and tasted differently, it remains true that the candy bars were actually identical. Despite the fact that applying different labels to the same product is a frequently used marketing experimentation strategy [38, 46, 47, 48], recent research [30] provides strong evidence that introducing actual product differences into an experiment can significantly alter the findings, even to the point of refuting accepted shibboleths (e.g., "perceived quality varies directly with price").

Finally, this experiment involved a series of measures administered cross-sectionally. A preferable procedure would have involved longitudinal measurement. Relatedly, and especially since even highly loyal consumers will probably occasionally select alternative brands, if only to assure themselves that their preferred brand is better, it seems reasonable to discard the frequent practice of using past purchase data to predict the very next brand purchased in favor of procedures which attempt to predict a series of future brand purchases.

The present investigation represents only a preliminary step in verifying the six-point conceptualization of brand loyalty. Additional research is required. First, this study should be replicated using qualitatively different subjects and products. Second, the intricacies of the two manipulated variables, mode of expression, and number of alternatives need to be examined. What is it about the behavioral expression of choice that affects the development of brand loyalty? Is it the physical act of making the purchase; is it the public commitment to a brand; is it the perceived irreversibility of the purchase act? In order to understand why stronger brand loyalty develops following the actual purchase of a brand, each of the possible components of purchase should be isolated and manipulated as independent variables. Similarly, what would be the effect of expanding the number of alternatives to five or ten? Third, what would be the effect of manipulating the other propositions in the conceptualization, either independently or in various combinations with the present two? Finally, the notion of commitment needs to be conceptually elaborated so as to accommodate some means of distinguishing among different degrees or strengths of brand loyalty.

In conclusion, a conceptual definition of brand loyalty has been presented which, at very least, is heuristic. At best, it provides some understanding of the dynamics underlying brand loyalty and goes a long way toward satisfying the hope that "at some point a standardized definition [can be] adopted by researchers" [20, p. 584]. On a more practical level, this work implies that the marketer should not only be concerned with the number of repeat purchasers, but also with the underlying reasons for such behavior. Only when he understands these reasons can he make informed decisions regarding strategies for affecting this behavior.

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