

# The Importance of Conscious Idleness & Intellectual Entrench in Gauging Brand Loyalty toward Smartphone Brands

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Many research papers, while investigating the connection between commitment and trust, have neglected the impact of brand loyalty. The focus of this research paper is to incorporate the customer's conscious idleness and intellectual entrench with commitment and trust in the overall context. The Structural Equation Model has been used to empirically analyse the studied prototype and hypothetical connections. Findings reveal that idleness of the consumer evocatively improves brand loyalty and meaningfully entrenches customer conscious idleness and dedication. The results are very helpful in improving the overall understanding with progressive impact of conscious idleness and intellectual entrench on customer brand loyalty.

**Key words:** *Brand Loyalty, Commitment, Trust, Intellectual Entrench and Conscious Idleness.*

## Introduction

Lee et al. (2015) has identified that customer loyalty is very important for products that are related to Information and Communication Technology for endurance and prolonging viability. Researchers have conducted many studies with respect to customer loyalty concerning theoretical aspects as well as rationality, utilising attitude and behavioral



perspective, at the same time incorporating the commitment and trust angle to assimilate the elucidation and forecasting control of attitude and behavioral perspective (Zhang et al., 2014). Interpersonal background aspects like trust and commitment have been recognized as important variables in establishing and upholding customer loyalty. Nevertheless, these studies might fail to note the impact of customer hidden aspects that led the foundation for brand loyal, predominately concerning ICT products (Kim et al., 2016). Prior studies have examined the importance of partiality associated with existing customer status in connection with brand loyalty. Samuelson [1988] states that, customer ongoing inclination towards particular brands instead of using substitute options is called status quo. Status quo partiality can be presented through conscious idleness and intellectual entrench - the consistency in prevailing customer behavior.

Current smartphones and tablets can be identified as ICT products which signify the role of unified communication, facilitating users with multi-purpose functionality and dynamic utensils allowing them to share information, minimizing time and space barriers and allowing users to communicate through social networks and other mediums. Lee et al. (2015) emphasised that smartphone usefulness is an important factor in establishing customer trust and loyalty; and preceding studies have mainly focused on the features of smartphones which include apparent user friendliness and functionality while ignoring the impact of customer intellectual entrench on loyalty and persistent usage. The terminology 'Intellectual entrench' can be defined as intellectual gratitude or obsession caused by recurrent usage of an incumbent brand. In order to use the smartphone proficiently, the customer, through the use of the product over a period of time gains knowledge with respect to brandrelated expertise, which enables a better understanding of the overall functionality of the product. This may result in the customer being intellectually entrenched onto a particular product, as they have very defined skill sets and knowledge of that specific brand or product which might be difficult to emulate onto other products (Lin et al., 2015). So there is a possibility that a customer being loyal to a specific ICT product and persisting with that brand may be regulated by intellectual entrench and conscious idleness rather than predominantly stimulated by trust and commitment factors.

Consequently the focal point of this research paper is to fill the theoretical and empirical gaps by investigating the influence of customer's conscious idleness and intellectual entrench on smartphones brand loyalty. The idea is to assimilate vital constructs from the viewpoint of status quo and relationship management and recommend a prototype and hypothetical connection to preconceive customer status quo partiality, using the concepts of conscious idleness and entrench, and integrating the customer commitment and trust approach with relationship management. The prototype and connected hypothesis have been experientially examined by using data gathered from smartphone customers. The results have revealed that



the prototype has very robust and substantial prognostic control in enunciating customer loyalty towards brands or products.

The research paper will greatly benefit the overall literature concerning customer's brand loyalty. Firstly the study will add to the existing literature by presenting the influence of status quo partiality with pragmatic validity concerning ICT products. Furthermore as prototype related to relationship management supports the commitment and trust approach, this paper validates that customer conscious idleness and intellectual entrench is very much influential in defining customer loyalty. Lastly this research presents a prototype which adequately demonstrates the customer intellectual process and the arbitration influence in inducing brand loyalty. The results will be very helpful in broadening the scope of brand loyalty and will facilitate examining further customer intellectual factors for establishing and nourishing customer brand loyalty.

## **Literature Review and Prototype Development**

### ***Customer Loyalty***

Customer loyalty can be defined as a strong intense nexus between customer and brand, and customer perseverance with a favoured product and brand regardless of the competition exertions to entice the customer into switching their brand (Giovanis & Athanasopoulou, 2018). Giovanis & Athanasopoulou (2018) has further outlined four phases relating to brand loyalty, which include intellectual, emotional, intent and action loyalty. Similarly, researchers have also suggested another brand loyalty structure using the attitude and behavioral aspect - nowise loyalty (little attitude and little buying), forged loyalty (little attitude and elevated buying), idle loyalty (elevated attitude and little buying) and original loyalty (elevated attitude and elevated buying). Further, some researchers point out that there happen to be three types of loyalty which include nowise loyalty, idle loyalty and original loyalty while excluding forged loyalty. On the contrary, Giovanis & Athanasopoulou (2018) the structure of the first three phases is surrounded by behavioural expressions of loyalty, whereas action loyalty is the most vital phase. Other researchers have also examined attitude and behavioral loyalty and identified a connection between the two concepts predominately formulating customer loyalty.

Action loyalty can be explained as customer behaviour where the customer mindfully controls his/her desire, has conscious inclination and motivated efforts to buy a certain product (Giovanis & Athanasopoulou, 2018). Typically an action-motivated loyal customer is very purposeful and has a very clear goal with respect to his/her actions; makes conscious choices and has presupposed outcomes; has a very thoughtful inclination; is very assured and idle to vindicate his brand preference and is very rigid in changing his decision (Gao & Liu, 2015). So revenue and growth of any organization is very much dependent on the action

loyalty behaviour of customers. This research paper will use this very concept of action loyalty and outspread these features to smartphone customers; brand loyalty associated with ICT products and specifically smartphones is very much action loyalty, where the consumer has a thoughtful fondness towards specific brands and has a robust inclination to keep on exercising status quo partiality and using the same product even after the availability of updated versions.

### ***Commitment and Trust Approach***

The model with respect to trust and commitment is a very significant construct in the relationship management archetype which provides the foundation for robust and lifelong connection with customers, which is necessary for building brand loyalty, long-lasting value and organisation enduring success (Ferguson & Hlavinka, 2007; Chienwattanasook & Jermittiparsert, 2019). The connection can be sketched to an elementary human intent for a progressive and viable nexus that is mutually valuable for the parties. Conferring to the social exchange theory, mainly two parties are part of any relationship, which specifies that certain social behavior is the cause of an exchange process that can be correlative in nature or can take the form of a bargain. Correlative exchange connection is more connected with the emotional and social aspects of the parties involved, where benefits are traded which are informal and far away from being rational. On the contrary, bargain exchange connections are more profit-driven with certain economic value associated with the relationship and are very formal in nature. Consequently the soul of customer and brand relationship lies with the bargain exchange connection. One of the major spending goals of an organisation is related to relationship management, where the goal is to convert the bargain exchange into a correlative exchange connection, which is vigorous and durable with brand loyalty. The vital element recognised in such fruitful connections is trust and commitment.

A prototype associated with trust and commitment, these two constructs are very much the main arbitrator aspects that deliver the influence of past experiences on customer loyalty development and consequently brand loyalty is the foremost constructive relationship result (Mabkhot et al., 2017). Many researchers have identified trust and commitment as an important measurement of exceptional customer relationships, which further induce the anticipated result of relationship management (Hajli et al., 2017). Specifically trust and commitment are acknowledged as the cause of customer loyalty. Subsequently, research papers have concentrated on the elements that enhance the overall scope of trust and commitment perspectives concerning brand loyalty in different scenarios. Nevertheless this study has examined the cerebral influence like status quo partiality, which is established when a customer uses a specific product and attains certain experience of that product, and the impact of the elements in establishing and sustaining customer brand loyalty.

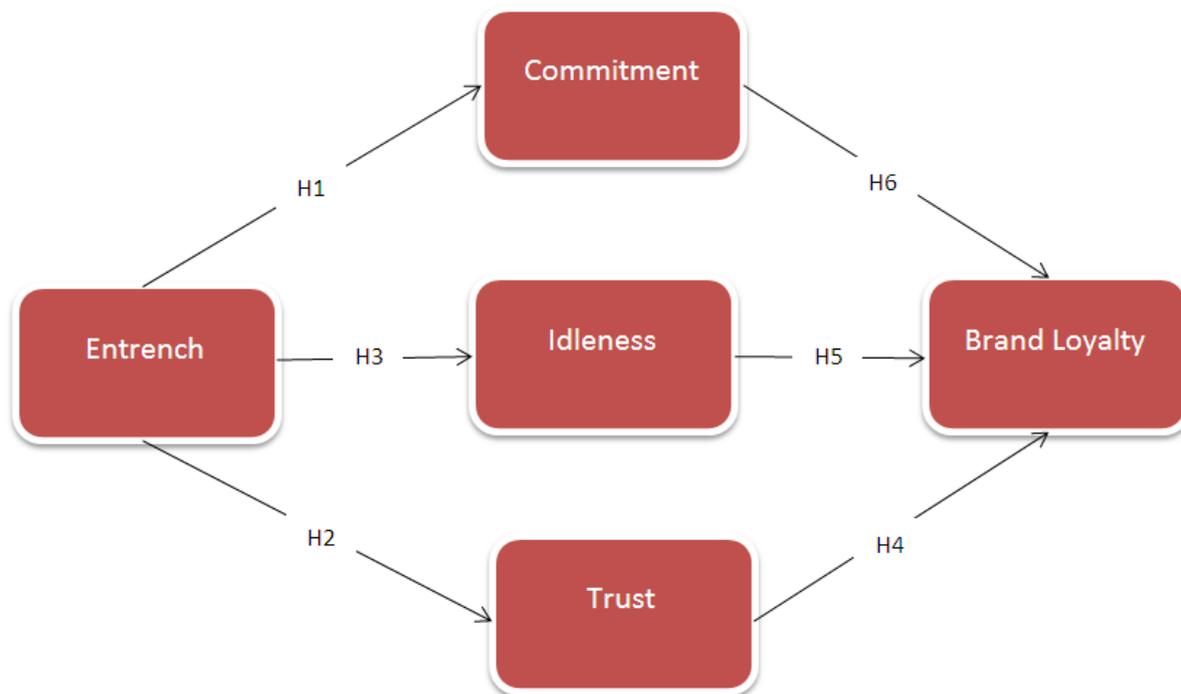
### ***Status Quo Partiality Approach***

The concept of status quo partiality emphasises the purpose of people choosing to uphold the status quo - that is using the same incumbent product over a period of time (Kim & Kankanhalli, 2009). Customers can have both logical and illogical motives behind any purchase decision which is very much coherent with concept of status quo. Status quo can also be considered a rational behaviour, as customers process all information related to the product before switching to a substitute option. Perception can also play a part in decision making where the customer, based on perception, tries to prevent any loss and elude any remorse, this type of decision making is considered as non-rational. During the decision making process, rational consumers make a conscious effort to mitigate the effect of any uncertainty; the same rule is followed when consumers make decisions with respect to different brand options, model advancement or looking for substitute products. The consumer displays robust status quo partiality when he associates certain levels of value with products or becomes emotionally connected, has certain knowledge, and entrenched consumption or use, despite of the attractive proposal from competition and peer pressures (Schwarz, 2012).

Kim & Kankanhalli (2009) have identified three kinds of status quo partiality: intellectual misconceptions (people's inclination to evade loss at any cost), making decisions coherently (decision based on logic, analysis and objectivity) and last cerebral commitment (social values, internal satisfaction). Other researchers proposed that status quo partiality is a decision making process which is built on behavior, cerebral and emotions (Polites & Karahanna, 2012). Status quo partiality established on behavioral aspect denotes to customer persistent utilisation of the same incumbent product deprived of any thought process; cerebral status quo partiality refers to a decision of the customer where they consciously use an incumbent product and emotion based status quo partiality is the one where customers establish certain emotional affection with the incumbent product and show very little inclination towards a substitute.

Smartphone users are very much intellectually entrenched with the incumbent product due to their developed experience with the product, consequently they tend to establish certain misconceptions of harm if they moved to a substitute brand (Hajli et al., 2017). Therefore intellectual entrench can be related to behavioural status quo partiality. Whereas conscious idleness can be considered as coherent decision making based on associated values (cost, net benefits, satisfaction) a customer has for that specific ICT product, this shows a very conscious decision of a customer with respect to the brand, although there is a possibility that the selected brand may not be the best option. In context with the classification suggested by Kim & Kankanhalli (2009), both intellectual entrench and conscious idleness can be considered as status quo partiality.

Figure 1 represents a proposed prototype based on the impact of status quo partiality on the trust and commitment approach where customers persistently use the same ICT product. The prototype specifies that intellectual entrench has an impact on commitment, trust and conscious idleness and that these three variables ascertain brand loyalty. The mentioned three notions serve as an arbitrator to deliver the impact of entrench on customer loyalty.



### ***Intellectual Entrench***

Intellectual entrench is considered one of the most significant obstacles that prevents customers from moving towards substitutes, the reason being the customer has devoted ample time to gaining the knowledge and efficient utilization of the ICT product. This recurrent usage of the ICT product for a length of time establishes very specific knowledge and skill sets with respect to the product. Dolan et al. (2016) states that cognitive load theory claims that customers depend on working memory in order to process the information, whereas instinctive decision making requires very little use of working memory. The use of working memory increases significantly when customers consciously and coherently process the information. While using their product for a period of time, the customer begins to execute related tasks instinctively without giving any thought, whereas if customers use a new or different product, the requirement to use working memory upsurges to process the related information fully. Transferring information and skills from one product to another can be sometimes difficult to achieve (Chen & Shen, 2015).

Sénécal et al. (2015) recommended that customers establish intellectual entrench when they execute functions and accordingly process the information instinctively. When customers exhaustively use their smartphone, the entrenched effect can be multiplied as with continued use, customers tend to establish a sense of closeness and fondness for the product. With continuous use of smartphones, the customer becomes more reliant on the product as they use it for complex data storage and information; at the same time using different applications which can be work-related and for leisure time. Nevertheless, researchers gauging the impact of intellectual entrench on commitment and trust has to date been very limited with respect to ICT products or smartphones; there is a possibility that customers who are intellectually entrenched have high degree of reliance and are more inclined to trust and being committed to the brand (Johnson et al., 2003). So the following hypothesis can be assumed:

***H1: Intellectual entrench has a progressive influence on commitment to a brand of smartphone.***

***H2: Intellectual entrench has a progressive influence on customer trust in a brand of smartphone.***

Intellectual entrench can be considered a potent contributor in nurturing conscious idleness, although researchers have highlighted other influences in fostering idleness, which include psychological dissimilarities (Polites & Karahanna, 2012), buying behaviour, apparent social and cultural values, edification and openness to technology (Wang et al., 2018). While studying the dynamics of social capital, Maurer & Ebers (2006) identified that members of an organisation have common individuality and reasoning with prevailing external constraints, there is dearth of inspiration or capability to transform among these members, causing idleness. Research in the field of Medicare suggested that carelessness and cost linked with substitutes are the prime reason for idleness (Heiss et al., 2016). Likewise a recent research study with respect to smartphones highlighted that lack of information with respect to competing brands causes idleness, and further advocates that customer intellectual entrench can also result in idleness. When a customer is intellectually entrenched towards a smartphone, they lack the desire to look out for a substitute product and are very less attentive towards offerings of other brands. So intellectual entrench may tend towards conscious idleness. So the following hypothesis can be assumed:

***H3: Intellectual entrench has a progressive influence on customer conscious idleness towards a brand of smartphone.***

### ***Trust, Conscious Idleness and Commitment***

Organisations and customers have an exchange relationship which is established on the foundation of trust. Trust can be described as ‘the realisation of a degree of contentment

which further develops into loyalty, which facilitates customers towards habitual buying behaviour from problem solving behaviour. Usually trust is portrayed through a favourable experience from a past affiliation which further enhances the likelihood of a mutual beneficial relationship in future. Various studies have identified the positive effect of trust on brand loyalty which translates into a continuous, long lasting relationship between customer and organisation. Similarly, researchers have also highlighted the importance of quality in building long term relationships through reliable products. Some researchers identify that when a customer has trust in a specific brand or product, it can translate into favourable outcomes for the organisation. For instance, Lee et al. (2015) specify that trust is one of the important indicators in assessing the brand loyalty of customers. So the following hypothesis can be assumed based on the rationality of a different research paper:

***H4: Trust has a progressive influence on customer brand loyalty towards the smartphone.***

As confirmed previously, conscious idleness is the deliberate perseverance to sustain status quo, despite the fact that competition may produce better offers and products in comparison to the incumbent product (Polites & Karahanna, 2012). Schwarz (2012) has identified four kinds of idleness: impulsive, mandatory, inconspicuous and conscious. This alignment is built on the two aspects of impetus to alter (strong v/s weak value) and induce a situation (interior v/s exterior). The type of idleness investigated in this research paper is conscious idleness, which is related to the parameter of low impetus to alter and influence by interior condition.

There are examples where researchers have misinterpreted the concept of idleness with habit. Habit can be defined as an unconscious established inclination or a type of behaviour that is virtually or totally instinctive. On the contrary, conscious idleness is very much deliberate and coherent behavior, where customers perform cost and benefit analysis of the incumbent product against the substitute product, at the same time assessing the risk factor associated with moving towards the substitute. Customers very consciously use idleness to make a decision that supports the status quo product and being loyal to the brand. Accordingly, the following hypothesis can be assumed:

***H5: Conscious Idleness has a progressive influence on customer brand loyalty towards smartphones.***

With reference to the trust and commitment approach, commitment can be defined as permanent intent to remain in the relationship with the seller. John Meyer & Allen (1991) developed a prototype and identified three components with respect to commitment which include affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Continuance commitment has been extended into a further three types: economic, obligatory

and habitual. Normative commitment is more related to the beliefs of an individual, whereas continuance commitment deals with the perception of an individual concerning cost. They all are interlinked with each other and inevitably with connecting customer with brand. Emotion, perception and belief all are diverse concepts. Prior research has defined commitment as customer intent built on emotional and cerebral connection with the brand or product. Considering this definition, we will utilise the affective commitment theory, as it is very precise, with perspective used to intellectualise the trust and commitment approach. Giovanis & Athanasopoulou (2018) have used the same approach in describing commitment, at the same time highlighting that commitment has a very direct influence on customer loyalty (Nyffenegger et al., 2015). Thus, the following hypothesis can be assumed:

***H6: Commitment has a progressive influence on customer brand loyalty towards smartphones.***

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Questionnaire***

Concepts used in the prototype are conventional latent variables established with several detectable items (Jarvis et al., 2003). The Han et al. (2011) study has been used in order to identify the items that were used to gauge brand loyalty. To measure the trust variable, items were selected from the research paper by Kim et al. (2009). Schwarz (2012), Polites & Karahanna (2012) studies were used as a reference to established items, which were further used to gauge the concept of conscious idleness. Commitment was measured through items selected from the research paper by Gustafsson et al., (2005). Lastly, the items used to gauge the intellectual entrench were established on the studies conducted by Johnson et al. (2003) and Murray & Häubl (2007). Constant variables used in the study include different smartphone brands, time periods customers had been using the status quo brand and smartphone and other demographic details.

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the basis of a seven point scale where {1} means strongly disagree and {7} means strongly agree. Pre-screening questions were also placed in order to gauge the respondents inclination to change, which allowed us to identify erratic response.

### **Data Collection**

Smartphone has become a common phenomena among customers, and considering this factor the goal was to take the feedback from people belonging to different walks of life. 600 questionnaires were distributed to different companies, multinational organisations and universities operating in Indonesia. Questionnaires were also distributed online. Within 15

days, 525 questionnaires were returned, which also included 90 online replays. 81 questionnaires were discarded due to inconsistent replays. Consequently, empirical analysis of the prototype was conducted using 444 questionnaires.

## Demographics and Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 1**

| Measures                                   | Particulars   | Indonesia |            |
|--|---------------|-----------|------------|
|  |               | Frequency | Percentage |
| <b>Age</b>                                 | 18-25         | 111       | 25%        |
|  | 26-35         | 101       | 23%        |
|  | 36-45         | 134       | 30%        |
|  | 45-60         | 76        | 17%        |
|  | >60           | 22        | 5%         |
| <b>Gender</b>                              | Male          | 250       | 56%        |
|  | Female        | 194       | 44%        |
| <b>Education Level</b>                     | Undergraduate | 105       | 24%        |
|  | Bachelor      | 220       | 50%        |
|  | Master        | 119       | 27%        |
| <b>Occupation</b>                          | Student       | 95        | 21%        |
|  | Associates    | 141       | 32%        |
|  | Managers      | 109       | 25%        |
|  | Senior Level  | 99        | 22%        |
| <b>Brand</b>                               | Samsung       | 108       | 24%        |
|  | Xiaomi        | 141       | 32%        |
|  | Others        | 195       | 44%        |
| <b>Year of using same smartphone</b>       | $\leq 1$      | 213       | 48%        |
|  | $\leq 2$      | 118       | 27%        |
|  | $\leq 3$      | 64        | 14%        |
|  | $\geq 4$      | 49        | 11%        |
| <b>Year of using same smartphone brand</b> | $\leq 1$      | 104       | 23%        |
|  | $\leq 2$      | 219       | 49%        |
|  | $\leq 3$      | 90        | 20%        |
|  | $\geq 4$      | 31        | 7%         |

## Data Analysis

Data was rigorously analysed in order to assess the prototype parameters. SPSS and AMOS softwares were used to gauge the partial least square path modeling and covariance based on

structural equation modelling. To begin with, Exploratory Factor analysis was performed to clean the variables related to the main concepts. Then internal consistency was verified through Cronbach's Alpha, Construct Reliability and Average Variance (AVE) (Hair et al., 2016). Subsequently, the measurement model was assessed mindful of root mean square correlation, variance inflation factor and convergent and divergent validity. Lastly, partial least square and covariance analysis were performed for parameter approximations, investigating hypothesis and validity of structural model (Hair et al., 2016).

Results concerning Construct Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, AVE & VIF are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

| Variables            | Items | Value | T-stats | p-value | Construct Reliability | Cronbach's Alpha | AVE  | VIF  |
|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------------|------------------|------|------|
| <b>Entrench</b>      | 1     | 0.831 | 15.671  | 0.000   | 0.92                  | 0.89             | 0.71 | 1.40 |
|                      | 3     | 0.852 | 15.981  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 4     | 0.809 | 16.679  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 5     | 0.799 | 17.901  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
| <b>Commitment</b>    | 2     | 0.813 | 14.213  | 0.000   | 0.92                  | 0.90             | 0.77 | 1.99 |
|                      | 3     | 0.872 | 14.981  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 5     | 0.836 | 15.091  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 6     | 0.819 | 17.915  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 7     | 0.901 | 13.912  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
| <b>Trust</b>         | 1     | 0.865 | 17.019  | 0.000   | 0.93                  | 0.90             | 0.75 | 2.17 |
|                      | 2     | 0.891 | 16.915  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 3     | 0.882 | 16.652  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 4     | 0.898 | 15.074  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 5     | 0.915 | 14.456  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
| <b>Idleness</b>      | 1     | 0.808 | 17.846  | 0.000   | 0.94                  | 0.91             | 0.72 | 1.97 |
|                      | 2     | 0.908 | 18.914  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 3     | 0.871 | 14.687  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 5     | 0.898 | 19.924  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
| <b>Brand Loyalty</b> | 1     | 0.941 | 15.092  | 0.000   | 0.92                  | 0.90             | 0.76 | na   |
|                      | 2     | 0.861 | 16.729  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 3     | 0.894 | 17.826  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 4     | 0.857 | 14.549  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |
|                      | 5     | 0.871 | 15.619  | 0.000   |                       |                  |      |      |

From Table 2 we can observe that finding achieved through construct loadings are more than 0.7 which falls within the parameters set by Hair (2016). It also signifies that parameters

utilised to measure the particular construct are fitting and sufficient in their presentation of essential constructs. Values obtained through the construct reliability test and cronbach's alpha is exceeding 0.7 which validates consistency and reliability and permits prototype analysis (Hair et al., 2016). Covariance based structural equation modeling has been used to evaluate the common variance bias. Common method factor was inserted in the prototype and linked with detectable variables. The notion serves as a regulator for common variance among all constructs. Structural equation model analysis was carried out considering CMF and without CMF and accordingly findings were statistically equated. Findings reveal that there wasn't any noteworthy variation among the measured parameters and fit index was recognized.

Likewise in order to investigate the loadings of detectable variables against their parallel constructs, partial least square technique has been used. From Table 2 we can witness that all the detectable variables are considerably and meaningfully loaded with values exceeding the minimum bench mark of 0.5. Measured t-values also specify low standard error, which vindicates the convergent validity of the main concepts. Similarly, value of AVE against the correlation coefficient also authenticates that concept matches the divergent validity (Hair et al., 2016). Findings are presented in Table 3:

**Table 3**

| Concepts                     | Intellectual Entrench | Trust        | Idleness     | Commitment   | Brand Loyalty |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Intellectual Entrench</b> | <b>0.845</b>          |              |              |              |               |
| <b>Trust</b>                 | 0.519                 | <b>0.869</b> |              |              |               |
| <b>Idleness</b>              | 0.507                 | 0.557        | <b>0.859</b> |              |               |
| <b>Commitment</b>            | 0.601                 | 0.682        | 0.641        | <b>0.874</b> |               |
| <b>Brand Loyalty</b>         | 0.572                 | 0.492        | 0.697        | 0.618        | <b>0.895</b>  |

Results reveal that the square root of AVE evaluated for all the measured items is greater than the relationship between the concepts, which further signifies that the established variables relate more firmly to their foster notion in comparison to the variable peripheral to their foster notion.

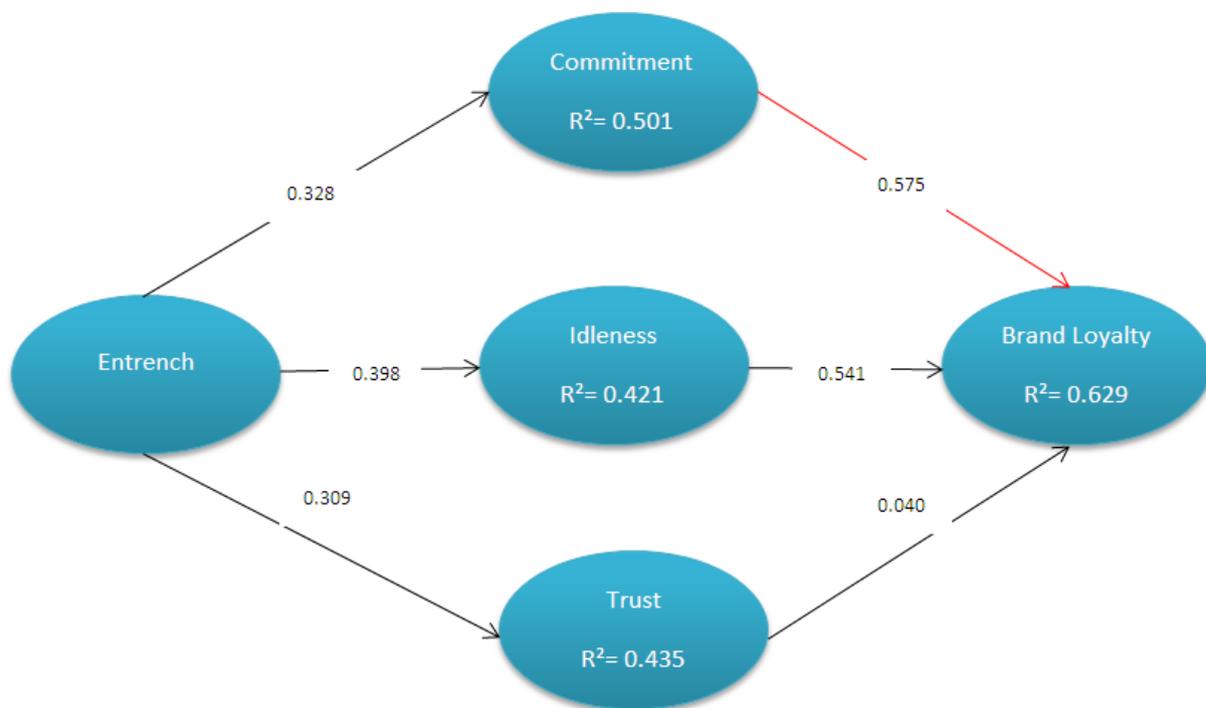
Structural framework of the investigated prototype can be evaluated through partial least square algorithm, blindfolding and bootstrapping, as they are very beneficial in elucidating the t-values, path coefficients, R square and effect size for analysing the hypothesis (Hair et al., 2016). Findings with respect to the research prototype are presented in Table 4

**Table 4**

| <i>Hypothesis</i>          | <i>Value</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Entrench → Commitment      | 0.328        |
| Entrench → Trust           | 0.309        |
| Entrench → Idleness        | 0.398        |
| Trust → Brand Loyalty      | 0.040        |
| Idleness → Brand Loyalty   | 0.541        |
| Commitment → Brand Loyalty | 0.575        |
| R Square                   | 0.629        |

Findings from Table4 reveal that the investigated prototype is very much statistically significant and brand loyalty variance proportion is elucidated by other concepts. Except for the relationship between trust and brand loyalty, all other five hypotheses are statistically significant. Specifically, intellectual entrench has been identified the most significant element of customer brand loyalty.

### Structural Equation Model





## **Discussion**

The research paper has been able to test brand loyalty of customers towards smartphones by assimilating concepts from relationship management, that is, commitment, trust and also integrating the status quo approach by applying concepts of intellectual entrench and conscious idleness. This experiential research has been able to identify some key elements. The first outcome extracted from the study is that conscious idleness is one of most influential elements in determining brand loyalty of customers. Many customers intentionally search for motives to repel the advertising message from competition, choose not to do anything, and display persistency in using the same incumbent product (Schwarz, 2012).

Subsequently, the study also reveals that intellectual entrench has an important, progressive and robust influence on customer's brand loyalty. Customers dedicate their time and energies to gaining experience with respect to certain products; this experience and knowledge further establishes an entrench effect on customers (Johnson et al., 2003). Findings also reveal that intellectual entrench further improves customer cerebral inclination for coherent conscious idleness and emotional attachment with particular brands. Results further specify that the customary explanation that trust and commitment are imperative for building brand loyalty has changed, and now intellectual entrench and conscious idleness are the key arbitrators in the commitment & trust archetype. The research paper also suggests that trust does not have any direct influence on brand loyalty; it operates as an important and provisional element, since the customer has already established a certain degree of trust for the incumbent product. Whereas commitment has a very direct and persistent impact on brand loyalty, as it operates in moderator capacity to deliver the effect of precedent concepts on brand loyalty.

## **Managerial Implications**

Results are very beneficial for ICT product manufacturers in general and particularly for smartphone producers. Research has very clearly highlighted that intellectual entrench and conscious idleness are the key determinants of brand loyalty. Demographic elements of customers do not have a noteworthy impact on brand loyalty and their idleness is dictated by the entrench effect. These findings highlight a very important point: that successful smartphone manufacturers have been able to establish the entrench effect in customers by allowing them to nurture knowledge based skill sets which keep them involved with their existing product and with time modifies the product according to customer preference. So manufacturers and their marketing teams need to rethink their strategies and possibly adapt by implementing effective methods which establish the entrench effect on customers and accordingly foster conscious idleness.

Furthermore, the study also elucidates that customer idleness might differ from anticipated loyalty with respect to particular products, opposition to change does not exemplify that the customer will not switch to a substitute brand or product. There is a possibility that customers might get disgruntled with the existing product, but still stick to that particular incumbent product due to their perception that substitute products do not have the necessary benefits which would encourage them to switch their brand - the cost and risk factor associated with alternate options might be difficult to comprehend. So manufacturers must not be deceived by robust brand loyalty of customers which is motivated by conscious idleness; rather they should ponder 'idleness' as an opportunity which signifies customer unhinged loyalty as customers might be tempted to switch their brand if that particular brand does not match perceived benefits and the entrench shell can be broken. Consequently manufacturers should develop their loyalty plans where intellectual entrench should be the foundation which will motivate customers to stick with their brand and product.

Lastly, encapsulating the results following these suggestions might be beneficial in managing customer loyalty efficiently: a) There is continuous need of upgrading the functionality of product which will help in managing the perceived value. b) Establishing customer knowledge based skill sets with respect to the product which will further enhance the overall experience and ultimately create entrench effect resulting in strong brand loyalty. c) Lastly, manufacturers should try to foster cerebral inclination in customers, which will develop resisting tendencies towards substitute products.

### **Limitations**

This research paper outlines considerable benefits, but limitations cannot be ignored. The study is connected with smartphones, so the overall scope is lessened to some extent, including other ICT products like tablets and laptops to name a few could be helpful in generalising the overall results. Similarly, both international and domestic brands were used during the research; separately gauging the brand loyalty for domestic as well as for international brands will be very beneficial for local producers, as they will be able to identify customer preferences and accordingly work towards building trust and establishing entrench effect. Research was conducted in Indonesia, so generalising the results should be carefully elucidated. Lastly, the scope can further be enlarged if research can be conducted in different settings with diverse cultural and environmental values.



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