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AN EXPERIMENT ON BRAND LOYALTY AMONG MOBILE PHONE USERS IN THE BASQUE REGION OF SPAIN

This paper attempts to examine brand loyalty among mobile phone users – the case of the main six mobile phone companies operating in the Basque region of Spain. An empirical study was conducted to collect the primary data using a questionnaire as a tool in order to test the hypotheses. The findings proved that there is a low loyalty toward phone mobile companies according to users' attitudes. In addition, there is no loyalty among mobile phone users toward companies they deal with according to users' behaviors.

Keywords: brand loyalty, mobile phone users, mobile phone companies, Basque region, Spain.

Formulation of the problem generally. In today's highly competitive environments, marketers should improve consumers' loyalty to maintain a comfortable and lasting position in the marketplace. That's mean, the success of a company relies largely on its capabilities to attract customers toward its brand [1]. In particular, the retention of current customers and making them loyal to the brand are the critical point for the survival of a company. Companies selling brand with high rate of loyal consumers have a competitive advantage over other companies. Brand loyal consumers reduce the marketing costs of the company as the costs of attracting a new customer have been found to be about six times higher than the costs of retaining an old one [2-4]. The concept of brand loyalty has been defined in a number of ways by different academics and practitioners involved with marketing [5-8]. Brand loyalty has been largely defined and measured in either behavioral or attitudinal terms. The behavioral dimension explains brand loyalty by means of actual purchases that occur in a given period, while the attitudinal dimension defines loyalty in terms of stated preferences, commitments or purchase intention [9-11]. In addition, according to many professionals and practitioners (see for example, 12-15), brand loyalty is very important aspect of a company's intangible and strategic assets and marketing strategy.

The study and management of brand loyalty provides a clear definition of the contrasts

involved; as well as an awareness of the valid measures which need to be developed [4]. However, these two elements are lacking. That is to say, while there seems to be an agreement on the conceptual definition of brand loyalty since Jacoby and Chestnut [16], this definition does not contribute towards the forming of a unified perspective which facilitates the measurement of this loyalty and which helps for a better understanding of the concept in question [17; 18].

As the awareness of the limitation of the measurement method is crucial for an accurate interpretation of any study results, we do realize as researchers in this field that it will not be possible to assess accurately the validity of specific brand loyalty measures without this definition [19]. In other words, the researchers' survey of current literature of brand loyalty notices the lack of clear definition of the term "brand loyalty". Without a practical definition, the concept will not be useful for neither application nor theoretical study.

On the other hand, there have been major differences among the measurements of brand loyalty themselves [20]. These are due to some of the following factors: (1) the differences in the backgrounds of the researchers studying brand loyalty which might include psychologists, economists, and statisticians, as well as (2) the complexity of human behavior and the necessary replacement of the explanatory method with the stochastic method in order to encompass these complexities.

One industry at the center of brand loyalty is mobile phone. The mobile phone industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The first major renovation occurred in 2002 with accumulation of the first color screen and then the introducing of multimedia mobile phone during 2004-2006. The birth of smart phone started in 2007 by Nokia [21]. One of the main influences of growing mobile phone industry is that mobile phone has become necessary device in our everyday life [22]. Ching and Myagmarsuren [23] stated as customer expectation and wants are changing, mobile phone will continue to innovate and be reinvented with modern technology. According to the International Telecommunication Union [24] the penetration rate of mobile phone subscribers is 96,2 per 100 inhabitants globally.

Spain has one of the largest mobile markets in Europe [25]. In addition, there are six main mobile phone providers with their own network: Movistar, Vodafone, Orange, Euskaltel Jazztel, and Yoigo [26]. Besides, there is a slight growth in the number of users from 39 million in 2011 to 40,8 million in 2013. By 2017, it is anticipated that there will be 44,1 million users [27]. According to eMarketer [28], the expenditure on mobile phones marketing reached €10,5 million (\$147,3 million) in 2013. In addition, spending on all measured media dropped from \$6,79 billion in 2012 to \$6,25 billion last year, with expectations to hit \$6,34 billion this year.

Subjects and Methods. *Definition of brand loyalty.* Perhaps the most elaborate conceptual definition of brand loyalty was originally proposed by Jacoby and Chestnut [16]. Their definition is expressed by a set of six necessary criteria or requirements for brand loyalty. These are (1) biased (2) behavioral response (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 brand, (6) which is a function of inertia. The keyword here is inertia meaning without commitment towards the brand.

According to American Marketing Association [29], brand loyalty is "1. (Sales promotion definition): The situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufacturer-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category. 2. (Consumer behavior definition): The degree to which a consumer consistently purchases the same brand within a product class". Trying to define the term,

Aaker [30] considers that brand loyalty reflects “how likely a customer will be to switch to another brand, especially when that brand makes a change in price, product features, communication, or distribution programs”.

According to Oliver [31], brand loyalty is “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”. There are two different types of brand loyalty: attitudinal and behavioral. In their research findings, Chaudhuri and Holbrook [32] discovered that attitudinal loyalty included a degree of dispositional commitment, whereas behavioral consisted of repeated purchases of the brand, in terms of some unique value associated with the brand. Thus, customer loyalty was considered bi-dimensional, including both attitudinal commitment and behavioral re-purchase intention.

Measures of Brand Loyalty. Mellens et al [33] classify the measures of brand loyalty into four groups, based on the following two dimensions: (1) attitudinal versus behavioral measures, and (2) brand-oriented versus individual-oriented measures.

1. *Attitudinal versus behavioral measures.* In the literature, the majority of the operational measures can be classified into two kinds: (1) the deterministic approach that consider loyalty as an attitude, (2) the stochastic approach, which is purely behavioral, and, depending on their relative emphasis on, respectively, the cognitive or the purchasing component [33; 34]. Practically, researchers may choose between purely behavioral measures of loyalty or attitude-behavior combinations [35].

Behavioral measures define brand loyalty in terms of the actual purchases observed over a certain time period, thus focusing on conditions of the conceptual definition. In contrast, attitudinal measures are able to distinguish brand loyalty from repeat buying. They are based on stated preferences, commitment or purchase intentions of the consumers, thus emphasizing the cognitive element of brand loyalty [36-41]. Each one of behavioral and attitudinal measures has its advantages and disadvantages which are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Advantages and disadvantages of behavioral and attitudinal measures
(Mellens et al [33])

Type of brand loyalty	Advantages	Disadvantages
Attitudinal measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – repeat buying separated from brand loyalty; – less sensitive to short-run fluctuations; – easier to pick right decision unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – valid representation of reality not guaranteed as they are not based on actual purchases; – incidental; – harder to collect
Behavioral measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – based on actual behavior or purchase; – non-incidental as they are usually based on behavior over a period of time; – easy to collect than attitudinal data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – repeat buying not distinguished from brand loyalty; – more sensitive to short-run fluctuations; – difficult to select right decision as no information is collected on the underlying reason for a particular behavior

2. *Individual-oriented versus brand-oriented measures.* Brand loyalty can be classified as brand-loyalty measures or individual-oriented. This distinction is not always as clear-cut

as between attitudinal and behavioral measures, and some operationalizations may even be labeled as brand-oriented in one study and as individual-oriented in another [33].

We may further differentiate individual-oriented measures which define brand loyalty within a specific product category (e.g. cars, soft drinks), and individual-oriented measures which treat brand loyalty as a quality of the consumer (i.e. as a character trait) which is useful to divide the consumer population, or to study the influence of certain consumer characteristics such as risk avoidance, innovativeness. As selectivity is paid to specific brands, these measures are less suited to make differentiation among brands [34; 42].

In summary, from the previous discussion of brand loyalty measures, there are four main categories of measurement as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Main categories of brand loyalty measures (Mellens et al [33])

	Attitudinal	Behavioral
Brand-oriented	– stated purchase intentions/preference measure; – commitment measures	– measures based on aggregated data; – measures based on aggregated switching matrices; – measures on market shares; – measures based on individual level data
Individual-oriented	– measures on product category level; – general measures	– proportion of purchase measures; – sequence of purchase measures

From the previous discussion, it is noticed that there is no consensus in marketing literature as to which method should, in general, be preferred for measuring brand loyalty. The choice relies on the available data.

From the researcher's point of view, the choice of a particular method for measuring brand loyalty will affect the results, and the results may be contrary based on different assumptions of each method. So, the researcher's choice must take into account the pragmatic compromise between theoretical considerations and practical difficulties. Moreover, it is not necessary to reach such consensus, but it is important instead to find consistency for the methods to be most useful for regulators or other decision-makers.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. Numerous studies from different perspectives have been carried out to understand the phenomenon of brand loyalty. However, none of the studies examined the brand loyalty in Spain.

According to Mwai et al.'s study [2], brand trust, brand perceived value and price should remain prime focus for the organization to maintain market share in today's competitive business environment. In Nigeria, price, tar/nicotine and peer influence affect brand loyalty for cigarette consumption [43]. According to Parmar's study [44], building a strong brand loyalty is believed to be a challenging task for a marketer involved in flourishing cosmetic industry because of the presence of well-known and good domestic and international quality brands.

According to Sreenivasulu, et al.'s study [45], brand loyalty towards Big Bazaar in India is positive and all the six antecedents (product quality, price, purchase decision, perceived quality, store environment and design) have the significant effect on customer satisfaction as customer satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty. In Pakistan, there is a significant relationship of brand image, brand trust, customer satisfaction, perceived quality, purchase criteria and advertising spending on brand loyalty. These factors influence the green purchase intention [46].

In Nigeria, the major factors influencing whether a GSM subscriber reports brand loyalty are: perceived service quality, perceived brand image, and perceived customer satisfaction [47]. In Malaysia, brand reputation, competence and price influence brand loyalty among users. However, advertising spending, brand image and design do not influence brand loyalty. Results also indicate that brand competence is the most important factor that influences brand loyalty [48]. The results of Ahmed et al.'s study [49] provide a better understanding about brand loyalty among customers for companies to analyze and part played by each element (service quality, perceived quality, perceived value, brand trust and customer satisfaction) in the progress of brand loyalty.

In Pakistan, there is a significant positive relationship of the proposed factors (Perceived Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Name, Brand Trust and Brand Communication) with brand loyalty [50]. According to Ahmed and Moosavi's study [21], a majority of Swedish Generation Y showed brand loyalty to their cell. Cell Phone brand quality, brand image, brand experience and customers satisfactions were found to be main factors influencing their loyalty.

In Taiwan, the "brand image" of mobile phones has significant influence on "brand loyalty" to adolescent consumers, and "consumption behavior" of adolescent has significant influence on "brand loyalty", while "brand image" and "consumption behavior" influence "brand loyalty" through significantly mediating effect of "perceived response" [51]. In India, peer group are more powerful in influencing potential consumers to take soft drinks while in Kenya parents play a crucial role [52].

According to Mahmud and Gope's study [53] conducted in Bangladesh, brand loyalty is determined by several distinct psychological processes of the consumers and entails multivariate measurements. Product features (Fragrance / Skin care / Germ fight features / Colour) is one of the most important factors that affect brand loyalty. In Pakistan, lower call rates, lower SMS rates, better service quality and service reliability (consistent and trouble free service) are the factors that affect consumer's level of satisfaction resulting in either customer retention or switching to another better service [54].

The Pawar and Raut' study [55] demonstrates out some factors (brand recommendation, brand need, and brand preference) for measuring the brand loyalty of cell phone consumers, and meaning of brand loyalty in the mind of consumers. The results of Nasir's study [56] conducted in Malaysia, confirms that the significant positive relationship of trends towards brand loyalty. It will be a great challenge for the service providers to prepare their strategic plan in maintaining customer loyalty, and at the same time expanding their customer base.

In Pakistan, service quality in mobile phone network market is considered as most important factor of brand loyalty [57]. In Jordan, there is positive and significant relationship between factors of brand loyalty (brand name, product quality, price, design, promotion, service quality and store environment) with cosmetics brand loyalty [58]. In South Africa, it is clear banking clients are not very loyal, scoring low on all the brand loyalty influences except customer satisfaction (which falls in the fair to good margin) [59].

In India, network quality, customer service along with value added services provided by BSNL enhanced the loyalty of the customers [60]. The results of Ersoy and Çalık [61] indicated close relationships between brand loyalty elements as involvement, performance, satisfaction, preference and switching. In Malaysia, there is positive and significant relationship between factors of brand loyalty (brand name, product quality, price, style, promotion, service quality and store environment) with sportswear brand loyalty [62].

Leahy's study [63] conducted in Ireland concludes that the challenge for marketers is to develop and nurture the bonds that lead to and that can strengthen brand loyalty. Besides

brand loyalty studies in the future should focus on both cognitive and emotional reasons for brand loyalty and the role of bonds therein. In Taiwan, customer loyalty was affected by perceived value, trust, habit, and customer satisfaction, with customer satisfaction playing a crucial intervening role in the relationship of perceived value and trust to loyalty [64].

According to Shugan's Study [14] conducted in the U.S.A., a loyal customer should be an enduring asset rather than a looming liability. True loyalty programs invest now for the future, commit now to the customer, and trust rather than demand trust. In contrast, many extant loyalty programs appear to produce liabilities rather than assets. In India, there is a significant influence of the following factors – brand benefits, brand symbolism, brand trust, genetic influence and price consciousness of consumers – on brand loyalty for toothpaste product category [65].

In Singapore, brand characteristics are relatively more important in their effects on a consumer's trust in a brand. Besides, trust in a brand is positively related to brand loyalty [66]. According to Shum's Study [67], competition advertising counteracts the tendencies of brand loyalty toward repeat purchasing. In addition, competition advertising reduces switching costs in this market.

In Germany, the development in telecommunications and media implies a need for change in the strategic alignment, a change away from transaction towards relationship orientation understanding loyal customers as an asset [68]. In the U.S.A., customer satisfaction had a significant indirect effect on behavioral brand loyalty when mediated by attitudinal brand loyalty, including cognitive-effective-conative brand loyalty stages. In addition, practitioners should consider customers' perceptions of their brand and not depend solely on purchasing frequencies when measuring brand loyalty levels [7].

The results of Yi and Jeon's Study [15] show that involvement moderates the effects of loyalty programs on customer loyalty. In high-involvement situations, direct rewards are preferable to indirect rewards. In low-involvement situations, immediate rewards are more effective in building a program's value than delayed rewards. Bennett's study [69] demonstrates the importance of brand loyalty in a business services context. Besides, it suggests that attitudinal brand loyalty is a prerequisite for behavioral brand loyalty.

The Gommans et al.'s study [70] showed the importance of building and maintaining customer loyalty in electronic marketplaces, it has come into sharper focus in marketing theory and practice. In Canada, ignoring heterogeneity will lead to biased influences concerning time dependence of brand loyalty. In other words, it is important to include consumer heterogeneity while studying the dynamics of brand loyalty. Ignoring these effects may lead to spurious state dependence, and biased inferences concerning brand loyalty over time [71]. In spite of the researchers have proposed the literature review due the timetable, though it is possible that the literature review can be reorganized according to concepts and basic theoretical background upon which analysis of brand loyalty have been based.

As shown in research literature review, we can divide the previous studies into two parts as follows:

- 1) attitudinal measure such as Yi and Jeon's Study [15], Lau and Lee's study [66], and Shugan's study [14];
- 2) behavioral measure such as Back and Parks's study [7], Magin et al's study [68], and Shum's study [67].

Research framework. The original work of Jacoby and Chestnut [16] and Mellens et al [33] regarding input analyses was found to be useful in constructing this research model. The model is partially normative and partially descriptive, as can be seen in Figure 1.

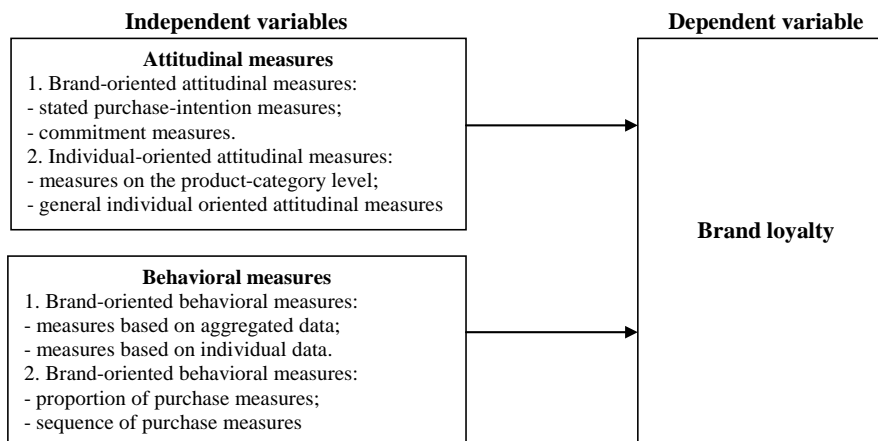


Figure 1 – The research framework

The proposals of Jacoby and Chestnut [16] and Mellens et al [33] are partially evident in the normative part of the model. However, the researchers are solely responsible for the descriptive part upon which the hypotheses of this study will be based.

The aim of the article is to examine brand loyalty among mobile phone users – the case of the main six mobile phone companies operating in the Basque region of Spain.

Basic material. Methodology and Data Collection. This research followed a descriptive approach, which is the most logical and appropriate approach to describe the current situation and answer pertinent questions on an experiment on brand loyalty among mobile phone users in the Basque region of Spain – the case of six main companies. A questionnaire was developed in order to investigate the research topic users' point of view.

According to the literature, the population is the entire group under study, which is all the users in Basque region in Spain. The sample is a subset of the population that should represent the entire group. For this research, a simple random sample of 400 users was selected from the main mobile provider user list. This sample was distributed in person.

The sample size was determined following the method of determining sample size. A sample size of 384 could be used in large populations, which will give the researchers a margin error of only 5%. The sample size required can be calculated according to the following formula [72; 73]:

$$N = \frac{NP}{1 + (NP \cdot e^2)}, \quad (1)$$

where N – sample size; NP – population size; e – the errors term = 0,05.

The sample size in this research is more than the recommended number, which will increase the level of certainty. Of the 400 users who were chosen to participate in this research, 13 refused to participate for various reasons; more 11 had agreed to participate in the research but either did not answer most of the questions or refused to answer the questions when they saw the questionnaire. Despite these difficulties, the researchers redistributed the 24 questionnaires to obtain a total sample size of 400 users.

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Practically, the researchers used a questionnaire designed to study an experiment on brand loyalty among mobile phone users in the Basque region of Spain – the case of six main companies. The questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by people who specialized and were interested in the field of marketing, and statistics were calculated to guarantee the questionnaire’s validity and reliability and to clarify any ambiguity in the questions. The researchers have modified, deleted, and added the necessary parts of the questionnaire in response to the group’s suggestions. After the preliminary design, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the survey. The researchers distributed the questionnaire to a sample of 30 users’ respondents (a Spanish version of the questionnaire was tested in order to make sure that the questions were easily understood).

In addition, the researchers used Cronbach’s a coefficient test to measure the questionnaire reliability of each section and the total average of the questionnaire. From the analysis, the Cronbach a coefficients were equal to 0,8735 as shown in Table 3, which means that they are significant and highly reliable coefficients.

Table 3 – Cronbach’s Alpha For Reliability

Contents	No. of questions	Cronbach’s Alpha
Attitudinal Measures	11	86,43
Behavioral Measures	8	88,27
Total	19	87,35

Demographic profile. As shown in Table 4, the age groups 30 years or less accounted for the largest percentages of user respondents. In addition, the majority of respondents were females, and majority of user respondents are “employed”. However, the majority of user respondents were high school or lower and bachelor degree holders. Furthermore, the great majority of respondents were singles.

Table 4 – Profile of user respondents

Variable	Interval	Users	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	30 years or less	299	74,8
	31-40 years	75	18,8
	41-50 years	18	4,5
	51-60 years	6	1,5
	61 years and above	2	0,5
Gender	Male	173	43,3
	Female	227	56,7
Employment category	Employed	229	57,3
	Unemployed	171	42,7
Education level	High school or lower	168	42
	Diploma	41	10,3
	Bachelor	91	22,8
	Master	96	24
	Ph.D.	4	1
Marital status	Single	337	84,3
	Married	53	13,3
	Widowed	4	1
	Divorced	6	1,5

General information. As shown in Table 5, the big percentage of user respondents (36%) deal with Movistar. 22,8% deal with Euskaltel, while Vodafone was the third (15,5%). Orange came next (13%), followed by Yoigo (8,3%), and finally Jazztel (4,5%). Furthermore, the big percentage of them know about the brand through social media. Besides that, the respondents rate the company they deal with as “adequate”.

Table 5 – General Information about Phone Mobile Companies

Variable	Interval	Users	
		Frequency	Percentage
Brand that users prefer to deal with	Vodafone	62	15,5
	Movistar	144	36
	Orange	52	13
	Yoigo	33	8,3
	Euskaltel	91	22,8
	Jazztel	18	4,5
How the users know about the brand	Friends	86	21,5
	Social media	121	30,3
	Promotion (including ads)	132	33
	Others, please specify?	61	15,3
Users' rating of the company they deal with	Very poor	26	6,5
	Poor	85	21,3
	Adequate	188	47
	Good	72	18
	Very good	29	7,3
Have users recommended the company they deal with to others?	Rarely or never	204	51
	Occasionally	169	42,3
	Quite often	27	6,8
The degree of users' loyalty toward the company they deal with	0-20%	73	18,3
	21-40%	65	16,3
	41-60%	130	32,5
	61-80%	72	18
	81-100%	60	15
Do price differences affect your tendency to switch among brands?	Yes	320	80
	No	80	20
The national charges per minute for the company	High	97	24,3
	Reasonable	236	59
	Low	67	16,8
The international charges per minute for the company	High	262	65,5
	Reasonable	120	30
	Low	18	4,5
The company" customer service	Good	106	26,5
	Acceptable	209	52,3
	Bad	85	21,3
Type of mobile phone that users have	Samsung	109	27,3
	iPhone	118	29,5
	LG	35	8,8
	Sony	16	4
	Motorola	25	6,3
	HTC	5	1,3
	Others, please specify?	92	23

Though, the big percentage of respondents has recommended the company they deal with to others occasionally, and the big percentage of them rate the degree of their loyalty towards the company they deal with between 41-60%. These indicate the weaknesses of brand loyalty.

Moreover, the great majority of respondents agreed that price differences affect their tendency to switch among brands. As well, 59% of respondents said that the national charges per minute for the company are reasonable, while 65,5% of them said that the international charges per minute for the company are high. Also 52% said that the company's customer service is acceptable. The majority of respondents said that the types of mobile phones they use whether Samsung or iPhone.

Users' attitudes toward brand loyalty. Overall, Table 6 demonstrates that users' attitudes are positive toward brand loyalty, as the total mean values (MVs) were equal to 3,31 and the standard deviation (SD) values were equal to 0,559. Despite the positive users' attitudes, a big percentage of respondents do not prefer maintaining a long term contract with the company they deal with. Besides, the majority of respondents do not remain committed to the company brand despite price increase. This indicates respondents' price sensitivity. Moreover, the majority of respondents think that company network does not provide strong signal disregarding the country's various terrains. This could be attributed partially to the fact that some companies operate in the Basque region of Spain.

Table 6 – Users' attitudes toward brand loyalty

Item	MV	SD
The company meets my requirements	3,60	1,009
The company has a reputation for high quality	3,65	0,910
In comparison to other companies, the company is growing in popularity	3,31	0,836
The company always improves its services	3,23	1,002
I have confidence in the services of the company I deal with	3,38	0,968
I consider myself loyal to the company I deal with in return for the excellent service	3,28	1,098
I prefer maintaining a long term contract with the company	3,05	1,234
I remain committed to the company brand despite price increase	2,82	1,227
Competitive promotion of companies affects my attitude towards the company I am dealing with	3,51	1,28
I think the company network covers all the country territory	3,72	1,107
The company network provides strong signal disregarding the country's various terrains	2,89	1,035
Total average	3,31	0,559

Users' behaviors toward brand loyalty. In total, Table 7 demonstrates that users' behaviors are negative toward brand loyalty, as the MV was equal to 2,88 and the SD was equal to 0,548. It is noticed that the great majority of respondents stipulated that the companies they deal with offer the best rates for them continuously in order to continue dealing with these companies.

This means that companies are required to continue to meet their users' needs and wants in order to retain them for a long time, because users will not remain loyal to their companies without meeting their needs.

Table 7 – Users’ behaviors toward brand loyalty

Item	MV	SD
I do not intend to sign out of the company in the next few years	2,81	1,209
I will keep on using this company service as long as it offers the best rates for me	3,98	0,974
If I had it to do all over again, I’d sign up with a different brand	2,70	1,040
I would not switch to a competitor, even if I had a problem with the services of the company I am dealing with	2,20	1,027
I do not intend to sign up with a competitor that offers better prices	2,92	1,205
If I’m satisfied with the company’ service, I hardly switch to another brand	3,03	1,145
I encourage others to sign up for the same company	2,67	1,085
I can recommend the company I deal with, to everybody	2,75	1,112
Total average	2,88	0,548

As shown in Table 8, the majority of respondents (55,8%) choose “continue with the company they are dealing with”, while (31,8%) choose “switching to the new mobile company (companies)”, and the remaining (12,4%) choose “continue with the current company and dealing with a new mobile company”. This indicates that there is no brand loyalty among big percentage of users toward companies and the door is wide open for switches. Every company has advantages and disadvantages but the best company is the one which can benefit from its advantages and makes use of other companies’ disadvantages in order to attract more and more users.

Table 8 – The company that users will choose in the next few years

Validity	Frequency	Percentage
Continue with the company I am dealing with	223	55,8
Switching to the new mobile company (companies)	127	31,8
Continue with the current company and dealing with a new mobile company	50	12,4

In addition, there are many factors that made users stay loyal to the company they deal with. As shown in Table 9, 20,8% of respondents ranked “the company’s service meets my needs” as the first factor that made them stay loyal to their company, while 18,5% of them ranked “the appropriate service prices of the company” as the second factor, and the third factor was “people’s knowledge of my mobile number” as it accounted for 14,8%, while 14,5% of them ranked “the company’s transmission coverage” as the fourth factor. Finally, 10% of them ranked “proximity of company branch to place of residence” as the fifth factor.

Nearly, most of the respondents did not accept the other factors that the researchers included in the questionnaire such as “the difficulty of having more than one mobile at a time” and “diversification of company’s services”.

Table 9 –The most important factors that made user respondents stay loyal to the company

Title	Frequency	Percentage
The company’s service meets my needs	83	20,8
The appropriate service prices of the company	74	18,5
People’s knowledge of my mobile number	59	14,8
The company’s transmission coverage	58	14,5
Proximity of company branch to place of residence	40	10

Hypotheses testing by using one-sample test. Table 10 shows that the t-test of the brand loyalty among mobile phone users was significant, accounting for 4,176 at a significance (two-tailed) of 0,000. It reveals that users' attitudes, and users' behaviors affect brand loyalty.

Table 10 – One-Sample Test of Each Part of Our Model Regarding brand loyalty

Test value = 3				
Item	T	Df	Significance (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Users' attitudes	11.189	399	0.000	.31295
Users' behaviors	-4.233	399	0.000	-.11594
Average	4.176	399	0.000	.09521

Conclusions. After careful, thorough, and statistical analyses of the data collected, the following are the most important conclusions of the study:

- according to users' attitudes, there is a moderate loyalty among mobile phone users toward companies they deal with through: they have moderate confidence in the services of the companies, they consider themselves moderate loyal to the companies in return for the excellent service, the companies improve its services by a moderate way, promotion of competitive companies affect their attitudes, and they will not remain committed to the companies' brands if prices increase;

- according to users' behavior, there is no loyalty among mobile phone users toward companies they deal with through: the respondents intend to sign out of the companies they deal with in the next few years, they will switch to competitors if they face problems regarding the companies' services, they will intend to sign up with competitors that offer better prices, they do not encourage others to sign up for these companies, and they do not recommend the companies to anybody;

- more research is needed covering brand loyalty because there is conceptual and empirical gaps remain in the marketing literature. So, competitive studies are important as differences between nations' characters and cultures, as well as political and economic differences, can affect the way companies and customers respond to markets.

Concerning **directions of further researches**, the researchers recommend the following:

- conducting further researches on the factors that affect the loyalty of users;
- agreeing on a unified definition of brand loyalty;
- identifying all the measurement methods of brand loyalty to facilitate its application in practical way to software programs.

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Дослідження лояльності до бренда користувачів мобільних телефонів у Баскському регіоні Іспанії

У роботі проведено дослідження лояльності до бренда користувачів мобільних телефонів, які обслуговуються шістьма основними операторами мобільного зв'язку, у Баскському регіоні Іспанії. Як інструмент для перевірки гіпотез у ході емпіричного дослідження було використано анкетування. На основі отриманих результатів визначено, що за показником "відношення користувачів" існує низька лояльність користувачів мобільних телефонів до операторів мобільного зв'язку; за показником "поведінка користувачів" відсутня лояльність користувачів мобільних телефонів до операторів мобільного зв'язку.

Ключові слова: лояльність до бренду, користувачі мобільних телефонів, оператори мобільного зв'язку, Баскський регіон, Іспанія.

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Исследование лояльности к бренду пользователей мобильных телефонов в Баскском регионе Испании

В работе проведено исследование лояльности к бренду пользователей мобильных телефонов, которые обслуживаются шестью основными операторами мобильной связи, в Баскском регионе Испании. Как инструмент для проверки гипотез в ходе эмпирического исследования было использовано анкетирование. На основе полученных результатов определено, что по показателю "отношение пользователей" существует низкая лояльность пользователей мобильных телефонов к операторам мобильной связи; по показателю "поведение пользователей" отсутствует лояльность пользователей мобильных телефонов к операторам мобильной связи.

Ключевые слова: лояльность к бренду, пользователи мобильных телефонов, операторы мобильной связи, Баскский регион, Испания.

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