



Sustaining Brand Loyalty: the Moderating Role of Green Consumption values

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Abstract

Environmental issues are massively emerging in the current agendas of governments, businesses and consumers all over the globe. Consumers increasingly adopt a more energetic role in the environmental discussion and employ product consumption to manifest their contribution to the debate. Equally, a growing number of businesses try to affect positive social change, while others strategically approach green opportunities; at the same time, they persistently intensify their branding offerings to sustain loyalty. This article brings into discussion green consumption values as the authors aim to shed light into the way the latter moderate the effect of brand related factors, namely brand experiences and brand personality, on brand loyalty. Based on data received from 413 participants and using the wearable technologies industry as the focal context, the study underscores the significance of green consumption values. Findings are discussed and implications for managers are provided.

Keywords: Green Consumption Values, Brand Loyalty, Brand Experience, Brand Personality, Wearable Technology

1. Introduction

The relentless development of technology significantly affects consumers' lives (Williams and Page, 2011). Technology is now considered a standard of life rather than just a gadget, enabling time saving and convenience. Consumers need to be adaptable, broadminded, buoyant and skilled multi-tasking performers (Bergh and Behrer 2013) to take full advantage of technological evolution, digital advancements and hi-tech product offerings. On top of this, modern consumers are described as image driven entities demonstrating high motivation with regard to how they perceive accomplishment while their sense of acceptance from friends and relatives is pivotal. In an effort to be accepted by their peers in several group settings (Williams and Page, 2011) they often tend to define their personal style through brand consumption driving, thus, businesses to increasingly use brand experience and brand personality as integral elements of their communication and multifaceted brand positioning strategies (Parment, 2013). The substantial rise of customer sophistication hinders promotional tactics and contemporary consumers are, therefore, not easily accessible through traditional advertising methods (Bergh and Behrer 2013). In times where sophisticated hybrid consumers seek to economize while brightening life with everyday luxuries (KPMG, 2014) and their conflicted needs are manifest, businesses are, in turn, struggling to generate brand loyalty by giving emphasis on the experiential aspects and the personality properties of brands. The latter situation appears to be more profound in hi-tech products that hold by definition, both a strong technological aspect and a fun disposition (e.g. wearables) and are regarded as luxurious offerings (Carlson, 2015).

Evidently, the investigation of customer retention has become really complex (Rizomyliotis et al., 2020; Wood, 2000); it becomes even more challenging to understand repurchasing behaviour as ethical and environmental concerns progressively take place in ecological debates of stakeholders (Gadenne et al., 2009). Health-consciousness (e.g. Green-consumption values) is rising and this has triggered a significant alteration (Trudel & Argo, 2013; Pelozo et al., 2013; Catlin & Wang, 2013) of the way consumers behave and remain loyal to a brand (Naprtá, 2015; White & Simpson, 2013). The drivers of loyalty for environmentally responsible consumers are not clearly presented in literature (Leonidou et al., 2013). The shift towards green consumption behaviour is massive but has been only recently discussed by marketing researchers while little has been done under the scope of branding e.g. brand experience (Wu, 2018); brand personality (Acharya & Gupta, 2016; Neto et al., 2020) and brand loyalty (Lin, 2017; 2019; Chen, 2020). Additionally, marketers foresee the need of social normalization of

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3 the green marketing practices, given that green products are not efficiently positioned as
4 mainstream alternatives. Thus, it needs to be further discussed in order to assess how green
5 marketing practices have impacted new trends in such normalization, especially in the field of
6 high-tech products.
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12 Considering the emerging trends in green practice implementation across business functions,
13 as well as the tendency to perceive greener products as material-symbolic artifacts among
14 modern consumers, and just as the relevant brand management practices are not yet
15 substantiated, the need for further investigation of them as determinants of brand loyalty is
16 evident. Rather, the predictors of consumers repurchasing decisions towards hi-tech products
17 are still unfolding, and this is where we offer new knowledge, as, to the best of our knowledge,
18 no study has investigated the role of green consumption values on consumer repurchase
19 behaviour towards hi-tech products. As such, the main aim of the study is to contribute to the
20 current environmental debate and advance existing knowledge by offering new insights into
21 the way green consumption values moderate the effect of branding on brand loyalty for high
22 tech-products.
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33 **2. Theoretical background and related work**

34 **2.1 Green Consumption and Branding**

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37 A socially responsible consumer is described by Han and Stoel (2017) as one who supports
38 businesses that try to affect positive social change or one who acquires services or buys
39 products that are thought to have a positive impact on the environment. People whose
40 consumption behaviour and purchasing habits indicate their concern for ethical matters and
41 environmental protection are considered to be green consumers (Haws, Winterich & Naylor,
42 2014).
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52 Green consumption beliefs refer to product development practices that may keenly and
53 positively affect the general society. Equally, green behaviour involves product related
54 activities that not necessarily benefit the environment but may as well embrace more neutral
55 activities or those that are harmless to the environment. Buying such a brand can be considered
56 a purchase related to green consumption values. Accordingly, consumers who believe that
57 certain brands have not been environmentally responsible and that their own actions can
58 contribute to change this status, are more likely to consume green products (Huang, Lin, Lai,
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3 & Lin, 2014). At the point when customers accept that the selection of products on the basis of
4 green consumption will be beneficial for them or potentially the society, they are substantially
5 more prone to act in a responsible way (Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010). As
6 customers become more mindful of the current ecological issues, they realise they can influence
7 the environmental status quo via purchase decisions and they equally form their attitudes and
8 consumption behaviour on that basis. (Huang, Lin, Lai, & Lin, 2014).
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15 The majority of the customers, who are currently requesting ethical and environmentally
16 friendly brands, consider it to be their responsibility to improve the world (World Economic
17 Forum, 2013). Consequently, they are likely to reject those brands which damage society or
18 the environment (Business Wire, 2004). These customers regard individual behaviour as being
19 of less significance to them than seeing the whole picture and making a difference in the world
20 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Boyd, 2010). Therefore, it is more of a social statement than a
21 personal one to be a green consumer (Griskevicius, Tybur & Van den Bergh, 2010). This
22 perspective denotes a means of customer personality and values, indeed a lifestyle. Therefore,
23 it could be having a powerful impact on customers' purchasing habits, irrespective of how they
24 are influenced by the efforts of businesses brand strategy. Customers' mentality and ecological
25 views towards the brands they intent to purchase seem to be, now more than ever, of
26 fundamental significance when analyzing their brand loyalty.
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40 Nevertheless, some customers are not necessarily prepared to pay the greater costs usually
41 attributed to sustainable and green products (Dale, 2008). During a recession, the budget of
42 some of them, especially Millennials, is limited and their investment priorities differ (IRC,
43 2019), whereas others hold a strong opinion that the extra cost should be absorbed by
44 businesses. Businesses, at the same time, are trying to empower their brands – regardless if
45 they are green or not – by adding intangible benefits to them through brand experiences and
46 brand personality.
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53 **2.2 Brand Experience and Brand Personality**

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56 The components of every brand are constructed around its essence, being its core as well as
57 denoting its promise, with the entire construct eventually representing its identity. Ambler
58 (2002) presented an advanced proposition that brand characteristics could be emotional,
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3 rational, illusory, tangible, real or invisible. Brand personality is described as the set of human
4 characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). Brand personality concerns the
5 appearance, representing tangible and visual factors, and the tonality, representing atmosphere,
6 style and communication. Consequently, it gives the customer greater symbolic advantages
7 (Wysong et al., 2002). Moreover, Aaker (1997) placed it into the following five categories:
8 competence, excitement, ruggedness, sincerity and sophistication. According to literature,
9 brands having conclusive and powerful personalities create numerous advantages (Freling &
10 Forbes, 2005).

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13 According to Aaker (1997) and Fournier (1998), individuals can connect brands with human
14 attributes, in that customers regard brands as being associated with themselves or showing
15 similarity to a celebrity. Consequently, brands resemble living people, meaning that intangible
16 elements can be perceived as being tangible, by which customers interact with brands as though
17 they are human (Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015). Customers' direct and indirect
18 memories of contact with the brand lead to their impression of the personality of that brand
19 (Plummer, 1985). Such perceptions are founded on associated attributes such as a products'
20 category, packaging or price, or unrelated characteristics such as company or user image or
21 advertising style (Aaker, 1996).

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24 There is a tendency for connections formed with a brand's specific attributes to be
25 comparatively clear and long-lasting (Aaker, 1997). Moreover, Williams & Page (2010)
26 contends that such connections are of assistance to customers to regain information, thereby
27 enabling them to make decisions regarding their purchases. Therefore, a specific group of
28 unique associations, within the memory of the customer, constructs a brand equity which is
29 enabled by a specific brand personality (Keller, 1993). Brand personality is of particular
30 importance in that it refers to the brand cues that eventually influence customers' purchasing
31 decisions more than the product's original properties (Dick et al., 1990). Consequently, for the
32 purpose of gaining the customers' attention, brand managers attempt to link personality
33 dimensions with a brand (Mulyanegara et al., 2009). Most of the high-tech products have a
34 hedonic aspect; in the case of hedonic products, it is apparent that brand personality dimensions
35 are more powerful (Freling, 2005), particularly for younger people who are classified as
36 emotional customers with considerable involvement with technology (Bergh & Behrer, 2013).
37 Consequently, it is likely that a unique and powerful brand can encourage this association with
38 the brand personality (Gurău, 2012).

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3 Accordingly, brand experience can be described as subjective internal consumer responses
4 sensations and behavioural responses induced by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's
5 design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al., 2009).
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7 Fromm and Garton (2013) claim that customers are seeking stimulation and experiences.
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9 Consequently, it is possible that the discerned brand experience is a critical element for the
10 construction of their brand preference, and subsequently their repurchasing objective.
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15 Furthermore, when customers are forming their brand preference, brand experience is of
16 specific significance (Behrer, 2013), whereas it is apparent that they search for services or
17 products which involve emotional experiences (Ratneshwar & Mick, 2005). This is due to their
18 influence which is greater than that of product advantages and attributes, thereby resulting in
19 enduring memories which improve brand trust and give a more profound understanding
20 (Schmitt, 1999). It is usual for customers to base their product judgement on their personal
21 experience or that of their peers instead of on conventional advertising or information
22 (Williams & Page, 2010). It is essential that brand experience is consistent, original and unique
23 from every aspect, thereby improving a decisive impact (Shaw & Ivens, 2002; Schmitt, 2003).
24 Brand experience should also link a brand's emotional and practical aspects (Berry et al., 2002).
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34 When customers connect to a brand, brand experience follows (Ambler et al., 2002). Such
35 connection may be either physical and direct, or indirect through an advertising presentation of
36 the product (Hoch & Ha 1986), which may become apparent as a consumption experience or
37 as a service, product or shopping (Brakus, Schmitt & Zhang, 2008). The product assessment
38 while a customer is seeking to buy a brand and the interaction with the product itself generate
39 brand experience (Hoch, 2002). Moreover, brand experience may happen when customers
40 discuss the brand with others (Ambler et al., 2002). This appears to resemble the creation of
41 the experience when customers consume the brand or visit a shop (Kerin, Jain & Howard 2002).
42 Brand experience, which varies in depth and effectiveness, may be positive or negative,
43 anticipated or unanticipated, or enduring or brief (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009).
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53 According to Schmitt (2003), a brand-related stimulus, as part of brand identity, reveals brand
54 experience, which may have an impact on brand personality (Kapferer, 1992). These concepts
55 display numerous differences, despite the fact that they both concern the management of a
56 brand's emotional advantages with reference to how customers react to a brand. Brand
57 personality projects certain personality characteristics on a brand with regard to the judgement
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3 or reflection of customers on that brand; therefore, this procedure is exceptionally presumptive
4 (Johar, Sengupta & Aaker 2005). However, brand experience contrastingly indicates the
5 subjective behavioural and internal responses on contact with a brand. Consequently, this is
6 mostly a type of behaviour or an emotion which is developed by customers towards a brand,
7 rather than being an exclusive conception of that brand. According to Brakus et al. (2009) the
8 following four outcomes emanate from this: affective, behavioural, cognitive and sensory. The
9 customers' senses form the sensory dimension, and their inner feelings and emotions indicate
10 the affective dimension, whereas their creative thinking regarding the brand represents the
11 cognitive dimension. Lastly, the customers' physical experiences associated with the brand
12 indicate the behavioural dimension (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). Therefore, although
13 the principal emphasis of brand personality is on emotional relationships, these represent only
14 one aspect of brand experience, despite the self-evident fact of the powerful and decisive
15 impact of brand experience on brand personality.
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27 Aaker (1997) categorised the following five brand personality dimensions: competence,
28 excitement, ruggedness, sincerity and sophistication. Furthermore, Bergh and Behrer (2013)
29 produced a branding paradigm whose five denominators improve the brands' success. These
30 are: coolness, happiness, realness (authenticity), self-identification with the brand and
31 uniqueness, all of which construct what is known as the CRUSH model. The single facets,
32 which give a broad range of interpretation, also supply a brand orientation, and each facet's
33 significance is dependent on the classification of the product. Moreover, this paradigm
34 identifies numerous similarities with the five personality dimensions presented by Aaker
35 (1997).
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45 Self-identification with the brand is an underlying factor of the CRUSH model which promotes
46 the theory that the decision-making procedure is strongly affected by the brand personality.
47 Since brands give a perception of comfort to customers and enable them to express their
48 feelings (Park & John, 2010), such consumers are likely to associate with brands in accordance
49 with their image and self-conception (Malhotra, 1988). The brands for which they search
50 emphasise conforming to their peers' crowd behaviour as well as the identity factors that they
51 wish to represent (Bergh & Behrer, 2013). This can be summarised by stating that it is
52 necessary for the personality of their favourite brands to intensify the uniqueness of their
53 customers as well as to support their principles and lifestyle. However, this needs to conform
54 to the families' and friends' expectations. Since uniqueness and brand coolness emphasise
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3 personality characteristics (Bergh & Behrer, 2013) closely resembling the excitement
4 dimension, several elements of the CRUSH model imply the need for brand personality to be
5 exciting (Aaker, 1997). Brand uniqueness motivates customers to buy the recommended brand
6 after discussing it with others, despite the difficulty in persuading them of the uniqueness of
7 the brand. It is therefore essential that they see the principal claim of the brand as applied
8 dependably for each of its aspects, and that they should also discern the unique selling
9 recommendation as being appropriate for them. According to Aaker (1997) The independent
10 and unique brand personality characteristics, which belong to the excitement dimensions, have
11 an identical meaning.
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21 Bergh and Behrer (2013) identified that the characteristic of coolness is included in the
22 excitement dimension and they claim that since brand coolness heightens brand loyalty, it is of
23 specific significance to the consumers. There is no specific definition of how customers
24 perceive “cool” because “coolness” is a subjective factor which indicates a type of appearance
25 and style which has an impact on brand personality. According to customers, a brand is cool
26 when it has a clear and consistent brand vision or DNA, a unique cheerful style and creates
27 exiting and creative innovations confirming that vision (Bergh & Behrer, 2013). This conforms
28 to the personality characteristics described by Aaker (1997) which define the excitement
29 dimension as being cool, stimulating, imaginative, young, unique, fashionable and progressive.
30 Nevertheless, in the case of tech brands, the significance of coolness is somewhat high;
31 therefore, the coolness expectation is not identical for every product classification. Customer
32 brand loyalty, which is not straightforwardly shared or moved, is exclusive because of this
33 being a high-involvement product (Gurău, 2012). Consequently, with regard to loyalty and
34 differentiation, technological brands’ personality is essential. Although self-identification with
35 a brand is a critical precursor of buying intention, it is particularly important that customers are
36 given assistance to express themselves (Maehle, Otnes & Supphellen, 2011).
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51 What’s more, the “sincerity” personality dimension of Aaker (1997) has a considerable overlap
52 with certain facets of the “brand happiness and realness” of CRUSH model (Bergh and Behrer,
53 2013). Customer expectation of brands to be transparent, plausible and truthful is associated
54 with the brand realness (or authenticity) dimension. Moreover, customers expect brands to
55 “discuss” with them and to “listen” to them in the same way as communicating with a friend,
56 and a brand should always maintain a fundamental vision and also be true to itself (Bergh &
57 Behrer, 2013). According to Pattuglia, Mingione and Borra (2015), the preparedness of
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3 customers to pay a high price as well as the brand image are increased by the brand authenticity.
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5 Moreover, Schallehn et al. (2014) claim that this has a firm connection with brand trust, which
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7 for 78 percent of customers is a significant purchasing concern (World Economic Forum,
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9 2013). As a part of the sincerity dimension, the attributes of brand personality are: sincere,
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11 trustworthy, practical, original and amicable, thereby indicating this definition of authenticity
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13 (Aaker, 1997).
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16 Although brands are meant to induce favourable feelings, it is also necessary to apply emotional
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18 branding because of customers' emotional nature; therefore, it is essential to eliminate negative
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20 emotions and to link the brand with positive ones (Bergh & Behrer, 2013). In order to motivate
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22 customers to buy, and to heighten brand differentiation, it is of greater importance to load the
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24 brand emotionally (Zarantonello & Luomala, 2011). This is because escapism or sensorial
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26 gratification is the driving force behind technological brands. Although a positive feeling that
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28 it is by means of communication and experience that a brand delivery is associated with brand
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30 happiness, a particularly subjective feeling is required to provide a broad scope for clarification.
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32 Nowadays, numerous factors are being sought by customers, particularly the younger ones:
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34 personal achievement, self-enhancement, a good work-life balance, worthwhile relationships,
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36 flexibility and liberty, and most importantly, to be in control of their lives. Such happiness
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38 facets, which may be compared with the personality characteristics, sentimental and cheerful
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40 within the sincerity dimension, may be achieved through the supporting the function of brands.
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42 Notably, the ability of brands to provide meaningful experiences can reflect these on brand
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44 personality traits. Thus, consumers that give a high rating to a brand experience, may also
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46 perceive a brand as being, for example, more sincere. Equally, this applies to other parts of
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48 brand experience given that customers who value the experience aspect of a brand tend to
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50 perceive this brand remarkably enhanced in terms of its personality (Riivits-Arkonsuo &
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52 Leppiman, 2016).
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3. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

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52 According to current literature, loyalty is directly and indirectly influenced by brand experience
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54 (van der Westhuizen, 2018; Ong et al., 2018, Mathew & Thomas, 2018). Therefore, the direct
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56 impact of brand experience on brand loyalty as well as the indirect impact resulting from brand
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58 personality are addressed in our study. Furthermore, brand loyalty is the principal dependent
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60 variable, or rather the intended outcome (Chandrashekar et al., 2007).

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3 Brand marketers must bond with consumers by staging holistic brand experiences (Schmitt,
4 1999). Since customer experience is valuable, it is anticipated that brand experiences will result
5 in greater satisfaction, and consequently, a higher degree of loyalty (Sahin, et al., 2011). When
6 consumers perceive greater value in the brand, then it is more likely not only to buy the specific
7 product but also make a recommendation to others. Since positive brand experiences strengthen
8 the brand's value consecutively the brand loyalty will be increased and thus is more likely to
9 make a consumer loyal to the brand (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014). Although customers look
10 for their senses to be stimulated, as well as for happiness (Rey et al., 2012), they also seek
11 intellectual stimulation in order to avert monotony (Schmitt, 2012). It is anticipated that they
12 will repeat the brand experience that satisfies their requirements when they have found one.
13 Consequently, there is a greater possibility of customers purchasing the same brand in future
14 because their brand experiences have influenced their repurchasing decisions (Ebrahim et
15 al.,2016).

26 27 **H₁: Brand experience is positively related to brand loyalty.**

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30 Loyalty may also result exclusively from a customer expressing an interest in a brand and
31 having a positive disposition towards it. Furthermore, this may result in the customer linking
32 the brand to positive experiences by practising complex information processing (Keller, 1993),
33 which may lead to such connections improving the likelihood of attaining loyalty. Customer
34 exposure to a brand is followed by the conclusions of a brand's personality and experience
35 (Aaker 1997; Johar, Sengupta & Aaker, 2005). In order to explain the procedures through
36 which customers reach a conclusion regarding a brand, Aaker (1997) mentions a brand's
37 ruggedness, sophistication, competence, excitement and sincerity, such attributes probably
38 being associated with brand experience. In the light of customer experiences with brands,
39 ranging from the packaging colour to salespersons, they have the potential to make effective
40 decisions regarding such brand personality attributes. According to Chang and Chieng (2006)
41 consumers use brand experience as the basis to appraise brand personality, which lead to
42 favourable outcomes (i.e. enhanced brand loyalty). This means that brand experience
43 encourages brand personality customer judgement, consequently being regarded as a brand
44 personality precursor. Brands which are capable of delivering a superior brand experience can
45 achieve preference over and differentiation from other brands and build brand loyalty (Brakus
46 et al. 2009), so it is anticipated that customers will have personal connections with a brand with
47 a high score on the experience scale.
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5 Since consumers have a wide choice of brands, it's important for firms to build and sustain
6 brand loyalty. Consumers have in their disposal a huge amount of information for each brand,
7 which gives them the ability to constantly switch (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Apparently,
8 this is extremely costly and ineffective for brands and the only way to differentiate from
9 competitors is to create exciting brand experiences that entice customers to continually
10 purchase their products and remain loyal to the brand (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Through
11 these brand experiences, consumers relate to the personality that the brand conveys and develop
12 strong bonds and relationships with the brand.
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20 One of the main contributors of a successful brand is its personality (Doyle, 1990). For that
21 reason brand personality should be shaped to be long-lasting and consistent. At the same time,
22 it should differentiate from other brands and offer a unique sales proposition. Because brands
23 have their own particular personalities, consumers may treat brands as real human beings
24 (Kumar et al., 2006). In this case, consumers will expect the people's words, attitudes,
25 behaviour or thoughts and so on to meet their respective brand personality traits. Since brands
26 have their own personalities, users may choose the products matching their preferences and
27 personalities according to the perceived product images (Milewicz & Herbig 1994).
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36 According to several researchers (Guo 2003; Mengxia 2007; Kumar *et al.* 2006), brand
37 personality has a positive impact on brand loyalty. Mengxia (2007) in his research concluded
38 that consumers scored higher on the cognition of some brand personalities of the brands they
39 prefer. That was attributed to the fact that consumers like the brands having more distinct brand
40 personality elements that could be conveyed through an anthropomorphic shape. According to
41 Brakus et al. (2009) brand loyalty will have a positive relationship with brands that have
42 anthropomorphic elements in terms of human attributes and personality. In practice, brand
43 loyalty will grow if such brand is provided with a personality by means of numerous functions
44 such as unique sales proposition and differentiation (Kim et al., 2001; Sop & Kozak, 2019).
45 Therefore:
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54 **H₂: Brand experience is positively related to brand personality.**

55 **H₃: Brand personality is positively related to brand loyalty.**

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60 The green values denote the consumer's expression about environmental protection through

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3 the adoption and consumption of eco-friendly offers (Koller et al., 2011; Khan and Mohsin,
4 2017; Sharma et al., 2020). Consumers are more likely to adopt and purchase products that
5 promote green values as their concern and the value they attach to the environment protection
6 has increased (Kautish and Sharma, 2018; Han et al., 2019), hence firms seek to enhance their
7 organizational sense of green identity (Song et al., 2019; Nguyen et al.; 2020). On the other
8 hand ecological concerns did not necessarily translate into environmentally friendly behaviour
9 (Mostafa, 2007; Finisterra do Paço and Raposo, 2010). Roozen and De Pelsmacker (2000) in
10 their study on consumers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products, posit that
11 purchase decision does not necessarily reflect consumers' environmentally friendly attitudes.
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20 Customers, who have a tendency to rely on the guaranteed values of their brands, anticipate
21 that brands will promote green values, despite the fact that a green consumer may not
22 necessarily affect that person's purchasing intention (Bucic, Harris & Arli, 2012). According
23 to Musonen et al. (2016) both green image and perceived value have a direct positive link with
24 customer loyalty and environmental values are positively linked to the green image of the
25 supplier. According to Butt et al. (2017), a strong relationship exists between consumers'
26 knowledge structure and their relational preference with green brands. Since brand value has
27 an impact on customer perception of brands, this may influence how brand personality is
28 understood, or decrease its positive impact. With regard to creative products, it is considered
29 that wearable technologies damage the environment because they do not generally possess
30 environmentally friendly properties. It is probable that customers having high green
31 consumption values will be hesitant about purchasing expensive innovative products requiring
32 high information processing because they have a tendency to apply their personal resources
33 intelligently (Iyer, 2016; de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017). It is usual for green consumers to be
34 innovative in finding new methods of reusing current products, but not in accepting novel
35 products or services (Price & Ridgeway, 1983).
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50 **H₄: Green consumption values are expected to reduce the effect of brand experience on**
51 **brand loyalty.**

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53 **H₅: Green consumption values are expected to reduce the effect of brand personality on**
54 **brand loyalty.**
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57 The conceptual framework and the hypotheses of the study are presented in Figure 1.
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4. Research Methodology

Wearable technologies industry provided a fertile ground to investigate the aforementioned relations. Wearable brands encompass innovative technological attributes along with fun and luxurious facets (Carlson, 2015); they are also thought to be a seeming part of a user's self. What's more, the wearable technologies market still booms, and this trend is expected to continue, according to the International Data Corporation (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Wearable Device Tracker (IDC, 2020). Most of the wearable devices are wrist-worn, i.e. smart wristbands or smart watches, and according to predictions they will continue to emerge worldwide in the years to come. Nevertheless, the recorded interest for wearable technologies, isn't followed by an equal increase in sales and little is known about the factors that prevent these innovative products from thriving. While in the early stages of their lifecycle, still, they are reported to receive somewhat lower acceptance than expected (Lampkin, 2015). Moreover, we have targeted respondents from GenX (19-38) as their profile matches the scope of this study; according to research (Future Thinking, 2017; AMCS, 2019) they are not all that keen on recycling, although they have grown in an era of increasing environmental awareness, but they are quite environment-conscious and are prepared to pay a premium for sustainably manufactured products.

Aiming to test the validity of our research hypotheses, we carried out a primary quantitative survey with the use of structured questionnaires. The reason behind the choice of the specific research design is that it enables the generalisation of the study's results to the population (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Hallberg 2008). Since literature advises that brand personality rating ought to be similar to peer rating, this technique was considered to be the most appropriate (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This is because the subject's connection with the brand forms the basis of the imagined brand personality. Therefore, in order to avert unsatisfactory or incorrect responses, respondents ought to be acquainted with the brand. Therefore, we considered that the subject's most often utilised brand or favourite brand to be the more appropriate choice than a fictitious brand (Huang, Mitchell & Rosenaum-Elliott, 2012).

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3 The questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics in order to eliminate human error at the
4 data entry level (Evans and Mathur, 2005). By creating awareness and providing secure access
5 any potential bias in coverage was minimized (Solomon, 2001). We also adopted the time-
6 trend procedure suggested by Armstrong and Overton (1977) to identify between early and late
7 respondents. No differences were found in early and late respondents; hence, non-response bias
8 does not appear to be an issue in the current study. The questionnaire in the first section, had a
9 filter question regarding the age group (GenX). The purpose of that filter question was to reduce
10 respondent burden and not waste researcher time in collecting meaningless data. Prior to
11 distributing the final questionnaire for the purpose of guaranteeing the instrument's
12 dependability and authenticity, we setup a pilot test (Williams, 2003; Giuffre, 1995). We
13 examined the reliability of the data for the purpose of ensuring the suitability of the scales, all
14 of which attained a minimum score of 0.750 in the Cronbach's Alpha, deemed to acceptable
15 (Kline, 1999). The survey elicited 437 questionnaires out of which 34 were partially completed.
16 The completed questionnaires were 413 (Table 1) out of a targeted 935 participants, thus
17 achieving a satisfactory response rate of 44.2%. Participants were asked to describe the
18 experiences with their preferred wearable tech brand as well as to assess their brands
19 personality and duly note their loyalty towards these brands.
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Place Table 1 around here

4.1 Measurement

41 Several measurement scales were used in the measurement instrument (see Table 2); they were
42 designed to record some general demographic data as well as the constructs under examination
43 (see Table 2). Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale was applied to measure brand
44 personality which, as aforementioned, comprises five dimensions. We separated each
45 dimension into two to four aspects, totalling 15, each of which comprises two or three
46 characteristics which define the brand attributes, making an overall total of 42 items in the
47 brand personality scale. Since the paradigm assesses the degree to which any particular brand
48 has any of these personality characteristics (Freling & Forbes, 2005), we rated the items on a
49 seven-point Likert scale in the scope of (1) "not at all descriptive" to (7) "extremely
50 descriptive". Previous studies reference to this scale and have provided adequate Cronbach
51 alpha values. Austin et al. (2003) reported values between .72 and .93 (tested in various brands),
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Ekinci and Hosany (2006) reported an overall value of .84 and Chu and Sung (2011) reported values between .86 and .95 for the different subconstructs.

The scale that Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) developed in order to measure brand experience was employed in this study as well. This scale applies to the following four dimensions: affective, behavioural, intellectual and sensory, which comprise three items each, making a total of 12. The items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale in which (7) indicated “extremely descriptive” and (1) “not at all descriptive”, with the instructions conforming to Aaker’s (1997) work. Previous studies have used the same measurement scale and reported adequate Cronbach values. Nysveen et al. (2013) report values between .86 and .96 and Dwivedi et al (2018) values between .82 and .91 for the different subconstructs.

We also applied the GREEN-Scale (Haws, Winterich and Naylor, 2014) which concisely indicates customers’ opinions on green consumption, in comparison with wider opinions concerning environmental awareness or socially responsible behaviour (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig & Jones, 2000). This scale, which comprises six items concerning values that pertain sustainable and environmentally friendly products, was assessed on a seven-point Likert scale in the scope of (7) “strongly agree” to (1) “strongly disagree”. Lastly, You and Donthu’s (2001) scale was applied to test brand loyalty. This scale has been used in previous studies (Larson 2019; Yan et al. 2019; Cruz-Cárdenas et al. 2019) providing adequate Cronbach alpha values (.87, .93, .84 respectively). All scales items with relevant mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Place Table 2 around here

Self-report techniques were applied in this study in order to gather the required data, and the survey instrument effectively comprised numerous aspects. The purpose of these was to reduce variance occurrences to a minimum, such variations being caused not by the participants’ real cause but by the method, thereby creating method bias. It is impossible to give a reason for every potential bias origin within a specific research method; however, the appropriate processes were followed to decrease bias associated with method within the sample, in line with MacKenzie & Podsakoff (2012).

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5 In doing this, we explicitly described the meaning and aspects of green products and wearable
6 technologies so that all the respondents could have the same, well-shaped idea of the constructs
7 before answering the questions. Thus, we provided them with the definitions of these
8 variables/constructs which assisted in removing any bias across the responses. Essentially, all
9 responses were recorded once we have asked respondents to consider one smartwatch brand,
10 so that the definitions would not produce any bias to their responses.
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19 **5. Analysis and Results**

20 The brand experience scale's discriminant validity obtained from the brand personality scale
21 was investigated as a first step. Exploratory factor analysis (varimax rotation) was performed
22 and, along with composite scores' factor analysis, it was shown that both the brand personality
23 and the brand experience displayed high discriminant validity levels. Therefore, we applied
24 composite measures of assessing the structural equation model so that the number of items
25 would be decreased.
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32 The results for the estimated model (Table 3) show a good fit to the data: GFI = .87, CFI =
33 .93, and RMSEA = .07, with $\chi^2(143) = 792.7$, $p < .001$. Every path coefficient was found to be
34 significant ($p < .05$). and the composite measures' internal consistencies were acceptable
35 (Cronbach's alphas: the sensory dimension = .78, the affective dimension = .71, the intellectual
36 dimension = .80, the behavioural dimension = .73, sincerity = .87, excitement = .85,
37 competence = .84, sophistication = .74, and ruggedness = .73).
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47 **Place Table 3 around here**

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51 The results (Table 4) revealed, in accordance with the existing knowledge, that loyalty is
52 directly as well as indirectly affected by experience – by means of brand personality (Brakus,
53 Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009). Apparently, brand experience explains repurchasing behaviour
54 better than brand personality does, given that the direct effect on loyalty (.53) in the case of
55 brand experience is greater than in the case of brand personality (.42).
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8 This can be partially explained by the fact that it is deemed as normal for a person who is
9 involved in an inspirational experience to wish to live it again. It is anticipated that customers
10 whose experience with a brand was remarkable, moving or impressive will choose such
11 stimulation a second time. Contrastingly, as a result of such experiences being private, it is
12 likely consumers will be less flexible and not as prone to situational impacts than with the more
13 self-expressive brand personalities (Aaker, 1999).
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20 The 2 moderating hypotheses were tested, with a multi-group analysis (see Table 5). We used
21 the median as the cut-off point (median split approach) in order to divide the sample in two
22 groups and then estimated results for the two new models. With regard to H₄ the results
23 indicated that green consumption values have a significant moderating effect on the association
24 between brand experience (BE) and brand loyalty (BL) ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.21$, $p < .10$). More specifically
25 although under low green consumption values ($\beta = .54$, $t = 3.12$, $p = .00$), the association
26 becomes even stronger under high green consumption values ($\beta = .79$, $t = 5.69$, $p = .00$). In the
27 case of H₅ the results indicated that green consumption values do have a significant moderating
28 impact on the association between brand personality (BP) and brand loyalty (BL) ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.18$,
29 $p < .10$). More specifically although under low green consumption values ($\beta = .49$, $t = 3.31$, p
30 $= .00$), the association becomes even stronger under high green consumption values ($\beta = .83$, t
31 $= 5.74$, $p = .00$). This moderating effect was found to be stronger in affecting the relationship
32 between personality and loyalty than that between experience and loyalty.
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51 **6. Discussion**

52 The contribution of this work is threefold. Firstly, and more importantly, we offer new
53 knowledge in the field of environmental research. Green consumption studies are still at an
54 early stage, especially when it comes to tech products. They may serve as a key driver in food
55 consumption or even fast-moving consumer goods, but little is known about their influence on
56 consumer decision-making process for high tech products. Within this scope, we have
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3 investigated wearable technologies and present a more profound comprehension of the way
4 green consumption moderates the effect of branding elements (namely brand personality and
5 brand experience) on brand loyalty. Moreover, using the specific context, this study adds value
6 to the extant literature in branding for new technological products. Thus, we provide additional
7 knowledge on the way brand loyalty is influenced by brand personality and brand experience
8 in a product category (e.g. wearables) where it still remains inadequately explored and
9 unconfirmed.

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17 First and foremost, this study offers new evidence pertaining to the role of customers' green
18 consumption values in the interplay between brands personality and consumers repurchase
19 habits. Given that the expectations regarding tech brands may be changed by various customer
20 opinions, it is important that businesses have complete and thorough understanding of who is
21 being targeted by their branding strategy. In order to obtain such insight for the expected brand
22 personality, additional and ongoing qualitative research should be conducted. The development
23 of green(er) products is inscribed by the certain environmental morality and is driven through
24 a process of socio-material comprehension (Zaharia & Zaharia, 2014). The specific aspect of
25 this development process is positioning green products as distinct, mapping it to the green
26 marketing claims regulated by the state authorities against common environmental needs.
27 What's more, the development of new brand experiences associated with green consumerism
28 is also positioned as a part of responsible consumer behaviour, which drives loyalty to the
29 relevant products among socially and environmentally responsible individuals. Hence, green
30 consumption values are primarily created among younger generations, who acknowledge the
31 need of change in daily practices, also reflecting on their changing lifestyles.

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45 Understanding of green consumer behaviors also emerges from a series of purchasing decisions
46 made individually rather than as a distinct consumer group. Young et al. (2010) mentioned that
47 brand experience in the case of green consumption is associated with certain hierarchy of
48 importance in ethical drivers involved into decision-making process. Shaw et al. (2005), Young
49 et al. (2010) also mentioned a typology of the ethical consumer practices according to the way
50 consumers relate to the product or try to influence the change in seller's attitude or product
51 stance. Considerably, green consumers develop loyalty to their products through the series of
52 interactions, further attempting to lobby their views in line with publicly discussed social and
53 environmental concerns.

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3 Considering that customers shape their brand preferences mostly based on first-hand
4 experiences, they are unlikely to develop their likings according to conventional advertising,
5 but rather tend to do so on the basis of personal experience and peer influence (Williams &
6 Page, 2010). Brand personality can be impacted by brand experience, as shown by brand-
7 related stimuli (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009), a presupposition verified by the results
8 of the survey.
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15 Exciting experiences are a result of exciting brands which help customers to display their
16 personality (Maehle, Otnes & Supphellen, 2011), a critical element being self-identification
17 with a brand (Malhotra, 1988). Moreover, customers, as suggested by literature, search for
18 worthwhile experiences which are deliverable through sincere brands (Park & John, 2010).
19 Hence, an attempt ought to be made by managers to generate a differentiated brand personality
20 and communicate it to the audience in such a way that they can clearly recognise and
21 understand. The positive impact of an inspiring brand experience on brand personality is also
22 stressed out in this study. Should hi-tech brands managers wish to give their customers a
23 worthwhile experience, they ought to be conscious of this impact. In order to attract these
24 customers, empirical research suggests a mix of competence, sincerity and excitement, whereas
25 on the other hand we expect ruggedness and sophistication to be relevant to brand
26 differentiation.
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38 Another important aspect of our findings refers to how green consumption values affect brand
39 personality. According to He, Cai, Deng, and Li (2016), green consumers often tend to boycott
40 the non-green products, foreseeing green consumption as the mean to minimize purchase
41 frequency and hence choose recyclable products with ecological labels and higher durability
42 of use. Considerably, green consumers put certain degree of symbolism into the products they
43 choose, replicating behaviors of luxury consumers from psychological standpoint (Sadachar,
44 Khare, & Manchiraju, 2016). Hence, marketers should consider personalities of green
45 consumers as those who differentiate their purchasing decisions from non-green ones, being
46 ready to pay for the high quality and product stance, while not being exaggerated with the need
47 to self-express through money and status.
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56 Finally, it is important to consider that green consumer values fall in line with regulatory norms
57 established by social groups and institutions. Minihero et al. (2014) admitted that green
58 consumers are prevention-focused individuals, who strategically regulate their behaviors and
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3 use vigilance strategies to ensure personal stability. Marketers need to keep in mind that
4 (Stoimenova, 2016) green consumers demonstrate stronger environmental knowledge, which
5 is often a barrier to communicate personal appeals natural to the non-green consumption. From
6 brand personality perspective, it means that high-tech products would only develop consumer
7 loyalty if their marketing communication practices would be in line with regulatory
8 frameworks and social orientation, while any deviation from the green practices might create
9 a significant loyalty breach.

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17 In all, as wearables and other technological products include trendy and fashionable elements
18 as well as technology components, they should be positioned in the market as products that
19 meet potential customers' hedonic needs but also functional requirements; individual needs but
20 also social requirements. In other words, "cool" brands ought to satisfy consumers' societal
21 well-being; however, although the majority of wearable brands offer increased satisfaction and
22 give convincing and sophisticated answers to meet to technical requirements, they have
23 minimal success in balancing environmental issues. Overshooting design with playful colours
24 or virtual elements and exceeding the customers' expectations by offering stimulating brand
25 experiences and exciting brand personality can be considered as critical features of a branding
26 strategy; still, they are expected to be less effective in positively affecting repurchasing
27 behaviour unless they also offset customers green concerns.

37 **7. Limitations and Future Research**

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39 This research, like most studies, faces some restrictions. Firstly, on one hand applying a single-
40 country sample enables us to generalise our findings and to secure for the internal validity of
41 the research. Nevertheless, taking a sample from different countries would help in gaining a
42 better insight into the purchase behaviour of various customer profiles, and check whether
43 behaviours are comparatively steady in various samples and contexts. In addition to this, the
44 respondents' bias is another issue, although they were unbiased in their responses given that
45 we used a specific non-brand definition of the product category and they had the choice to
46 pinpoint the actual effect of several factors on their attitude. Still, some of them might have an
47 affection (Albert & Merunka , 2012) or a strong attachment (Belaid & Behi, 2011) to a specific
48 brand and would purchase that brand, irrespective of the product. This research focuses on
49 wearables; however, we expect managerial implications to be transferable to different
50 technological products.
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Table 1. Sample Profile

Variable	Values	Frequency	Valid (%)
Gender	Male	173	41.9
	Female	240	58.1
Family Cycle	Single	116	28.1
	Married	204	49.4
	Married+Children	93	22.5
Age	19-22	121	29.3
	23-27	157	38
	28-32	135	32.7
Educational Level	High School	24	5.8
	Graduate	254	59.3
	Postgraduate	135	32.7
	PhD	9	2.2
n=413			

Table 2. Scales of measurement

	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Er Mean
Brand personality			
Sincerity			
1. Down to earth	5.05	.926	.042
2. Family oriented	4.74	.865	.039
3. Small town	5.32	.879	.040
4. Honest	4.52	1.003	.046
5. Sincere	5.19	.989	.045
6. Real	4.75	.730	.047
7. Wholesome	3.70	.747	.038
8. Original	3.65	.723	.058
9. Cheerful	3.65	.836	.032
10. Sentimental	3.58	.798	.037
11. Friendly	3.70	.747	.037
Excitement			
12. Daring	4.46	.642	.041
13. Trendy	4.27	.729	.036
14. Exciting	4.23	.732	.040
15. Spirited	4.20	.750	.038
16. Cool	4.19	.808	.037
17. Young	4.31	.722	.058
18. Imaginative	4.16	.795	.065
19. Unique	4.08	.747	.043
20. Up to date	4.16	.737	.053
21. Independent	3.49	1.143	.052
22. Contemporary	3.59	1.285	.053
Competence			
23. Reliable	3.49	1.055	.070
24. Hard working	3.42	1.022	.068
25. Secure	3.42	1.047	.076
26. Intelligent	3.27	1.177	.090
27. Technical	3.85	.950	.083
28. Corporate	2.97	1.186	.087
29. Successful	3.83	.926	.062
30. Leader	3.70	1.141	.038
31. Confident	3.65	.859	.059
Sophistication			
32. Upper class	3.58	.831	.070
33. Glamorous	3.70	.878	.074
34. Good looking	3.11	.744	.062
35. Charming	4.46	.945	.079
36. Feminine	4.27	.807	.068
37. Smooth	4.08	.724	.061
Ruggedness			
38. Outdoorsy	3.49	.741	.062
39. Masculine	3.59	1.002	.086
40. Western	3.81	.832	.072
41. Tough	3.49	.827	.071
42. Rugged	3.42	.900	.078
Brand Experience			
Sensory			

1.	This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses.	4.95	1.065	.048
2.	I find this brand interesting in a sensory way.	4.36	.966	.044
3.	This brand does not appeal to my senses. *	3.92	1.134	.051
Affective				
4.	This brand induces feelings and sentiments.	4.19	1.133	.051
5.	I do not have strong emotions for this brand. *	3.64	1.137	.052
6.	This brand is an emotional brand.	4.13	.959	.033
Behavioural				
7.	I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use this brand.	3.70	0.747	.058
8.	This brand results in bodily experiences.	3.11	1.141	.032
9.	This brand is not action oriented. *	4.46	.642	.037
Intellectual				
10.	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand.	4.27	.729	.037
11.	This brand does not make me think. *	4.23	.732	.038
12.	This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving.	4.20	.750	.041
Green scale				
1.	It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment.	4.19	.808	.036
2.	I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions.	4.63	1.097	.050
3.	My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment.	4.16	1.170	.053
4.	I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet.	4.12	1.117	.051
5.	I would describe myself as environmentally responsible.	4.68	.993	.045
6.	I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly.	4.23	.939	.043
Brand loyalty				
1.	I consider myself to be loyal to this brand.	4.12	1.283	.058
2.	This brand would be my first choice	4.14	.812	.056
3.	I will not buy other brands if this brand is available at the store.	4.36	.837	.053
*Reverse item				

Table 3. Indicators of Reliability and Validity

Constructs and measurements	a	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
BE	.831	.854	.714	.321	.141
BP	.861	.911	.713	.088	.070
BL	.811	.885	.829	.313	.074
GCV	.852	.911	.733	.166	.092

Note: BE=Brand Experience, BP=Brand Personality, BL= Brand Loyalty, GCV=Green Consumption Values

For Peer Review

Table 4. Standardized structural coefficients

Hypothesis	β	t-value	p-value	Acceptance
H ₁ Brand experience is positively related to brand loyalty.	.53	2.06	.003	Supported
H ₂ Brand experience is positively related to brand personality.	.66	2.72	.008	Supported
H ₃ Brand personality positively related to brand loyalty.	.42	3.25	.010	Supported

Note: Cmin/df = 2.72; CFI = .93; NNFI = .90; RMSEA = .07 (90 % C.I. 0.02, 0.07); SRMR = 0.04

For Peer Review

Table 5. Results of moderating effects

Green Consumptions Value as a moderator					
Main effect	Hypothesized moderating effects	High Green Consumption Values Group	Low Green Consumption Values Group	$\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df=1$)	Acceptance
BE→BL	H ₄ Green consumption values are expected to reduce the positive effect of brand experience on brand loyalty.	$\beta = .79$ t = 5.69	$\beta = .54$ t = 3.12	3.21 (p<.10)	Supported
BP→BL	H ₅ Green consumption values are expected to reduce the positive effect of brand personality on brand loyalty.	$\beta = .83$ t = 5.74	$\beta = .49$ t = 3.31	3.18 (p<.10)	Supported

For Peer Review