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# Age-Related analysis of service loyalty: An example from recreational riders in equestrian centres



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**Camille ESLAN, Céline VIAL, Sandrine COSTA, Pascaline ROLLET**



# Equestrian context in France

## A MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT of horse riding in France:

3<sup>rd</sup> federal sport (628 262 members\*) - 1<sup>st</sup> nature federal sport - 1<sup>st</sup> female sport

## BUT:

- Since 2012: ↘ FFE memberships (-13 %\*) after 70 years of continuous progression
- Customer turn-over: every year 30% of first-time members and 10% of practitioners switch riding schools

## WHILE:

- Offer mainly focuses on competition in riding schools\*\*
- Transformation and diversification of rider's demand



Lack of knowledge/studies concerning this market

\* Source : FFE 2018

\*\*Source : REFerences – IFCE 2017

# Research question and theoretical background



**How to improve customer loyalty in riding schools?**



**Which factors influence customer loyalty to riding schools?**



**Consumer behavior theory**  
**Service loyalty approach**



***2 dimensions:***

- ***Attitudinal (attitude, intentions)***
- ***Behavioral (observed behavior)***



# Methodology



**Target: non-owner riders using riding schools**

## Exploratory qualitative survey:

- Semi-directive interviews
- 30 respondents
- 10 various structures
- Hérault : urban, suburban and rural areas



## Quantitative survey:

- Whole of France
- Online
- Focus: paths, practices, wishes
- Specific questions for model's concepts
- Respondents aged 15 years old and over
- 630 actual riders
- Riders with other conditions

## Data processing:

- Use of R software
- Descriptive statistics and cross tables with significance tests
  - Lavaan package for Structural Equation Model (SEM)

# Who are the French riders in RS?

-  92%     8%    *(88% and 12% FFE national stat)*



- Age: 15 to 77 (average: 28 y.o.) → 42% students




Copyright: FFE

-  Horse riding experience from 0 to 56 years (average: 13 years)

-  Various horse riding levels: from beginners to Galop 7<sup>®</sup> (experienced)

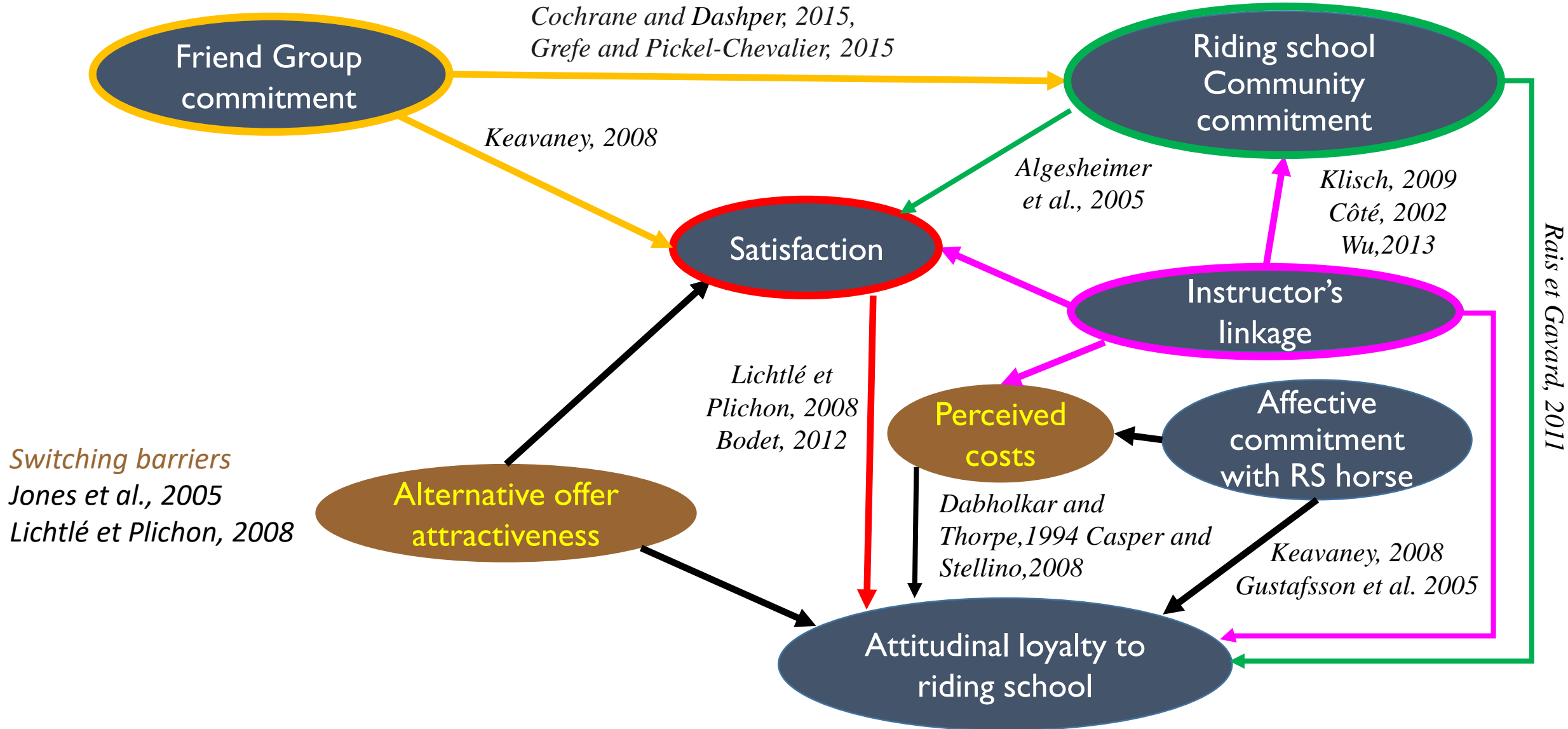
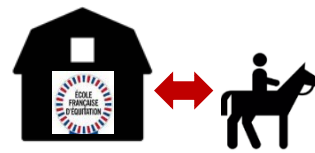
-  Various practice frequencies:    • 59% practice another sport  
27% < 1/week  
27% = 1/week  
46% > 1/week    

-  Number of riding schools frequented: from 1 to 20 (average number: 2.7)

➡ Average stay from 0 to 47 years (average: 4.1 years)

➡ In current RS from 0 to 47 years (average: 5.6 years)

# How loyalty to RS is built?



# Difficulty to evaluate the influence of the relationship with the horse

**Affective commitment with the favorite horse** was tested in our model **BUT** all variables were high (marked as 4 and 5 for most people) and no significant effect was found

## HOWEVER

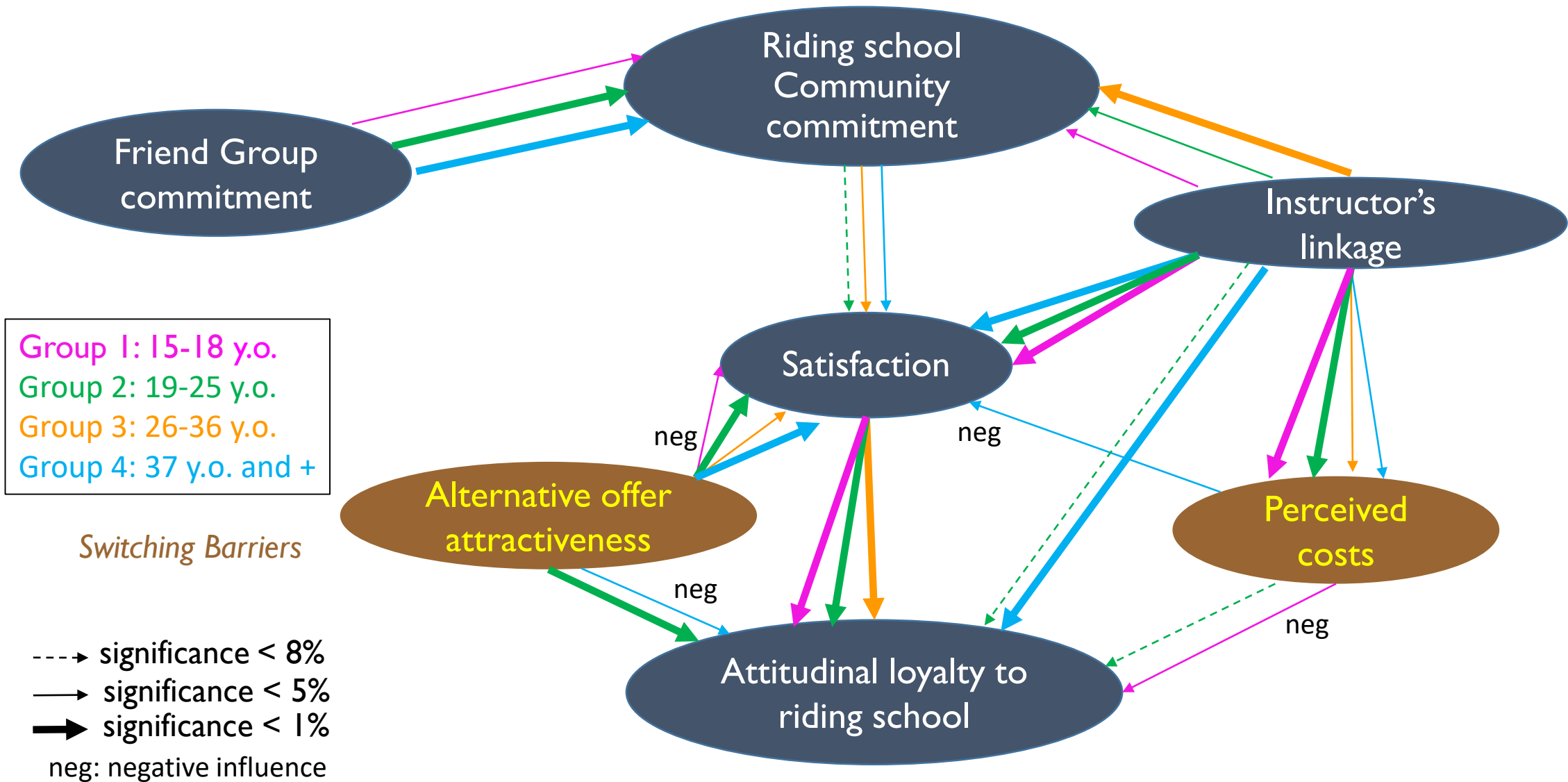
### Key role of the relationship with the horse

- 1<sup>st</sup> reason for riding
- Almost all riders have a favorite horse in the RS
  - => can be a barrier to riding school switch (result from another survey)

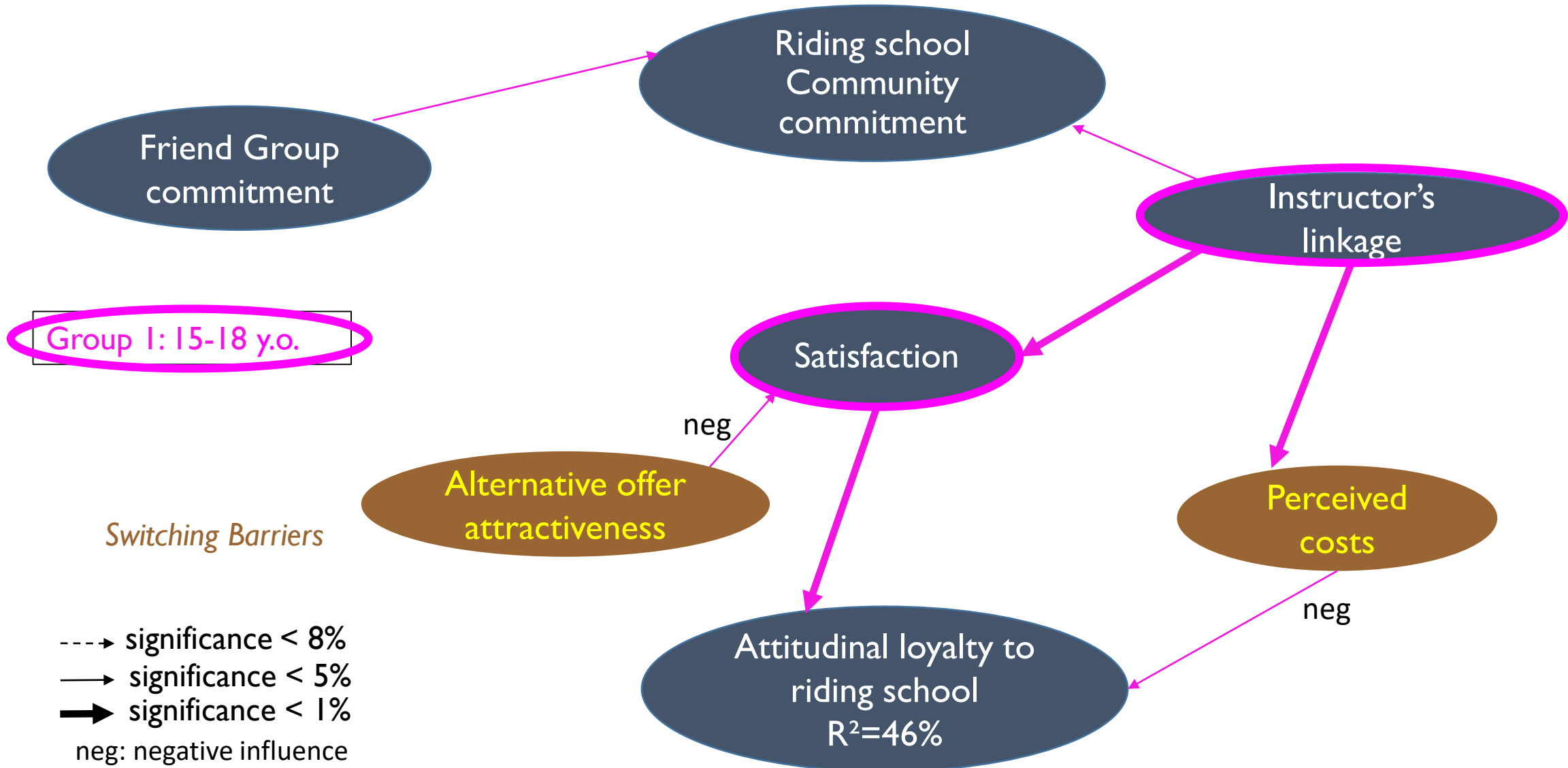
 **Problem in the evaluation of the influence of the relationship with the horse ???**



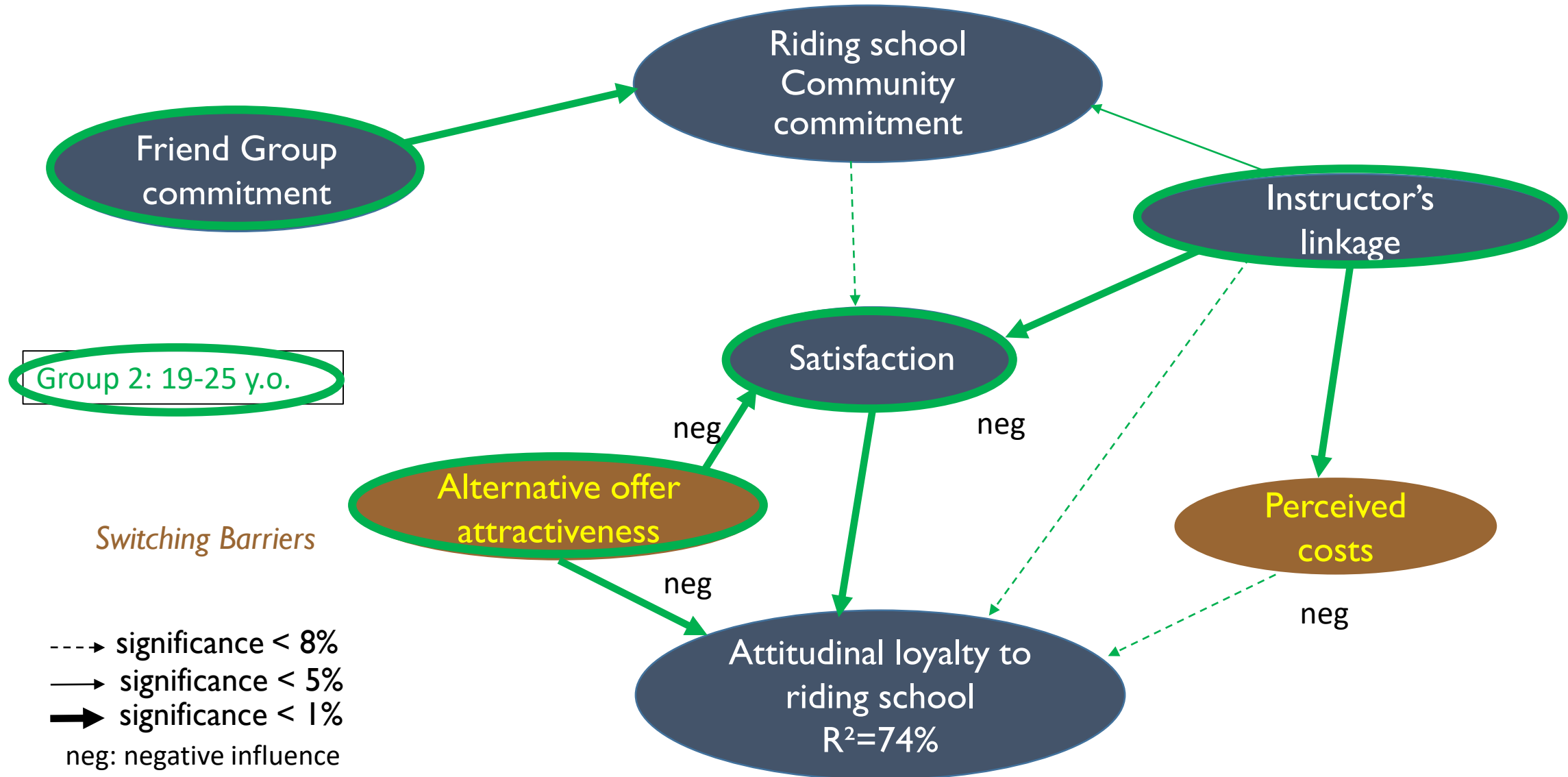
# Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



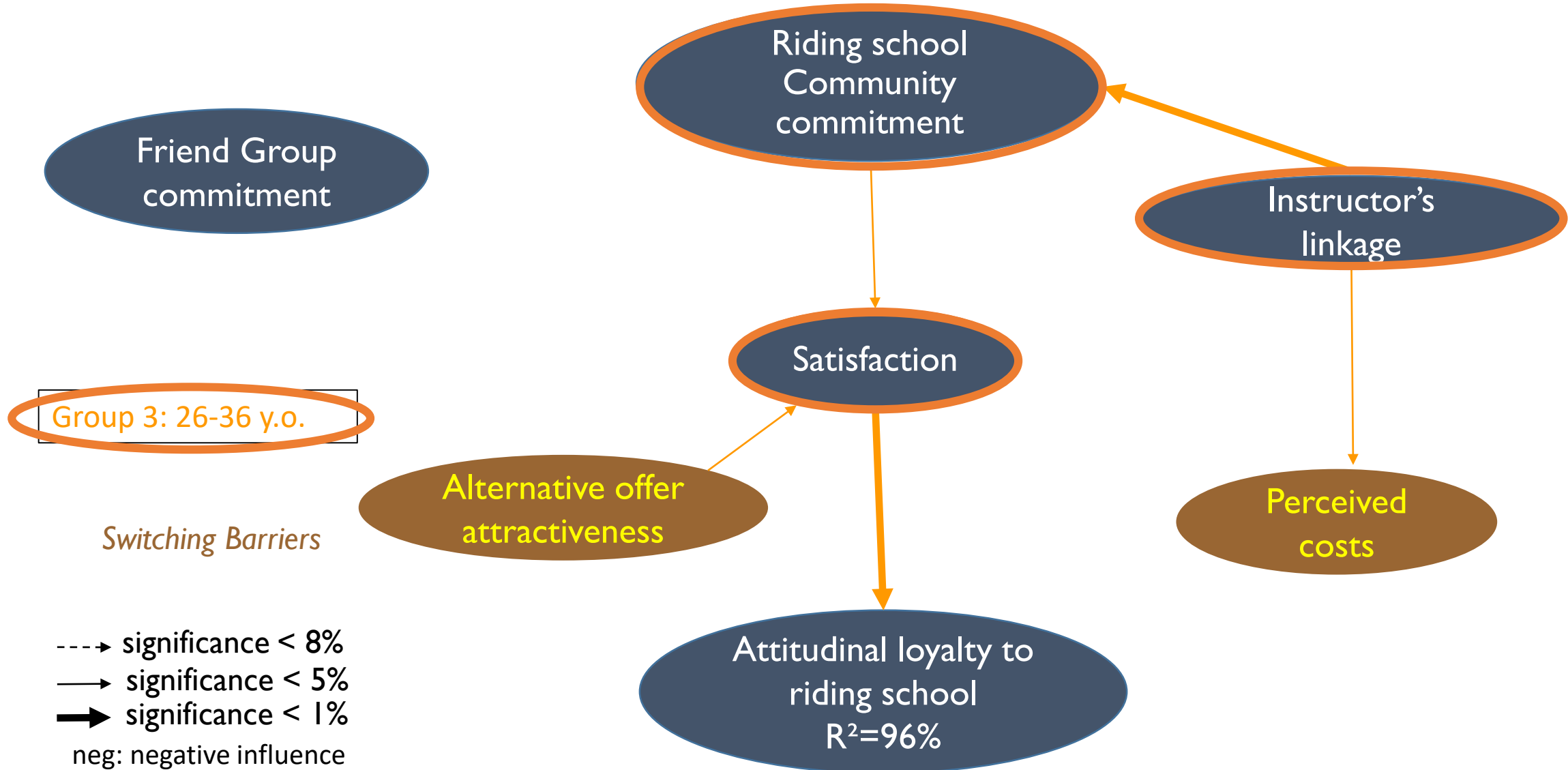
# Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



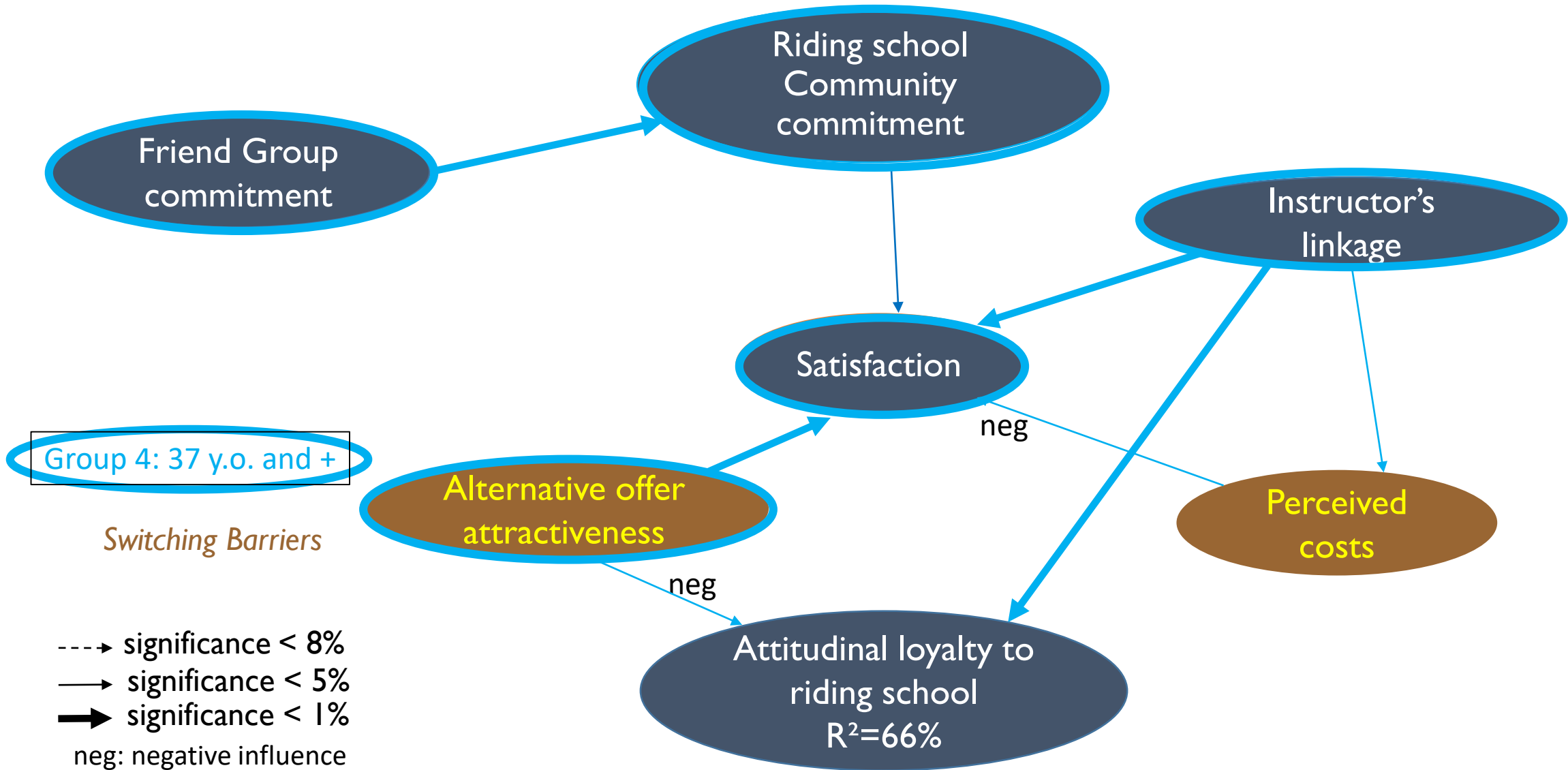
# Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



# Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



# Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



# Complementary results explaining loyalty to the riding school

What is the main reason for leaving your last RS?	%
Moving house, structure closure	39,3
I wasn't making enough progress	8,7
Instructor lack of skills or pedagogy	6,0
Traumatic experience, fall, fear	4,2
Non-adaptation to my needs	7,7
Staff lack of friendliness	6,7
My group of friends left	2,0
I wasn't enjoying RS's club life	3,5
Horse's lack of well-being	5,7
Horse's lack of training	1,0
Horse's lack of diversity	2,0
Offered activities didn't match anymore with my needs	4,5
I wasn't enjoying the setting and the environment of the structure	2,7
Rates were too high	6,0

33% Instructor's role

15%: Inadaptation of the offer??

# Limits



## ➤ **With the sample composition:**

- Few boys / men (8%)
- Few beginners (in their first riding year) (5%)
- Few over 60 years old (2%)
- Almost every area of France

## ➤ **With the analysis:**

- Survey questions to study the relationship with RS horses
- Multigroup SEM with social profile

# Conclusion



## **Factors influencing the loyalty to riding schools:**

Key role of the riding school's instructor

Loyalty to the riding school is linked to **satisfaction**

**Community commitment:** loyalty factor for **senior riders**

Practitioner's **lack of knowledge about alternative offers**

➔ Riding schools need to promote their activities better



# Perspectives



- **Extend the study to other audiences:** horse owners, children...
- **New investigation** of the role of the **relationship with the horse**
- **Thesis** that begins on the **behavior of self-organized practitioners**



***Thank you!***



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Model general indices: N° free parameters: 308 – Nb obs used G1: 133/144; G2: 190/203; G3:116/121; G4: 141/147– P value:0.000 – Robust CFI: 0.880 – Robust TLI 0.864 – RMSEA: 0.080 (P value: 0.000) confidence interval [0.076 0.089] – SRMR: 0.077- GFI=0.985

Table 1: Multigroup properties of the model (standardized coefficients)

	Group 1	Group2	Group3	Group4
Sample number	144	203	121	147
Loyalty <- Satisfaction	0.338 (0.000)	0.348(0.000)	0.478(0.000)	0.106(0.149)
Teachers' linkage	0.145 (0.34)	0.250(0.072)	0.123(0.255)	0.538(0.000)
Attractiveness offer	-0.042 (0.697)	-0.239(0.003)	-0.019(0.864)	-0.212(0.015)
Perceived cost	-0.119 (0.057)	-0.069(0.062)	-0.007(0.856)	-0.108(0.173)
R <sup>2</sup>	46%	74%	96%	66%
Satisfaction <- Teacher's linkage	1,071(0.007)	0.963(0.001)	0,724(0.085)	1.198(0.000)
Community commitment	0.133(0.513)	0.463(0.058)	0.388(0.012)	0.414(0.017)
Attractiveness offer	-0.522(0.013)	-0.601(0.002)	-0.680(0.041)	-0.537(0.001)
Perceived cost	-0.027(0.851)	-0.112(0.212)	-0.027(0.778)	-0.269(0.014)
R <sup>2</sup>	47%	53%	59%	62%
Community commitment<- Friend group commitment	0.333(0.055)	0.415(0.000)	0.216(0.172)	0.721(0.000)
Teacher's linkage	0.525(0.027)	0.310(0.020)	0.682(0.000)	0.032(0.838)
R <sup>2</sup>	34%	36%	33%	66%
Perceived cost <- Teacher's linkage	0.738(0.001)	0.542(0.007)	0.359(0.014)	0.402(0.034)
R <sup>2</sup>	16%	6%	5%	8%

# RESULTATS: MODELE

Construit	Item (noté de 1 à 5 ou de 1 à 10)	Moyenne	Médiane
Fidélité attitudinale	La probabilité que je revienne à ce centre équestre est...	4,6	5
	La probabilité que je recommande ce centre équestre à mes amis est...	4,4	5
	La probabilité que je reprenne une adhésion est...	4,5	5
Satisfaction	Merci d'indiquer votre niveau de satisfaction globale vis-à-vis de votre centre équestre (1-10)	8,4	8
	Votre centre équestre correspond-il au centre équestre idéal que vous vous imaginez ? (1-10)	7,4	8
	Dans quelle mesure votre centre équestre répond-il à vos attentes ? (1-10)	7,9	8
Engagement communautaire	Je suis motivé pour participer aux activités de mon centre équestre parce qu'après je me sens mieux	4,0	4
	Je suis motivé pour participer aux activités de mon centre équestre parce que cela me permet d'aider les autres membres du centre équestre	4,1	4
	Je suis motivé pour participer aux activités de mon centre équestre parce que cela me permet d'atteindre des objectifs personnels	4,0	4

# RESULTATS: MODELE

Construit	Item	Moyenne	Médiane
Engagement affectif cheval	Je suis très heureux de monter mon cheval/poney préféré	4,8	4
	Il y a une forme de réciprocité dans ma relation avec mon cheval/poney préféré	4,0	5
	Mon cheval ou poney préféré est très attentif à moi	3,7	4
Lien enseignant	Mon enseignant de centre équestre prend vraiment soin de moi	4,2	4
	Je suis très heureux de prendre des cours avec mon enseignant de centre équestre	4,6	4
	Il y a une forme de réciprocité dans ma relation avec mon enseignant de centre équestre	4,0	4
	J'ai tout à fait confiance dans mon enseignant d'équitation	4,6	5
Engagement affectif groupe	Je suis très heureux(se) d'être avec mon groupe d'amis du centre équestre	4,3	4
	Mon groupe d'amis du centre équestre prend vraiment soin de moi	3,7	4
	Il y a une forme de réciprocité dans ma relation avec mon groupe d'amis du centre équestre	4,0	4

# RESULTATS : MODELE

Construit	Item	Moyenne	Médiane
Coûts au changement	Changer de centre équestre demande beaucoup de temps et d'efforts	3,5	4
	Généralement, il est compliqué de changer de centre équestre	3,5	4
	Pour moi, les coûts en temps, en argent et en effort pour changer de centre équestre sont élevés	3,3	3
Attractivité de l'offre	Je serais probablement content des services d'un autre centre équestre	3,2	3
	En comparaison avec ce centre équestre, il existe d'autres centres équestres qui pourraient aussi bien me satisfaire, voire davantage	3,1	3