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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:

3rd federal sport (628 262 members*) - 1st nature federal sport - 1st 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

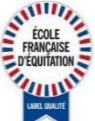


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-  Horse riding experience from 0 to 56 years (average: 13 years)

-  Various horse riding levels: from beginners to Galop 7[®] (experienced)

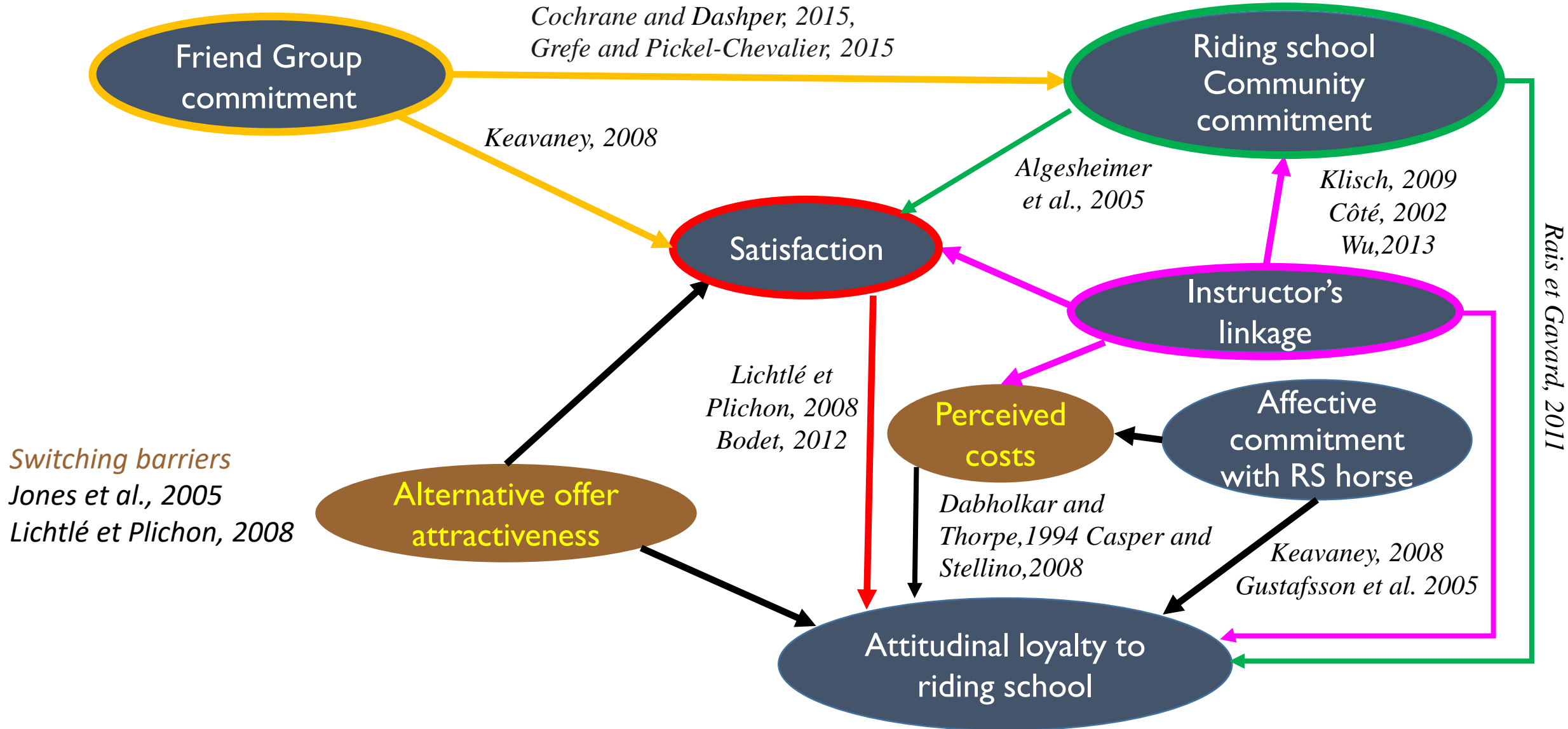
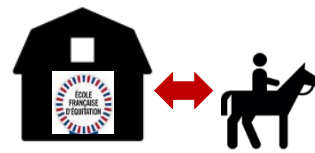
-  Various practice frequencies: • 59% practice another sport
27% < 1/week
27% = 1/week
46% > 1/week 

-  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

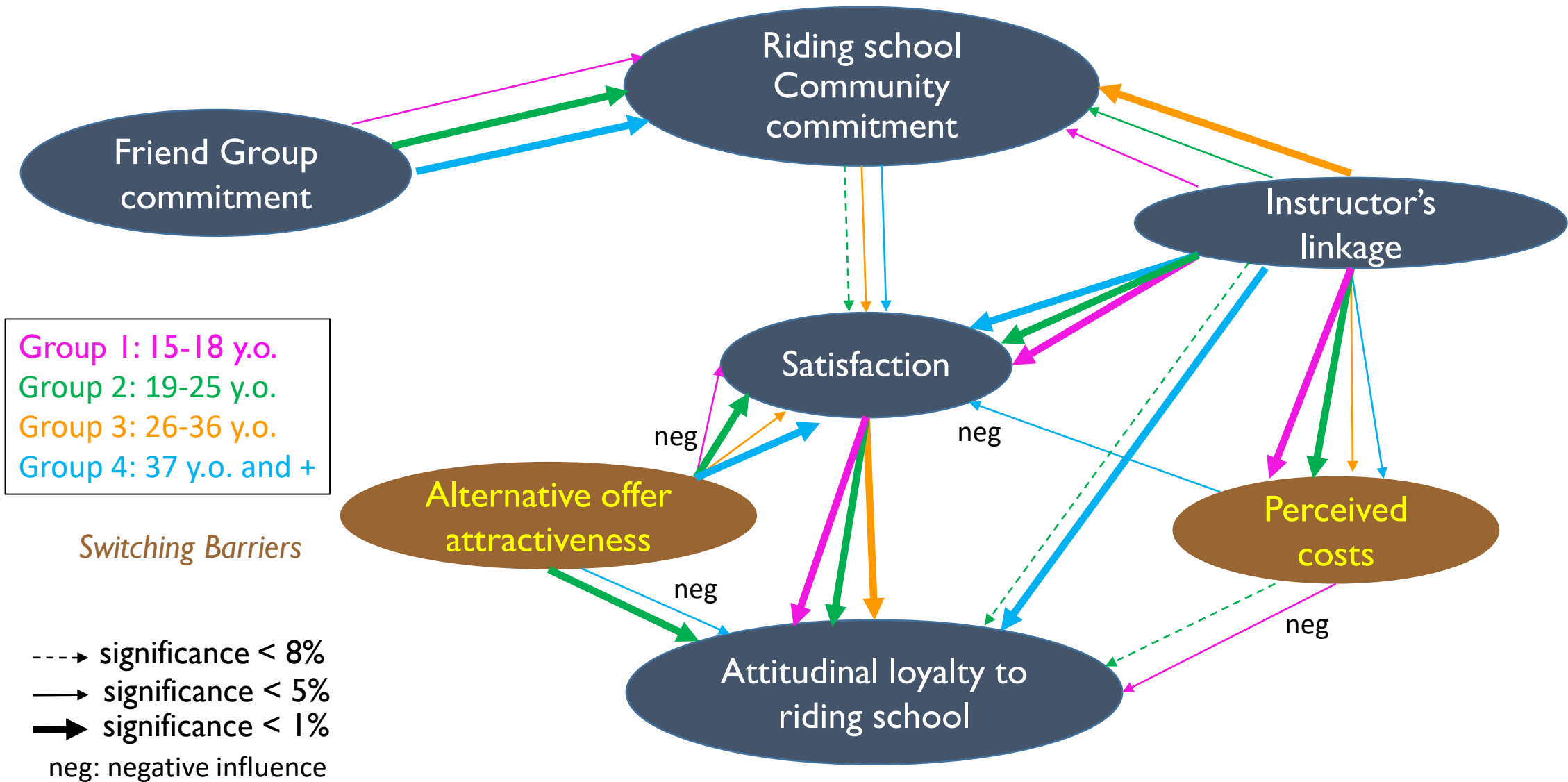
HOWEVER

Key role of the relationship with the horse

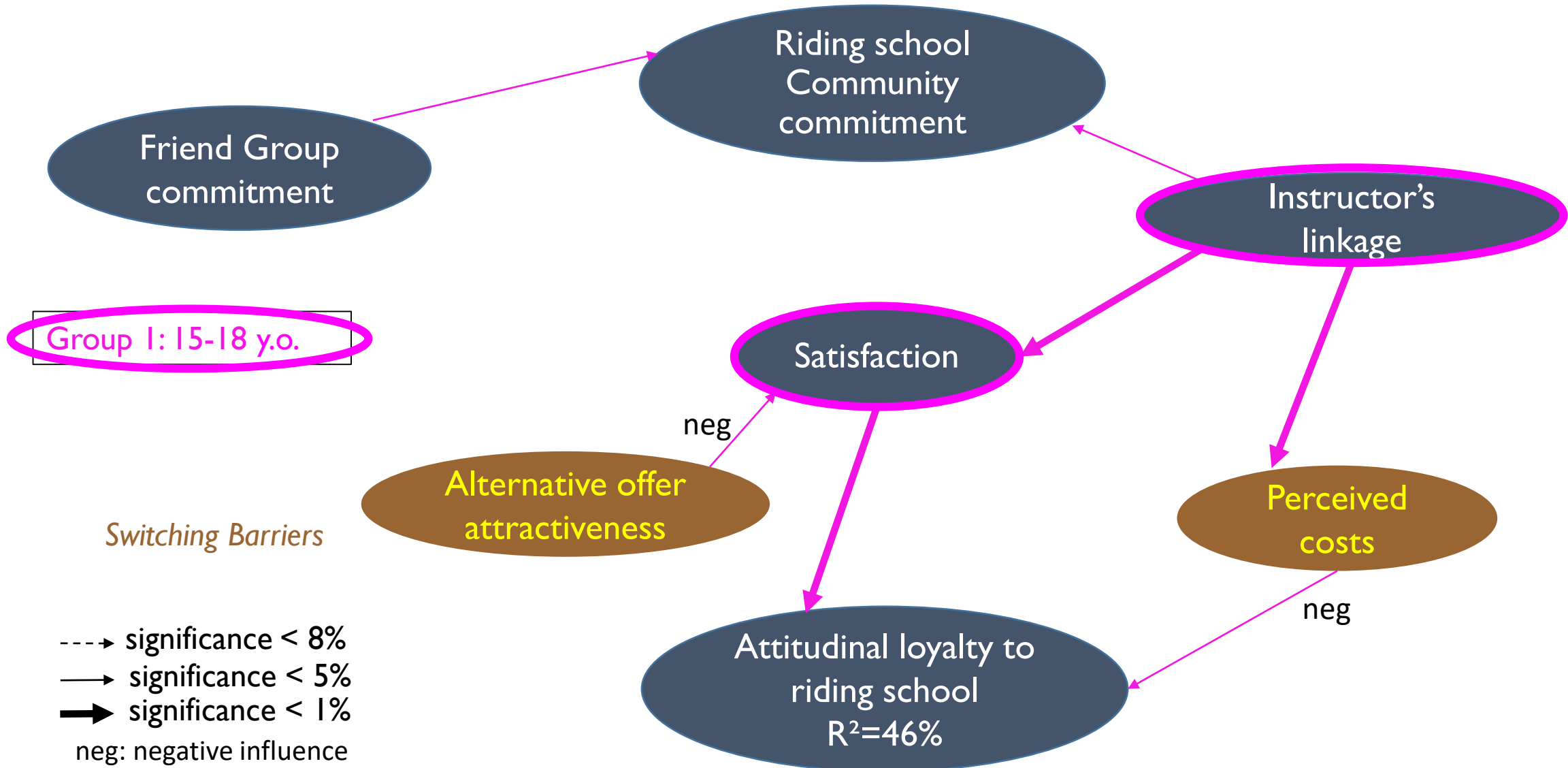
- 1st reason for riding
- Almost all riders have a favorite horse in the RS
 - => can be a barrier to riding school switch (result from another survey)

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

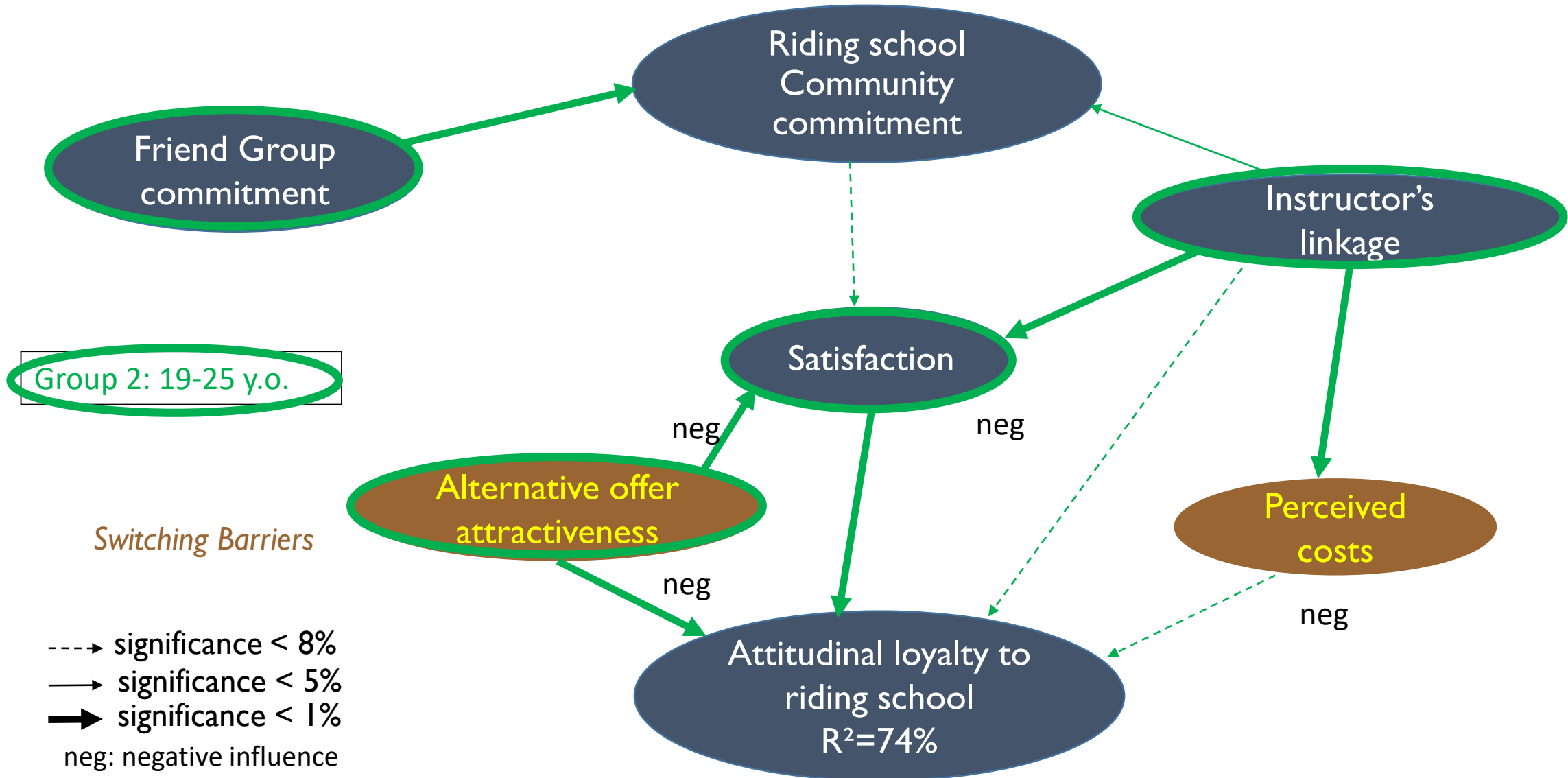
Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



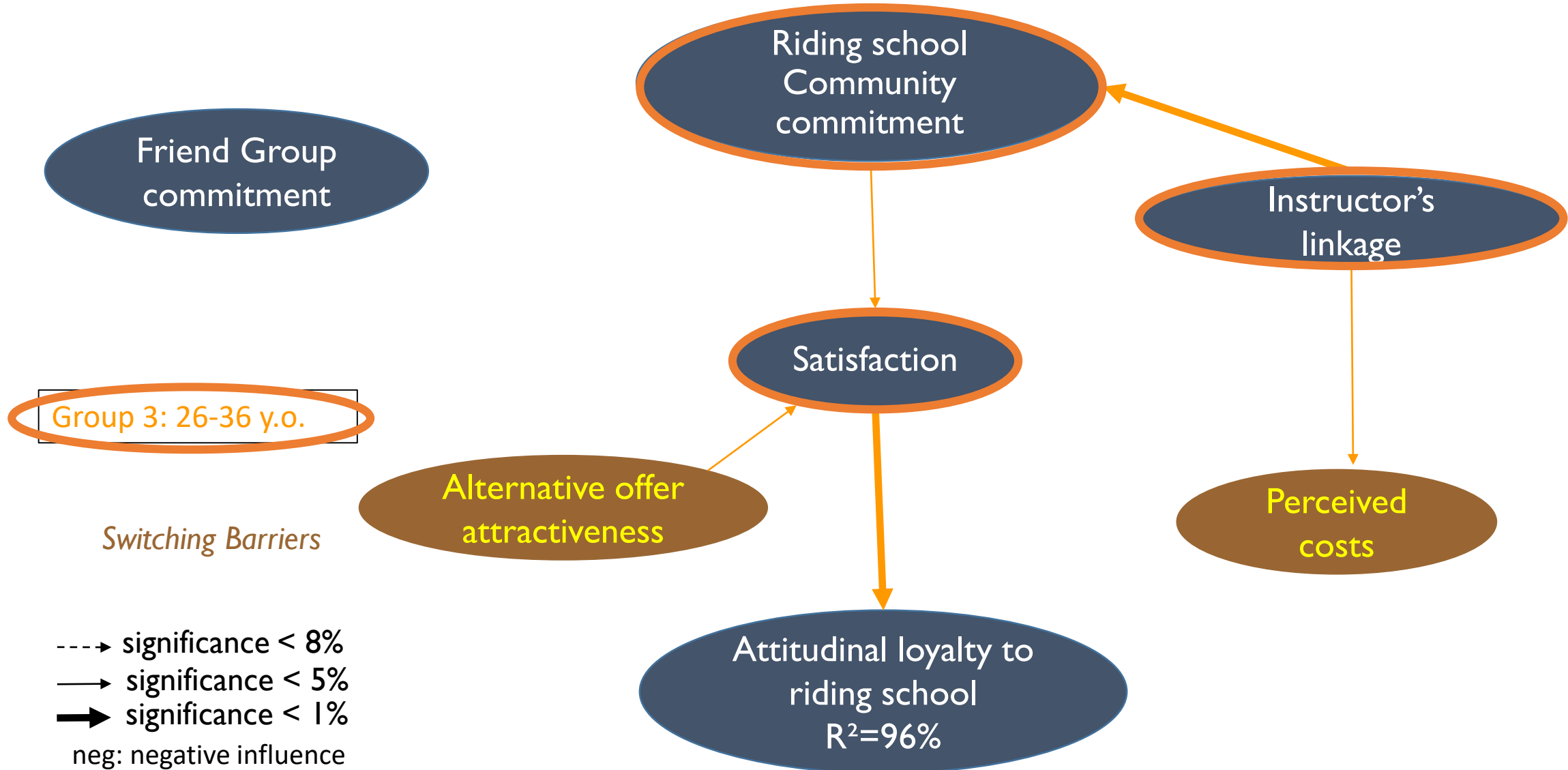
Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



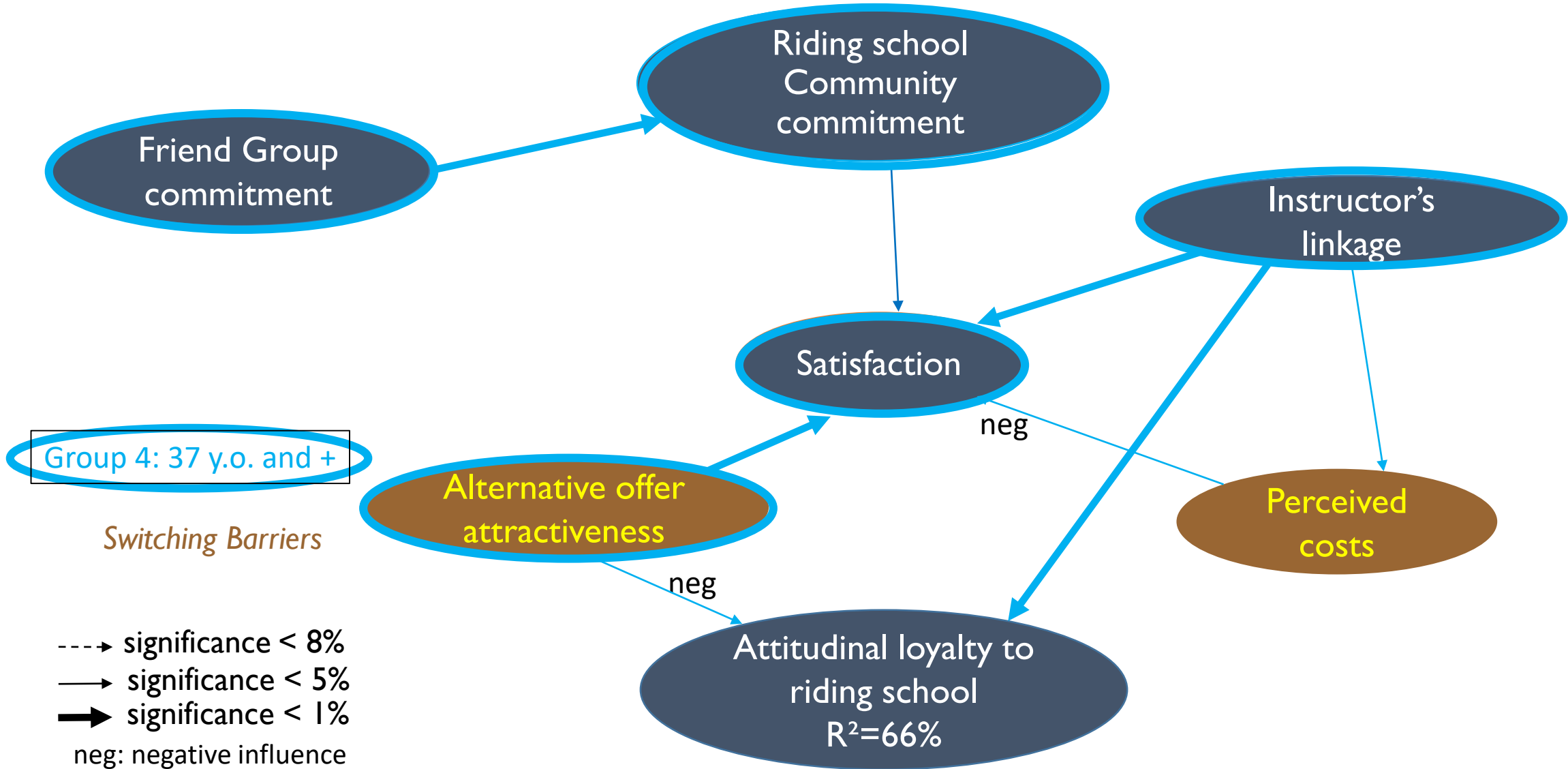
Multigroup analysis on loyalty model



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 ²	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 ²	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 ²	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 ²	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