University of Glasgow
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The Effect of Relational Elements and Co-Creation of Value on Brand Extension Acceptance

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Abstract

  This thesis aims to broaden the spectrum of brand extension acceptance literature, largely defined by categorisation theory, and bring to light alternative and complementary criteria for predicting brand extension success. To achieve this, the theoretical framework of this study replicates the principal model in brand extension acceptance (Aaker and Keller 1990) and extends it by introducing the concepts of virtual brand tribal communities, consumer-brand relationships, and co-creation of value, which originate in relationship marketing and service-dominant (S-D) logic. The thesis considers brand extension acceptance criteria within the increasingly important paradigm of S-D logic (Vargo and Lusch 2004).

  The present study uses a mixed method research design in order to address the research objectives of this study, enhance the robustness of the study and improve the level of reliability of the research findings. The qualitative data from the study served to deepen understanding of the research concepts and to construct the research instrument. The quantitative data were analysed to test the research hypotheses, and provide measurable results that can be projected to a larger population; the data were collected through an online survey with European consumers in the entertainment goods sector (specifically, video games).

  The present study found that the factors introduced by relationship marketing and the S-D logic explain a high proportion of variance on extension acceptance of joint co-creation and high consumer-low company co-creation products. Major contributions of the study include the development of a more holistic framework of brand extension acceptance; along with the adoption of the S-D logic which establishes the existence of relational and co-creative parameters in the evaluation of brand extension products.

  In terms of theory, the thesis contributes to the conceptual development of the virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship concept; and provides empirical support for their dimensionality and impact on brand extension acceptance. Similarly, at a theoretical level the thesis brings together two dimensions of the co-creation of value concept which were previously found dispersed in the literature, and thus provides empirical support for the effects of the level of co-creation construct. Concluding remarks acknowledge the limitations of the thesis and propose avenues for future research.

Declaration of Originality

Declaration of Originality

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

I declare that the thesis embodies the results of my own work. Following normal academic conventions, I have made due acknowledgement of the work of others.

Copyright Statement

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Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis studies the importance of relational and co-creative elements on brand extension acceptance. The significance of relational and co-creative elements has risen through the marketing paradigm shift and the dominance of the services-dominant (S-D) logic. The S-D logic unifies disparate literature streams in areas such as customer and market orientation, services and relationship marketing, management, and network analysis (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Pivotal importance within that logic is the contemporary role of the customer as a co-creator of value and the relationships the customer creates with the brand or around the brand.

Brand extension strategy represents one of the most popular growth strategies for companies across all sectors. Brand extension strategy has many commercial advantages, such as reducing consumer risk and gaining consumer acceptance faster. An interesting study by the International Research Institute shows that success rate is reduced by 50% when consumers are not familiar with the brand name (Hiscock 2002). In addition, brand extension products/services may benefit from existing distributor relationships and quickly achieve high levels of distribution in the multiples. Brand extension strategy reduces new product launching costs for the company, strengthens the parent brand by reinforcing its positive images in the mind of the consumers and boosts sales of other products which benefit from positive spillover effects. Such wide-range potential benefits should lead marketers to identify, measure and evaluate drivers of brand extension success.

Despite the fact that substantial research has been undertaken for the past 20 years, according to the National Advertisers' Association 27% of all the extensions within the same product category with the parent brand fail (Munthree, Bick and Abratt 2006). The divergence between research findings and the marketplace suggests that some factors affecting extension acceptance have been overlooked.

Brand extension strategy is largely based on categorisation theory (cognitive elements) to rationalise its findings. This study investigates particularly the effect of relational and co-creative elements in addition to the cognitive elements on various consumption situations, which are featured by products with different levels of co-creation of value under the same brand name. The rise of relationship marketing theories and the S-D logic from the changes in the consumption environment, as well as categorisation theory, aim to offer a sound rationalisation of the cognitive, affective (relational) and connative (co-creative) elements that are hypothesised to affect the adoption of extension products. In this way the study is designed to create a more holistic framework around brand extension acceptance.

To focus and operationalise the research, four research questions, derived from the theories above, underpin this study:

What are the main antecedents to brand extension acceptance?

What are the effects of virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship on brand extension acceptance?

What is the effect of co-creation of value on brand extension acceptance?

What are the effects of virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value on acceptance of brand extensions, with different levels of co-creation?

The purpose of the present chapter is to provide an introduction and a synopsis of the current study. The chapter starts by presenting the aim and the objectives of the research. Next, the chapter offers some background information and considers the importance of brand extension strategy. Following the literature review pillars, key issues related to research methodology are reported. The study applies a mixed method, embedded sequential design which includes the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data; although the latter plays a supplementary role within the overall design. The research methodology situates the conceptual framework in the context of the thesis and provides the background information on the industry chosen (i.e., the entertainment industry).

The following section highlights the significance of the study. It presents the main contributions of the study: a) the merging of three literature fields - brand extensions, S-D logic and relationship marketing; b) the advancement of knowledge regarding the concept of virtual brand tribal community; c) the re-conceptualisation of consumer-brand relationship, and d) the introduction of the co-creative element as an antecedent to the

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adoption of extension products. From a methodological perspective, this section describes how the present study can contribute to existing brand extension literature, by using a mixed method approach and building upon the weaknesses of past research. This section also briefly presents the main managerial implications.

Finally, the chapter closes with an outline of the thesis, describing key issues covered by each chapter. The aim is to provide the reader with the key content of each chapter as well as to demonstrate the logic of the organisation of the thesis.

1.2 Background Information

During the past thirty years a significant amount of literature has been devoted to the way the consumption process has changed (Kotler 1986b; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Patterson 1998; Shankar, Cherrier and Canniford 2006; Shaw, Newholm and Dickinson 2006; Cova and Dalli 2009; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006a, Lusch and Vargo 2006b; Vargo 2008; Lusch and Vargo 2011; 2012). Given this shift in consumption behaviour, it is argued that the antecedents to the adoption of extension products require re-evaluation. This thesis examines whether these post-modern patterns of consumption simultaneously and significantly affect consumers' evaluations of extensions products. The motivation for this thesis arose from the changes in consumption practices that prompted the researcher's interest to look deeper into how these changes will have affected existing consumer practices.

In more detail, the change in consumption patterns starts historically with the transition from modernity to post-modern times. Modernity is characterised as the time of liberation of humankind from the burdens of the past (Cova 1997; Cova and Pace 2002; Firat and Schultz 1997). In the twentieth century, individuals endeavoured to find freedom from social conventions, social stereotypes and other traditional forms of social belonging (e.g., family, neighbourhood, social class) that previously used to define them; they had never been so free, or so alone. From one perspective, post-modernity can be viewed as a child of modernity, as a period of termination of social unity and extreme individualism (Cova 1997; Cova and Pace 2002). However, a number of social shifts towards the opposite direction in another form have been observed. The individual was found to be seeking new forms of social belonging and the creation of links with inanimate entities such as brands, within his or her consumption environment.

In post-modernism the individual is left alone, craving for a connection; the connection itself being more important than its object. This has led to the creation of personal relationships between consumers and the brands they prefer, representing the metaphor of personal relationships. In modernity, consumption was confined to private life and considered a secondary and meaningless thing, while in post-modernity there is no natural distinction between consumption and production; rather, production is an act of consumption and *vice versa* (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Firat and Shultz 1997). Moreover, the birth of the S-D logic, with the principal paper of Vargo and Lusch (2004) referring to the concept of co-creation as critical to the present era, can be seen as an obvious consequence. Consumption assumes greater significance in post-modernity as, due to the lack of traditional forms of social belonging, consumption practices constitute the means by which individuals define their existence. For example, the question "Who I am?" in post-modernity is likely to be answered in terms of consumption patterns (Patterson 1998, p70). As a result, consumption has a pivotal role in post-modernity and due to the empowered role of consumer and the hyper-differentiated product demand, so does the concept of co-creation.

Attempts at social re-composition, individual and collective co-creation can also be seen. The individual, free from archaic or modern social links, embarks on a reverse movement to recompose their social universe on the basis of free choices. Brands are now increasingly used as a means of community identification (Cova 1997; Cova and Pace 2002) and are observed to form relationships and co-create with other consumers who share the same interest in their favourite brand (in the artificial form of a community).

The construction of consumers as partners in innovation and product processes appears to be a necessary strategy for the firm to overcome the difficulties associated with an active and demanding consumer. As a result, consumers' sophisticated tastes and consumption patterns are increasingly disjointed, heterogeneous and less open to corporate categorisation and control (Firat and Dholakia 1998; Holt 2002; Bonsu and Darmody 2008).

The task of managing production in such unstable and continually changing markets has become a significant challenge. Through co-creation practices, the consumer is enrolled as a willing subscriber to the firm's goals. The previously unmanageable consumer is now a partner in the co-production process, offering skills and creativity that support the firm's

goals of re-rationalizing key drivers of growth and innovation (Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody 2008; Bonsu and Darmody 2008).

Recent research by Dholakia et al. (2004) and Cova and Pace (2006) reveals that post-modern consumers show new forms of sociality through the marks and rituals linked to brands. With the emergence of the Internet, an enabling tool which allows direct, real-time individualised interaction, consumers can express their individuality within homogenous groups of people. The Internet has emerged as the virtual glue which allows many people to bond together in an increasingly fragmented world. From a company perspective as well, e-branding, customer centric strategies are becoming increasingly important (Ibeh, Luo and Dinnie 2005). Therefore, the choice of the online context for the realisation of the study is important.

The study examines the effect of virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value on the adoption of extension products. The importance of these concepts in the marketing literature is rooted in the change in the consumption environment described above.

1.3. Introduction to the Main Concepts under Investigation

1.3.1. Virtual Brand Tribal Communities

During the last 10-15 years, a great deal of academic literature has concentrated on the phenomenon of brand communities. The term 'community' is one of the most elusive and vague in sociology and is, by and large, without specific meaning. In its most basic meaning, it refers to a collection of people with a particular social structure and sense of belonging, whose activities take place in a particular geographical area (Dictionary of Sociology 2006).

The lack of a specific definition of the concept of community in sociology has created further problems in the discipline of marketing where scholars have been observed to have difficulty in distinguishing between the term 'communities' and related terms such as 'sub-culture', 'cult', and 'tribe' (Cova and Cova 2002). The study contributes to filling this gap in the literature by identifying similarities and differences between the terms 'tribe' and 'community', given that the community under investigation in the present study is recognised as a tribal community. The lack of specific definition of and consensus as to

the components of the concept explains the qualitative nature of a large number of studies in the area to date (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; McAlexander et al. 2002; Kozinets 1997; Brown et al. 2003; Muniz and Schau 2005; Schau and Muniz 2004; O'Sullivan, Richardson, Collins 2011)

In marketing, brand communities may take the form of local clubs based on direct interaction (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005), or they may exist entirely on the Internet (Granitz and Ward 1996; Kozinets 1997; Muniz and Schau 2005). Furthermore, brand communities may be based on a wide array of products, including cars, motorcycles, computers, fashion, food, entertainment and social media (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005; Belk and Tumbat 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu 2007; Dholakia and Vianello 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, Pihlstrom 2012; Felix 2012, Lee, Kim and Kim 2011, Royo-Vela and Casamassima 2011). Brand communities have also been documented for such mundane products as television series (Kozinets 2001; Schau and Muniz 2004), movies (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003), personal digital assistants (Muniz and Schau 2005), and even soft drinks and car tyres (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The current research has chosen to test the concept in video games sector, as the size and frequency of interactions within these communities provide unique environments for testing their effects.

1.3.2. Consumer-brand relationship

Although human beings have been observed to live with different types of relationships, the concept of brand relationships in marketing was introduced relatively recently – in 1998 - by Fournier. Since then, a number of researchers have directed their efforts towards finding theoretical support for the concept and developing measures that will represent the concept and help depict its impact. In particular, the literature has reached no consensus regarding the applicability of the concept of relationship between the brand and the customer in marketing, given that the brand is not a human being. Second, as the concept of relationship is borrowed from social psychology, when used by academics in the field of marketing there is often a lack of theoretical support in its conceptualisation. This lack, in turn, leads to an open debate concerning its dimensions. Finally, there are a number of frameworks in the marketing literature that attempt to capture the concept of brand relationship. Some of the most commonly used are the brand relationship quality

framework (Fournier 1998); relationship investment (Breivik and Thorbjørsen 2008); emotional exchange and two-way communication (Veloutsou 2007); and trust and commitment (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Empirically, most of these frameworks are products of qualitative research while their implications when addressed quantitatively are insignificant or of very low significance (Park, Kim and Kim 2002; Huang 2008; Breivik and Thorbjørsen 2008).

The current research addresses these inconsistencies in the literature by re-conceptualising the concept; by conducting an extensive literature review of marketing theory and inter-personal theories on relationships in social psychology; and finally, by collecting qualitative data from focus groups with real consumers in an effort to explain practice through theory and identify mismatches. Overall, the concept was re-conceptualised to address the core elements of a relationship rather than the strength and quality of that relationship. The use of qualitative focus groups also helped in identifying better measures for this concept. Finally, the effects of the dimensions of this concept were tested individually on three types of extension product.

1.3.3. Co-Creation of Value

Until only a decade or two ago, people lived mainly within a mass culture. Stable and predictable consumption patterns favoured the mass production of cheap products. Recent drastic changes in consumers' lifestyles have proved difficult for the companies to adjust to. It is difficult and costly for firms to understand their customers and it is becoming an increasing challenge to develop the products that meet hyper-differentiated consumer demand. Some pioneering companies have stopped attempting to adapt, understand, and personalise, and have reallocated the design aspect of product development to external sources such as their own customers. Hence, this has given rise to a new business model where firms are engaged in an ongoing collaboration with the customer regarding product design, development and delivery (Arakji and Lang 2007).

The concept of co-creation of value has emerged through the rise of the S-D logic that puts the consumer at the centre of the process. Fundamental in the field is the article of Vargo and Lusch (2004), which implies that value is defined and co-created by the customer rather than embedded in an output. This concept is evolving and its effects have only very recently started to be tested as parts of other literatures. Yet its importance has not gone unnoticed. Coleman (2010), in his recently published thesis in the area of branding,

developed a service brand identification framework within the broader service-dominant logic. In the same vein, the current study plans to contribute to the limited research in the area of S-D logic by examining the concept of co-creation of value within the extensions literature.

Specifically, the current study examines the concept in terms of consumer intentions to co-create value and perceived level of co-creation of value. In particular, the study examines the concept of intentions to co-create as recently proposed by Christodoulides et al. (2010; 2012). In this way it contributes to advancements within this literature of co-creation of value by i) validating empirically the importance of the concept in the context of extensions; and ii) also testing whether its importance is related to the level of co-creation and fit the product offers in the brand extension literature. Furthermore, the concept of level of co-creation has never before, to the knowledge of the researcher, been tested together with the intention to co-create. The latter effort by the present study is thus intended to advance knowledge in the field.

1.4 Brand Extension Theoretical Background

Brand extension is a research topic that has been constantly evolving since the late 1980s (Boush et al. 1987; Aaker and Keller 1990; Czellar 2003; Hem and Iversen 2009; Ahluwalia 2008; Völckner and Sattler 2006; Boisvert 2010). Brand extensions have been found to be important because of their ability to increase the chances of new product's success (Meyvis, Goldsmith and Dhar 2012; Singh, Scriven, Clemente, Lomax and Wright 2012; Estes, Gibbert, Guest, Mazursky 2012). The ever-increasing competitive pressure in most industries and the high costs of launching new products (and services) coupled with high new product failure rates has resulted in a significant number of firms launching extensions of existing parent brands rather than launching new products with new brand names (Aaker, 1991; Aaker and Keller, 1990; Hem, de Chernatony Iversen, 2003; Keller, 2008; Völckner and Sattler, 2006). A brand or line extension is defined as the use of an existing brand name to launch new products or services into the same product category as the parent brand (line extension) or different product category (brand extension) (Kim et al. 2001; Lee et al. 1996).

1.5 Research Methodology

On the methodological spectrum, this study takes a more positivistic approach. Positivism claims that reality is objective and can be tested through scientific methods and results projected to the general population (Guba and Lincoln 1994). However, the present study uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to enhance the robustness of the research. The qualitative research method is used in order to gain a deep understanding of the concepts and the context. The qualitative method served to help construct the research instrument, which was developed specifically for the needs of the study. Apart from the video game scenarios, the other measures were all adopted from previous research with the necessary adaptation. The research instrument went through a number of phases before being used in the survey. These phases were a qualitative study (four focus group discussions); the stage one piloting (testing the research instrument using six experts); stage two piloting (testing the research instrument using interview with 7 consumers); stage three pre-test (testing the research instrument on 82 typical consumers); stage four, making the necessary changes in language, structure and item reduction using the chosen statistical techniques; and stage five, repeating stages two and three. All of these efforts have assisted in achieving a highly reliable questionnaire.

Furthermore, a set of hypotheses were developed based on previous literature. The research hypotheses were tested with an online survey on video game players. In more detail, the researcher chose a video game brand community and asked members of 12 guilds to participate in the survey. In total, 429 questionnaires were collected. Out of the 429 collected questionnaires, 331 were used for statistical analysis. The present study collected data from European World of Warcraft online video game community. Convenience and snowball consumer-driven techniques helped the researcher collect information that would otherwise not have been possible to collect by following probability sampling techniques that require formal access to the list of population of the community.

Initial data analysis was conducted on the completed sample (n=331). Initial data analysis involved scale reliability estimates to assess the internal consistency of the scale and remove items that did not relate to the construct (Churchill, 1979). Further tests to ensure the validity of all the measures utilised in the study were carried out, and a series of tests on the basic assumptions were also carried out before running the regressions. The main part of the statistical analysis used multivariate tests to account for the asymmetric effects

of the variables in question on the adoption of extension products with different levels of co-creation as well as individual regressions and confidence intervals.

1.5.1 Choice of Research Context

Video gaming has become a popular social and psychological theme of research (Wood, Griffiths and Eatough 2004) mainly due to the rapid growth of this sector of the entertainment industry during the last decade. Specifically, the world video gaming industry is predicted to record 9% yearly growth through 2013. The UK was the largest video gaming market in 2007 and grew by 20% in 2008, while Internet penetration is expected to increase from 61.6% in 2008 to 72.9% in 2013 (Business Insights 2009). Finally, video games have been found to generate sizeable tribal communities, strong consumer-brand relationships and embrace the co-creation trend. The latter characteristics make them unique environments for research on the applicability of these trends arising from the change in consumption patterns. Future research in industries with similar characteristics to the one examined in this study are also likely to find results from the present study useful.

In addition, within the brand extension literature, it has been observed that there is a significant lack of research in the area of products with comparatively shorter lifecycles which follow an exponential decay pattern – their volume decreases with time as does their value - and therefore that are expected to generate their highest value immediately after the new product (e.g., movies, books, games) is launched (Ainslie, Drèze and Zufryden 2005).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study has developed and tested the first conceptual framework that merges theories of relationship marketing, categorisation and S-D logic. The framework, reflects a multi-level perspective, cognitive, connative (co-creative) and affective (relational) on the adoption of extension products.

Most of the extension research focuses on the effect of perceived fit and perceived parent brand quality (categorisation theory), on consumer evaluations of extension products. This research covers new ground by focusing on the changes arising from the re-emergence of

relationship marketing and S-D logic on consumer behaviour. This theoretical background constitutes an additional way of predicting and evaluating brand extension success in the marketplace.

Moreover, in terms of theoretical development, the study links together three important but to date unrelated areas, namely, brand extensions literature, relationship marketing and S-D logic, seeking synergies in the three literatures. The research establishes the effects of relational and co-creative elements on extension acceptance, extending Aaker and Keller's (1990) principal conceptual framework in predicting consumer evaluations of brand extension acceptance. In addition, it specifies the degree of relational and co-creative elements effect on different levels of co-created extension.

This research also investigates the effects of perceptions of fit and parent brand quality and provides evidence for their effect on products with different levels of co-creation. In this way the research replicates and enhances external validity of existing work; but also extends knowledge by measuring their effects in combination with a number of other factors, previously unknown to this literature.

Moreover, the study adds to the lack of research regarding products whose quantity is subject to exponential decay. This study enables the results of previous studies to be extended to wider product areas; and consequently promote knowledge development regarding brand extension acceptance of products which share the same characteristics with the ones examined in this study.

The research provides empirical support for the virtual brand tribal community concept and the consumer-brand relationship dimensionality. The research advances knowledge in the field by using both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the dimensionality of the concepts. Specifically, the study presents the similarities and differences between the neighbouring concepts of tribes and communities and advocates the notion of tribalism as a component of the concept of community.

In addition to this, the study repositions the concept of the consumer-brand relationship to reflect the core elements of a relationship and finds support in the inter-personal theories. By this means it aims to overcome past criticism regarding the a-theoretical nature of the consumer-brand relationship concept as well as the lack of consensus regarding its dimensionality and measurement difficulties.

Furthermore, the concept of the co-creation of value (in terms of level of co-creation of value and intentions to co-create) deriving from the rise of the S-D logic were first conceptualised and empirically tested in the context of brand extensions literature by the present study. In this way, the research makes a significant contribution to knowledge, given that the S-D logic is a growing field of research.

From a methodological point of view, the present study adds to the methodological practices used in brand extension literature by following a mixed method approach. Although the mixed method approach has been gaining ground in the marketing field during the last twenty years (Alshebil 2007), brand extension literature has largely overlooked the importance of mixed method research designs. Moreover, the research design of the current study builds upon the weaknesses of past research in terms of the lack of use of qualitative data; actual customer samples; realistic extension stimuli; actual consumption environment, and the online context (see Appendix A, Table A-1).

Finally, the findings of this research will be of relevance to practitioners, who, whilst increasingly using extension and relationship marketing strategies, have little research evidence to assess their impact on the success of extensions in the marketplace. In particular, managers will profit from the emerging importance of the level of co-creation as a determinant of extension acceptance. Managers can promote the creation of products that require joint levels of co-creation between the company and the consumer and also encourage consumers to participate in the process.

Consumers may co-create both individually (one-to-one consumer-company) and in the form of a community (consumer-with-consumer to company); therefore relationships with the brand are important. The study identifies to managers which dimensions of the multi-dimensional concepts of virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship affect extension acceptance and proposes avenues for more a beneficial application of these concepts. Overall, the research will also have implications for managers' understanding of the brand's relational elements and their applicability as a business strategy. The results of this research will be particularly relevant to companies planning to extend their portfolios.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 -Introduction- The first chapter provides an overview of the study from a conceptual perspective, justifies the value of the research by highlighting changes in consumer consumption behaviour. The chapter describes the research aim and research questions underpinning the thesis; presents the research methods utilised and justify the significance of the study from a theoretical and managerial point view.

Chapter 2 -Brand Extension Business Strategy- The second chapter aims to introduce the reader to the literature of brand extensions. The chapter starts by discussing the concept of this business strategy. It then explains why this strategy is so popular; and presents a number of gaps and inconsistencies the researcher has identified in the literature and how the present research plans to contribute to filling these. Further on, the chapter provides the reader with a descriptive literature review around the topic, for the sake of completeness. Through this, the researcher intends to reveal the main theoretical gap, which the study will contribute to filling.

Chapter 3 -Relationship Marketing and the S-D logic- The third chapter aims to introduce the reader to the post-modern way of thinking and, in turn, to the theories of relationship marketing and S-D logic. The chapter presents the theories underpinning the main concepts of the research. The chapter defines the concepts, provides a critical literature review evaluating existing work in the area and explains how the concepts have been conceptualised in the present study in order to overcome past difficulties.

Chapter 4 -Model Development and Research Hypotheses- The fourth chapter clarifies the focus of the study. The chapter explains why the research focuses on consumer evaluations of brand extension products and how the concepts were selected from the brand extension literature. The chapter also describes the research conceptual framework and the underlying theories behind it. This chapter applies categorisation theory, relationship marketing and S-D logic to propose hypotheses with regard to perceptions of fit; perceived brand quality; co-creation of value; virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship; and extension acceptance.

Chapter 5 -Methodology- The fifth chapter explains the methodology used in the study. The chapter starts by describing the researcher's approach to the study and then describes the research process. The first part of the research process presents the use of the qualitative work, which is to assist in the construction of the research instrument used in the quantitative research. The second part of the research process describes the development of the survey instrument. Next, the chapter describes the sampling and the measure development process**.**

Chapter 6 -Preparation of Data for Analysis- The sixth chapter explains how data were prepared for the data analysis. The chapter continues with the data cleaning procedures on the final sample size and then presents the reliability and validity tests undertaken for every dimension. The chapter also presents the analysis of variance of the three scenarios to ensure that the research has achieved distinct differences. Chapter 6 addresses the issues related to the survey response, e.g., sample characteristics, validity, and reliability of measures, computing values of new variables and generating factors.

Chapter 7 –Data Analysis and Model Testing- The seventh chapter presents the quantitative data analysis. The chapter starts by describing the data analysis method and then presents a number of tests that were conducted before starting the analysis. These include normality, constant variance, casewise diagnostics, and multicollinearity tests. To test the hypotheses developed in Chapter 4, the methods of multivariate analysis, independent regressions and confidence intervals were used. Interpretations of the results are presented at the last section of the chapter.

Chapter 8 -Conclusion- Chapter Eight is the conclusion chapter. The chapter discusses the most significant results of the thesis, following the data analysis in Chapter 7. This chapter justifies the results by providing the theoretical underpinning, which involves the theory of categorisation, relationship marketing and S-D logic. The chapter summarises the theoretical and managerial implications of the study, presents the limitations and avenues for future research.

The structure of the present study is presented diagrammatically in Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1
Introduction
- Overview of the Thesis
- Significance of the Study

Literature Review

Chapter 2
Brand Extension Business Strategy
- Gaps and Inconsistencies
- New potential success factors

Chapter 4
Model Development and Research Hypotheses
- Theoretical Background
- Construct Selection

Chapter 3
Relationship Marketing and the S-D logic
- Virtual Brand Tribal Community
- Consumer-to-brand relationship
- Co-Creation of Value

Chapter 5
Methodology
- Mixed Method
- Qualitative Data Purpose and Analysis
- Questionnaire Design

Data Analysis

Chapter 6
Preparation of Data for Analysis
- Examination of Sample
- Factor Analysis
- Reliability and Validity Tests

Chapter 8
Conclusion
- Discussion of the Main Findings
- Theoretical, Methodological and Managerial Contributions

Chapter 7
Analysis
- Multivariate Tests
- Individual regressions
- Confidence intervals

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1.8. Summary

This introductory chapter has sought to provide a description and a brief explanation of the substance of the present study. It has provided a conceptual overview of the study; outlined the aim and the research questions set to achieve it; presented the main methods used to achieve it; and finally, provided an overview of the significance of the study and a short description of the content of the sequence and structure of every chapter to help the reader follow the concept of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

BRAND EXTENSIONS BUSINESS STRATEGY

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw a complete picture of the brand extension literature. The chapter starts by presenting new product launch opportunities from a company's point of view, as defined by Tauber (1981). Next, the chapter establishes the importance of this business strategy through examples from its use in the marketplace, presents some statistical data on the success and failure of new products in the UK, and other risks and benefits associated with this strategy. A brand extension business strategy is defined as the use of an established brand name to launch a new product either in the same product category as the brand or in a new product category (Völckner and Sattler 2006).

The chapter discusses several gaps and inconsistencies the researcher has identified in the literature. The gaps are classified into four categories: *theoretical,* referring to the lack of brand extension literature to rationalise findings arising from theoretical backgrounds other than categorisation theory; *conceptual,* which refers to the lack of brand extension literature accounting for the factors of virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value as antecedents to brand extension success; *methodological,* which relates to the lack of brand extension literature making use of qualitative data, and also the limitations associated with the context of previous research (in terms of the type of consumers, stimuli, and consumption environment); and *contextual,* which concerns the lack of extension literature accounting for certain types of product, brand (line) extensions and overall paucity of research in the entertainment sector.

Finally, in order to draw a full picture of the brand extension literature, the chapter presents a categorisation of the main success factors identified in the literature to date. A short summary of the studies related to each factor is provided to help the reader gain an understanding of the research that has been undertaken around each success factor, as well as to provide evidence for the emergent conceptual contribution of the study. The chapter finishes with a concluding note summarising the main points discussed in the chapter.

2.2 New Opportunities from the Company's Point of View

Tauber (1981) describes four types of opportunity when launching a new product, depending on whether the product category is new to the company and whether the brand name is new or already familiar to the consumer (Figure 2.1). When a new entry employs a new brand name and the product or service is in a category new to the company, it is called a new product. When a new entry employs a new brand but it is introduced into a category where the firm already has a market position, it is termed a flanker brand. When a new entry employs an existing brand name in a firm's present category, it is a line extension, and when a brand name familiar to the consumer is applied to products that are in a category new to the parent firm, it is a termed a franchise extension. Brand extension will thus be used as a generic term to cover both franchise and line extensions; franchise extensions involve the leverage of a brand into a new category (e.g., Virgin airline and Virgin wine), and line extensions (e.g., Coke and Diet Coke) concern the extension of a brand but only within the same product category.

Figure 2.1 New Product Launching Opportunities

Product Category		
New	**Existing**	**New**
New Product	**Flanker Brand**	**Brand Name**
Franchise Extension	**Line Extension**	**Existing**

Source: Adopted from Martinez and Pina (2003)

2.3 Brand Extension Business Strategy

A brand represents a series of associations in consumers' minds of product attributes, brand image and overall attitudes (Boush and Loken 1991; Czellar 2003; Loken and Roedder John 1993; Park, Jun, and Shocker 1996; Van Osselaer, Stijn and Alba 2003; Sood and Keller 2012). When consumers see an extended product/service provider, category- based processing ensures that the parent brand is used as the basis for evaluation (Boush and Loken 1991; Moreau, Lehmann, and Markman 2001). Brand extension is the

use of an established brand name to launch a new product either in the same product category as the brand or in a new product category. Many new product introductions each year are brand extensions; for example, Apple's iPhone; Godiva coffee; Jeep Strollers, and; Virgin wine, air tickets and records (Monga and John 2010). The ever increasing competitive pressures found in most industries have turned the introduction of a new product into a risky business. On average, new products fail at the rate of between 40 percent and 90 percent depending on the category (Gouville 2007). In the UK out of the 2,300 newly introduced products in the fast-moving consumer goods sector (FMCG), only one out of seven proved to be a success in 2007, indicating that new product development (NPD) is a highly risky strategy. An interesting research by the International Research Institute (IRI) shows that the success rate is reduced by 50% when consumers are not already familiar with the brand name. As a result, all of the top ten brand launches in 2002 were brand extensions (Hiscock 2002).

Brand extensions gain consumer acceptance faster and also benefit from existing distributor relationships, so they quickly achieve high levels of distribution in the multiples. For instance, in the study conducted by the IRI in 2002, in the FMCG sector, 9 out of 10 FMCG launches achieved 90% distribution in multiples within 20 weeks of launch and managed to maintain that over time (Hiscock 2002). Extending brands has become a profitable strategy during the past two decades as it reduces new product launching costs; lowers consumer risk by leveraging positive association onto a new product (Milberg, Sinn and Goodstein 2010); and strengthens the parent brand by reinforcing its positive images in the mind of the consumer (Jung and Tey 2010). Positive attitudes towards the extension product/service can reinforce the value of the parent brand and boost sales of other brand products (Pina, Martinez and Iversen 2010). Currently, by treating brands as assets, an increased number of brands have grown through launching brand extensions.

Although brand extensions are known as the "cornerstone" of many firms' growth strategies (Milberg et al. 2010), they do not guarantee success (Keller 2007). On the contrary, should an extended product fail, it generates negative associations that many scholars have found can dilute brand equity (Sharon 2010; Pina and Martinez 2004; 2006; Pina, Iversen and Martinez 2010; Sinapuelas and Sisodiya 2010). Unsuccessful extensions of products perceptually close to the brand may transfer more intense negative feelings to the brand than unsuccessful extensions perceptually distant to the brand. Overall, the

success or failure of an extended product has significant financial and operational implications for the company (Xie 2008).

2.4 Gaps and Inconsistencies in the Extension Literature

Most of the recent research in the area is focused on examining the factors that may affect an extension's acceptance from a customer's perspective (see Appendix A, Table A-1). This happens because consumer behaviour patterns have changed significantly in the last decade. The current study aims to contribute to filling this gap, by introducing three factors that have been overlooked by the extensions literature, i.e., *virtual brand tribal communities; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value.* The lack of research around these concepts can be rationalised by the lack of brand extension literature to address critical success factors from relationship marketing and the S-D logic.

In addition, most brand extension literature is concentrated on the success of category rather than line extensions. A paradox, however, arises as the marketplace is replete with successful extensions that are perceptually distant from the parent brand (e.g., Tesco grocery store; Tesco insurance) and others which are perceptually close and have failed (e.g., Xerox computers; Nintendo 64DD). According to the National Advertisers' Association, although strongly supported by marketers, 27% of all extensions within the same product category as the parent brand (line extensions) fail (Munthree, Bick and Abratt 2006). The divergence between research findings and the marketplace may suggest that some factors affecting extension acceptance have been overlooked (Milberg, Sinn and Goostein 2010). In addition, extensions congruent to the brand are likely to cause brand equity dilution if they fail (Milberg, Sinn and Goostein 2010; Aaker 1996; Loken and John 1993). The current research aims to contribute to the scarce research around the area of brand (line) extensions by experimenting with line rather than category extensions.

To date, studies have been selective and examined only the effects of a selection of factors, or even one factor at a time, and therefore present parsimonious and often contradictory results. For instance, one study examined solely the effects of consumer innovativeness, and proposed that consumer innovativeness was likely to have a significant impact on extension acceptance (Xie 2008). Another study examined the effects of consumer innovativeness in relation to another 14 factors and found no significant results for the effect of innovativeness (Völckner and Sattler 2006). In addition, the conditions under which each experiment was conducted differ significantly from study to study, and

therefore the generalisability of the results is limited. For instance, one study examined the effects of consumer innovativeness on the FMCG sector (Völckner and Sattler 2006), while another focused on high-tech products (Klink and Smith 2001). It is important to note that as innovativeness is found to correlate with involvement, it may have a different impact on extension acceptance depending on the level of involvement. Moreover, another study examined the effects of consumer innovativeness in relation to involvement and culture (Pina, Iversen, Martinez 2010). Therefore, it is hard to compare results between the studies. Similar criticisms could be applied to most other concepts.

Furthermore, experiments were not always conducted with actual consumers, actual brands or real extension stimuli, and rarely in the actual consumption environment (see Appendix A, Table A-1), and there have been difficulties associated with experimental design. Consumers' cultural background also plays an important role in accepting extensions (Sharon 2010; Buil de Chernatony and Hem 2009; Pina et al. 2010), and most of the research was conducted in the US with US consumers (see Appendix A, Table A-1). The current research aims to contribute to this gap in the literature, by conducting research in a real-time environment, with actual consumers of a real brand and realistic and co-creative extension stimuli. The researcher has not found any study in the field that was carried out with realistic co-creative extension stimuli, despite the increase in importance of the co-creation trend in the market (e.g., Apple; Ralph Lauren; Blizzard). Despite the growing interest in mixed method design in marketing, the brand extension literature remains purely experimental, highlighting a lack of understanding of consumer choice criteria of extension products that could be achieved with qualitative research.

In addition, most of the literature on extensions has focused on the sectors of durable goods and fast-moving consumer goods (see Appendix A, Table A-1), with some studies on services and luxury goods. In other sectors of the economy which are equally profitable and important, such as the entertainment industry, very little research has been conducted. Although the results from the present research may be generalised to other industries, the current research also contributes to this gap in the literature, by concentrating on the video game sector. Furthermore, although the Internet is increasingly important in current consumer purchasing and consumption behaviour, all literature on brand extension acceptance has been conducted in an off-line environment. Consumers' evaluations of extension products on the Internet may be affected by factors that are less evident, given the interactive potential the online environment offers. The current research aims to contribute to this gap in the extensions literature and specifically, analyse products where

diffusion follows an exponential-decay pattern and generates the highest revenues immediately after the new product has been made available to consumers (e.g., video games).

Brand extension strategy is of particular importance for products where diffusion follows an exponential-decay pattern and generates the highest revenues immediately after the new product has been made available to consumers. This is often the case of budget media products, such as motion pictures, books and games (Ainslie, Drèze and Zufryden 2005). It is hoped that the present research will make a valuable input in these product categories. In a recent study Hennig-Thurau, Houston and Heitjan (2009) have expressed their concern regarding the lack of research within this sector. It is hoped that the present study will contribute to the limited research in the literature by using the video game industry as the context for the application of the brand extension. The choice of the video game industry and the importance of the context will be discussed in (Chapter 5).

The video game industry, as part of the entertainment industry, has attained significant levels of growth within the last decade, compared to the other sectors of the same industry (e.g., music and books). In their study, Walsh, Kim and Ross (2008) have highlighted the fact that despite the growth of the video game sector within the entertainment industry worldwide, little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of corporations' branding activities within the sector. Branding is pivotal in the video game industry both for brands that operate within the industry, and for brands that operate outside this industry but are interested in entering in this industry. Specifically, apart from the well-known video game brands that consistently rank among the top sellers, there are a number of top-selling games under brands that do not operate principally in the video game industry. The latter fact suggests that antecedents to video game success are relevant to brand owners in many fields even outside the range of video game brands (Wuts, Person, Hultink and Brands 2012).

Extension product success usually depends on a number of factors, some of which companies tend to overlook, e.g. consumers' willingness to co-create the product with the company or take such as brand reputation for granted. Consequently it would be useful to review and evaluate the effect of factors affecting consumer evaluations of extension products. As such information is critical for accurate budget allocations, product design and marketing campaigns, as well as for negotiations between company and consumers of

brand extension rights, the limited evidence available constitutes an important gap in the literature.

It is for all these reasons that there has been a "burgeoning" stream of academic research that focuses on the factors that can affect the success of brand extensions (Batra et al. 2010). More specifically, prior research has demonstrated that consumers' acceptance of brand extensions depends mainly on two factors: the perceived quality of the parent brand, and the perceived fit between the brand and the extended product/service.

The current research examines how the traditional model can be enriched with a number of factors that have arisen as a result of the changes in the consumer decision making environment. Understanding the impact of these relatively new factors in the decision making process for the acceptance of extensions is essential for both theoretical and practical reasons. At a theoretical level, social and technological environmental changes (see Chapter 3) can affect how consumers process information and hence evaluate extension. At a practical level, understanding the effect of factors deriving from those changes can improve predictions of brand extension acceptance. It is important to note here that the decision-making framework may not vary significantly between shopping situations, i.e., online/offline environment (Christodoulides and de Chernatony 2004), but it may vary depending on the consumer trends at the time of the research. The current research examines how the traditional framework can be enriched by three basic features of the contemporary consumer environment, i.e., *virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship and; co-creation of value*.

2.5 Brand Extension Success Factors

Success Factor Summary

For the past two decades a considerable amount of research has been carried out in the brand extensions area. To simplify the review, the main success factors that have been conceptualised by previous research are classified below as: *Parent Brand Characteristics, Consumer Characteristics-New Potential Success Factors, Brand Extension Characteristics,* and *Market Related Factors.* The following section hopes to provide a holistic overview, but not all the factors will be used in this study's conceptual framework. The purpose has been to include literature that will not be used for the sake of

completeness. The concepts that represent the major contribution of this doctoral study are also introduced here for the sake of completeness; full justification for the inclusion of these is presented in the next chapter.

Parent Brand Characteristics

Brand Associations

A brand-specific association is defined as an attribute or benefit that differentiates a brand from its competitors (Chakravati, McInnis and Nakamoto 1990). For example, Apple is the brand associated with friendliness, as opposed to the Toshiba brand which is associated with reliability. Broniarczyk and Alba's (1994) ground-breaking article on the importance of the brand in brand extension found that several brand specific associations may moderate the effect of brand affect and product category similarity across several product categories. The impact of brand-specific associations was actually found to dominate brand affect and product category similarity. For example, in one experiment Broniarczyk and Alba (1994) found brand-specific associations to cause preference reversals from the parent to the extended category, while in another experiment, they found that brand-specific associations enabled a brand to extend to dissimilar product categories.

Likewise, Rangaswamy, Burke and Oliva (1993) examined the effect of brand-specific associations related to the product category, and associations of a more general 'intangible' nature. The authors found that brands which were associated with more 'intangible' attributes' were easier to extend than those with very strong 'product-based' associations. The findings of Park and Srinivasan (1994) offered support to Rangaswamy et al. (1993). Park and Srinivasan (1994) found that brand equity could be split into `product attribute' and `non-product attribute' based components. The authors found that it was primarily the non-attribute based component which played a dominant role in determining a brand's overall equity. In both categories studied (mouthwash and toothpaste), it was established that brand associations unrelated to product attributes were more important in shaping a brand's equity and potentially the brand's ability to extend.

The US cigarette market study of Reddy, Holak and Bhat (1994), on the role of a brand's symbolic value as a factor in line extension success, found that long-established brands with a significant advertising share of voice tended to produce higher share line extensions. Line extensions from symbolic brands (not focused on physical or functional product

attributes) tended to enjoy more extension success than those from more functional brands. Early market entry tended to favour stronger (higher market share, long-established, high share of voice) brands, but not weaker brands.

More recent research has also questioned the effect of brand concept on brand elasticity. Monga and Deborah (2010) in their article on brand concept and styles of thinking have challenged past research of Park, Milberg and Lawson (1991) that prestige brands can stretch further than functional brands; and suggest that it also depends on the style of thinking of the consumers. Similarly, Yorkston, Nunes and Matta (2010) examined how implicit theories regarding brand personality traits affect consumer inferences about the malleability of a brand's personality traits and its ability to extend into new categories; they found that consumers' personal theoretical dispositions affect their perceptions over a brand's trait and its ability to extend.

Overall, it seems that brand-specific associations play an important role when extending with functional brands due to their product feature associations. Intangible attributes of the brand are more flexible and can help its extendibility. More recent literature, however, suggests that consumer characteristics may influence the way these associations are perceived.

Brand Breadth

Boush and Loken (1991) conducted an experimental study within the electrical goods and grocery categories, assessing the impact of category similarity and brand breadth on consumer evaluations of brand extensions for fictitious brands. The authors found that there was a direct linear relationship between extension typicality and attitude ratings for potential brand extensions. Brand breadth was also found to interact with extension typicality. Findings from the experiments suggest that a narrow brand such as Campbell's has an advantage over a broader brand such as Heinz in offering a close-to-the-brand extension product, i.e., a new soup; conversely, Heinz has an advantage over Campbell's in offering a moderately different extension such as a new line of frozen vegetables.

Dacin and Smith (1994) conducted two classroom-based experiments and a consumer survey to establish the impact of brand breadth on consumer evaluations of brand extensions. Although the experimental results found a positive relationship between brand breadth and positive extension evaluations, these findings were not replicated in the survey stage. A consistent finding from the research was, however, that as portfolio quality

variance decreased a positive relationship between the brand breadth and consumer extension evaluations emerged. It appears that portfolio quality consistency offers confidence and comfort to consumers. The research also revealed that the effect of perceived fit was likely to diminish with brand breadth in multiple categories which were not closely related (e.g., motorcycles; media).

Similarly, in a more recent study with actual brands and hypothetical extensions, DelVecchio (2000) found support for the effects of brand breadth on extension acceptance. Both the perceptions of fit and brand breadth affect brand reliability. Brand breadth interacts with consumer perceptions of fit so that positive effects of fit on brand reliability are strengthened by brand breadth. However, if product quality variance increases, brand reliability decreases.

Overall, although findings suggest that brand breadth may in certain cases affect consumers' perceptions of fit there is no evidence of a direct relationship.

Brand Name Structure

Sood and Keller (2012) found that brand name structure interacts with fit. More specifically, sub-branded extensions evoke slower and more thoughtful categorisation processing strategy. On the other hand, family brand extensions evoke faster category-based processing. Therefore, category similarity affects extensions evaluations when the extension is family branded but not sub-branded. In addition, dilution effects carry a negative experience only with family brands. Sub-branding can therefore help protect the brand from unwanted negative feedback and enhance evaluations of the extensions.

Brand Quality

A core idea behind the practice of brand extension is to take advantage of a brand's equity in order to facilitate the acceptance of a new product. It is therefore logical to expect that the perceived quality of the brand would be associated with consumers' attitudes toward the extension. The brand quality, as the perceived superiority and excellence of the brand compared to its competitors (Zeithaml 1988), is the second most frequently researched construct in the extensions literature (Aaker and Keller 1990; Keller and Aaker 1992; Sunde and Brodie 1993; Nijssen and Hartman 1994; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; van Riel, Lennink and Ouwersloot 2001; van Riel and Ouwersloot 2005; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Tang, Liou and Peng, 2008; Song, Zhang, Xu and Huang 2010; Burnaz and Belgin 2011; Völckner and Sattler 2006); but results regarding its effect are contradictory or

inconsistent. The current study aims to make a valuable contribution to this discourse in the literature.

Brand Trust

Reast (2005) based his work on Keller and Aaker (1990, 1992), who found a significant association between company credibility and extension acceptance. Reast (2005) hypothesised that brand trust, measured though two correlated dimensions of connative and cognitive trust, affect extension acceptance. His study was conducted in the UK with real, but low involvement product and service brands. The effect of brand trust was found to be greater than media, brand share and perceived quality of the parent brand.

Brand Affect

The concept of brand affect or "liking" the brand has been found to have a positive effect on the extension (Broniarzyk and Alba 1994; Barone et al. 2000) and in several cases independently of fit evaluation. Moreover, Yeung and Wyer (2005), in their article on how brand-elicited affect influences consumer evaluations of brand extensions, found that the effect of brand affect (liking) is strong even when the extension and the core are very dissimilar. It is important to note here that results are valid provided that participants are not prompted to consider core-extension similarity as the basis for their evaluations. Provided that this condition is satisfied, consumers are likely to base their evaluations on the 'brand affect' (liking) they developed when they were first exposed to the parent brand name. In this sense, these conclusions are in line with the results of Barone et al. (2000), who found a positive relationship between 'brand affect' and extension evaluations, dependent on the level of fit between the core brand and the extension. However, they had explicitly asked the respondents of the study to consider the level of fit before making their judgments. Therefore, brand affect can have different impacts on extension acceptance depending on when and in relation to which other factors it is measured.

Brand Loyalty

Brand equity has often been conceptualised as a measure of consumers' behaviour, a financial measure, a measure of consumer beliefs (Hem and Iversen 2003). Brand extension literature has focused on several of brand equity dimesions such as brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, but very little on brand loyalty. Although brand loyalty is a basis of brand equity, it is influenced by other major dimensions (i.e., awareness, associations, perceived quality). Brand loyalty in the brand extension literature has been conceptualised and measured as calculative, affective commitment, positive

behavioural intention towards the original brand and self-image connection between the consumer and the brand. In their study, Hem and Iversen (2003) found support for the effects of positive behavioural intention towards the parent brand, and self image connection on brand extension acceptance. Yet, the latter suggest that further work is needed to improve theoretical understanding and measurement of brand loyalty.

Communication Strategies

Aaker and Keller (1990) suggested ways to help address negative associations which had been transferred from the dominant parent brand associations through a sophisticated communication strategy. Aaker and Keller (1990) showed how communication strategy could improve extension evaluations. For example, the communication strategy for Heineken (e.g., Heineken popcorn: in regular and cheese flavours), helps overcome consumers' negative perceptions that Heineken popcorn would taste like Heineken beer.

Bridges, Keller and Sood (2000) found that, in general, the most effective communication strategies for brand extensions would be those which recognised the salient associations from the parent brand and highlighted those associations; these might otherwise be overlooked or misinterpreted in the extension context (Keller, 1993). Apparently, communication strategies that raised the salience or credibility of explanatory links could increase the number of potential extension categories for a brand.

In a similar vein, Lane (2000) sought to demonstrate how brand extension communication strategies (ad content and repetition) could overcome negative evaluations with what might be regarded as `incongruent extensions'. In a study of four highly regarded brands (Heineken, Crest, Keebler and Michelin), participants who viewed brand extension advertisements five times evaluated incongruent extensions more positively, expressed higher usage intentions, indicated more favourable consistency judgements, and exhibited increased elaboration and more positive elaboration, than did participants who viewed the advertisements only once. It was, therefore, disputed by Lane (2000) that incongruent extensions are doomed to fail.

In one of the frequently cited contributions to brand extension research, Klink and Smith (2001) questioned the importance of perceived fit and raised doubts about the external validity of much prior research within the field. The authors noted that in prior research that had supported the importance of perceived fit between extension and parent brand,

respondents were exposed only once at the extension. The authors also noted that while consumers vary in risk-aversion and new product adoption behaviour (Rogers 2003), previous research had not factored in this behaviour. Klink and Smith (2001) found that the effects of perceived fit diminished significantly when attribute information concerning the extension was increased. In addition, Klink and Smith (2001) also tested for consumer innovativeness and found that the effect of perceived fit diminished as consumer innovativeness increased. Furthermore, as respondents' exposure to an extension increased, so did their perceptions of fit between the parent brand and the extension product. In many ways this finding was supportive of Lane (2000), who had found that evaluations of 'incongruent' extensions improved with additional advertising exposures.

Kim et al. (2001) reported the stimuli presentation of the extension to the consumer could improve extension evaluation and reduce negative impacts on the core brand. For this reason, the authors proposed the use of graphical and linguistic distancing techniques. These techniques could help with the evaluation of upward brand extensions, and reduce negative impacts on the core brand. Similarly, Munthree et al. (2006), in their framework of brand revitalisation through an upscale extension, found that increased distancing techniques benefit step-up brand extension in a premium category.

Overall, it is important to note that many studies have considered the company's marketing activities as an influential factor on extensions evaluations (Reddy et al. 1994; Sinapuelas and Sisodya 2010; Grime et al. 2002; Völckner and Sattler 2006). Marketing support is found to be an effective antecedent to extension success in many studies. Yet, the results may vary depending on the strength of the brand equity or the type of the extension (e.g., upwards or downwards).

Consumer Characteristics

Brand Experience
Swaminathan, Fox and Reddy (2001) examined the effects of experience with a parent brand on a) consumers' trial; b) repeat purchase of brand extensions; and c) reciprocal impact of the trial of successful and unsuccessful brand extension on the parent brand. An existing brand name provides warranty and reduces the risks involved in purchasing a new product (Erdem, 1998; Wenerfelt, 1988); thus, direct product experience was expected to be more trustworthy than advertising or other communications, and resulted in strongly

held beliefs (Smith and Swinyard, 1983). Consumers with parent brand experience have greater parent brand knowledge, better recall, and greater confidence in their beliefs about the parent brand than consumers with no such experience. Nevertheless, Swaminathan, Fox and Reddy (2001) found that parent brand experience had a significant impact on extension trial, though not on repeat purchase. Similar results were found by an earlier study of Erdem (1998), who demonstrated that quality perceptions transferred between umbrella-branded products in the case of congruent product categories. Völckner and Sattler (2006), in a more recent study on drivers of brand extension success, found support for the effects of parent brand experience on extension acceptance in the FMCG sector.

Brand Knowledge

Broniarzyk and Alba (1994) found that brand-specific associations are more important than similarity when extending. They also found that the brand extension associations are not expected to be uniform across consumer segments. Two brands – Apple and Compaq - were chosen from the computer industry (chosen because technical knowledge varies widely) with 45 subjects participating, 15 of whom were experts. Results suggested that brand-specific associations moderated the effect of brand affect on extension judgements only for high in-brand knowledge consumers.

Another study that researched the concept of brand knowledge is that of Klink and Smith (2001); they suggest that previous research on brand extensions restricts the amount of attribute information provided to the subjects, exposes individuals to a single stimulus and does not distinguish between early and late adopter extension strategies. The authors conducted two studies and found that the effects of 'perceived fit' diminish as the level of 'consumer innovativeness' increases. The effects of fit also diminish in 'high information' conditions. In addition, as a person's exposure to a brand extension increases, so does the person's perception of fit between the brand and the extension. In support of these findings, Grime, Diamantopoulos and Smith (2002) also proposed that the higher the level of consumer knowledge, the greater the impact of fit on consumer evaluations of a) an extension and b) the core brand.

From another perspective, Pina et al. (2010) examined brand knowledge in terms of brand familiarity, and found that brand familiarity has a direct effect on the development of parent brand associations (see also Hoek et al. 2000) and can be moderated by national culture.

From the studies above, it is evident that knowledge can affect consumer perceptions of fit and overall acceptance. Yet it is important to note that not all the studies have considered the same type of knowledge (e.g., consumer brand knowledge; product category knowledge; product knowledge). Future research may expand upon the effects of such different types of knowledge.

Brand Ownership

Kirmani, Sood and Bridges (1999) proposed an ownership effect, that is, that owners or users of a brand have more favourable responses than non-owners to a brand's extensions. Kirmani et al. (1999) examined the ownership effect in consumer responses to price=based upward and downward brand stretches. The study was undertaken on durable goods such as automobiles and clothing where prestige brands exist and ownership is visible. The ownership effect (owners' favourable responses) occurred for both upward and downward stretches of a non-prestige brand and for upward stretches of a prestige brand.

Consumer Involvement

Continuing the theme of the impact of consumer characteristics on brand extension evaluation, McWilliam (1993) presented a discussion paper which raised the question as to whether the degree of 'consumer involvement' (Krugman 1965) in a category could have an impact on extension evaluation decisions. Based upon a research study with marketing practitioners of recent brand extensions, most practitioners seemed to view the consumer evaluation process for extensions as essentially one of low involvement. This was the case since a low involvement category moving to another low involvement category was evaluated in much the same way as low involvement advertising (Krugman, 1965), with no need for consumers to engage in much cognitive processing.

 However, after exposure to the extension with the help of advertising or distribution visibility, it was suggested that a reorganisation of the perceptual structure would take place to include the extension. McWilliam (1993) argued that conversely, brand extensions from and/or to a high involvement product category may induce a higher level of overall involvement; and the evaluation process in consequence would take a different route involving more cognitive processing. To summarise, McWilliam (1993) argued that involvement level would impact upon the way extensions were processed. This view of the differential decisions associated with high and low involvement extension decisions

appears to be supported by the work of Boush and Loken (1991), who found that decision times for electronic goods were significantly longer than for grocery goods.

Moving a step forward, Jung and Tey (2010), in search for boundary conditions for successful brand extensions, have found that situational involvement and consumer innovativeness may moderate the effect of extension similarity of brand extension evaluations. Moreover, the findings suggest that when consumers have high innovativeness and are within a highly involved situation, they prefer moderately dissimilar extensions over similar and extremely dissimilar extensions. However, when consumers have low innovativeness or are in an involved situation, they prefer similar brand extensions over moderately dissimilar and extremely dissimilar extensions.

Therefore, the concept of involvement is highly related in the literature with the concept of innovativeness, while it can have a differential impact on the type of extension acceptance.

Consumer Innovativeness

In his conceptual paper Xie (2008) developed propositions on how consumer innovativeness exerts an influence on consumers' acceptance of brand extensions. According to this author, the relationship between consumer innovativeness and consumer acceptance of the extension product is moderated by information availability and interpersonal communication.

Another study by Pina et al. (2010) found that consumer innovativeness has a moderating role on perceptions of fit, which however, varies from country to country. For instance, Norwegians were found to be more innovative and risk-taking than Spaniards. Thus, Pina et al. (2010) distinguished between hedonist innovativeness and social innovativeness. The findings extend previous research of Klink and Smith (2001) that hedonist-innovative consumers do not consider category fit, but are interested in the coherence between brand image and new associations. Pina et al. (2010) also suggest that the higher the social innovativeness, the stronger the relationship between familiarity and image for cultures such as Norway as opposed to cultures similar to Spain: the former place more emphasis on the image fit, while the latter stress category fit. In another study, Jung and Tey (2010) also found that consumers high in innovativeness and under high situational conditions prefer moderately dissimilar brand extensions. It is therefore possible that consumer involvement moderates perceived similarity.

Völckner and Sattler (2006), on the other hand, found limited support for the effects of consumer innovativeness, although this could have been because of the type of products (FMCG sector) on which the study was conducted. Thus, innovativeness factors are likely to affect extension success with different levels of intensity depending on product type.

Overall, it is important to note here that not all the studies have considered the same type of innovativeness for their experiments (e.g., social innovativeness, hedonist innovativeness). In addition to this, not all the studies have examined the relative importance of innovativeness with the same number of factors or even in the same context. It is therefore, expected that different results will emerge.

Consumer Mood

Barone, Miniard and Romeo (2000) found support for the importance of brand extension similarity and the perceived competency of the marketer in producing the extension, but also for the mediating role that viewers' mood state could have on extension evaluation. Barone et al.'s (2000) results indicated that a positive mood primarily enhances evaluations of extensions viewed as 'moderately similar' to a favourably evaluated core brand. The findings may imply that the use of advertisements capable of evoking positive mood states can promote brand extension success.

Culture

Sharon (2010) found that motivation and extension typicality moderated consumers' cross-cultural differences in brand dilution, with Eastern and Western consumers reacting differently to failures in brand extension. Buil, de Chernatony and Hem (2009) similarly found significant differences between three European countries (Spain, UK and Norway), and Pina, Iversen and Martinez (2010) also found that culture moderates perception of fit in research on Norway and Spain. Thus, from the relatively limited research, the overall conclusion is that culture affects extension acceptance with evidence of both positive and negative associations towards the parent brand.

Consumer (Self)-Characteristics

Ahluwalia (2008) examines the role of individual differences (self-construal) in a brand's stretchability. It was found that an inter-dependent self-construal construct can affect perceptions of fit and therefore acceptance of the extension. Nevertheless, these beneficial

effects are likely to emerge only under conditions where the individual is motivated to elaborate extensively on extension information.

Monga and Deborah's (2010) study on the role of individual differences on extension acceptance, challenges the normal convention (Park, Milberg and Lawson 1991) that consumers are more accepting of extensions into distant product categories for prestige brands than for functional brands .

Yorkston, Nune and Matta (2010) presented the role of implicit theories in evaluating brand extensions of a malleable brand. Their research documents how incremental theorist consumers are more accepting of brand extensions than entity theorist consumers. Incremental theorists are those consumers who believe that personality traits of the brand are malleable, whereas entity theorists are those who believe that personality traits of the brand are fixed.

Yeo and Park (2006) found that self-regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention) moderates the effects of parent extension similarity on brand extensions. Similar extensions were evaluated more favourably than less similar ones when participants were prevention focused, but the effect was reversed when the participants were promotion focused.

Overall, consumer's self-centred characteristics may moderate perceptions of fit or the transfer of perceived brand associations from the parent brand to the extension. Yet, it is important to note that the studies discussed above all considered a different aspect of self and therefore are not directly comparable; noneetheless, they are useful for intuitive purposes.

Customer Certainty

Smith and Andrews (1995) examined the effect of customer certainty, defined as a belief in a company's ability to deliver a product that meets the customer's expectations. Their research questioned the previously assumed direct association between perceived fit and brand extension evaluation. Customer certainty mediated the relationship between perceived fit and brand extension evaluations. It is believed that this certainty that the new product would meet expectations depends on whether the customer believes that the company possesses the appropriate skills to launch the extension. These findings contribute to brand extension success factors in perceptually distant product categories.

Hawkins and Singh (2012) found that an individual's level of uncertainty avoidance impacts brand extensions. The study examines two groups of consumers (high and low certainty) and finds that high uncertainty individuals prefer extensions from broad breadth brands over narrow brands.

Overall more research is needed to establish the effects of this construct across different product categories.

New Potential Success Factors to be Investigated in the Present Study

The consumption environment has recently undergone an important shift from *transactional* (where the emphasis is in the value in exchange and the consumer is seen as a passive recipient of the brand's offering) towards a more *relational* approach (where the connection between the brand and the consumer in any form that this may take is important). The link intensifies as the consumer becomes the centre of the consumption process. The modern consumer takes steps to own the consumption process and co-produce the goods and services with the company so that they appeal best to his needs. The consumer takes pleasure not only in co-producing at the stage of co-production, but also at the value in use stage; therefore, the consumer is seeking continuity in his relationships with the brand without separating the consumption from the production process. The concept of co-creation of value has not been investigated in the brand extension literature. The present study plans to address this gap.

Two types of relationships have been identified by marketing theory as influential. First, there is the community-type of relationship, which researchers have found to have a positive effect on adoption behaviour, but have not connected with the extensions literature. Second, there is the consumer to-brand relationship type, which researchers have tried to address within the extension literature, but have faced difficulties in doing so (Park et al. 2001, 2002). The lack of research regarding these two concepts within the literature on extensions is due to the fact that it is only a few years since they were presented in the field of relationship marketing, and their conceptualisation lacks the concrete evidence that is evident in other concepts. The extensive qualitative research regarding these concepts undertaken by researchers recently proves this point.

Virtual Brand Tribal Community

The effects of this concept as an antecedent to extension success have not yet been explored. Nevertheless, there is sufficient literature to support the hypothesis that this

concept may have a strong effect on extension success. For instance, relatively recently, Thompson and Sinha (2008) found that brand community affects acceptance of new products.

Consumer-brand relationship

There has been considerable emphasis on the effects of relational elements on extension acceptance (e.g., brand trust; brand affect; brand attachment) in recent literature. The concept of consumer-brand relationship has also been tested in the extension literature. However, at the time, the concept of consumer-brand relationship was underdeveloped, and the researchers who tested it (Park, Kim and Kim, 2002) suggested that further research should be conducted to enhance its conceptualisation and measurement. The present study contributes to this understanding by re-conceptualising the concept to reflect the core elements of a relationship (see Chapter 3), and follows a structured methodological procedure to ensure the reliability of the results. This study will examine the effects of this concept and its relative importance in the traditional brand extension framework (perceived fit and perceived brand quality). In addition, the study will examine the effects of this concept in relation to that of virtual brand tribal community and co-creation of value derived from the relationship marketing literature.

Co-Creation of Value

The concept of co-creation of value has not yet been considered in the literature on brand extensions. A possible explanation for this is that the concept has only been recently developed (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo 2008). This research examines the effects of co-creation of value in terms of intentions to co-create and level of co-creation. The study aims to contribute to existing literature by introducing this antecedent in the brand extension framework, and assessing its relative importance compared to the other factors.

Extension Characteristics

Timeliness

Wilson and Norton (1989) consider the optimal entry timing for line extensions. Their results suggest that a brand should introduce the line extension at a time early in the life cycle of the original product or not to introduce it at all. The study was focused on a new version of a durable product and a particular set of assumptions about the development of that market, its characteristics and the product's functional and development characteristics. Reddy, Holak and Bhat (1994), in their article on success determinants of line extensions in the cigarette industry, also considered the factor of timing and found a positive effect for early timing. More recently, Munthree Bick and Abratt (2006), in their article on brand revitalisation in the beverage industry, established that it is best for a line extension to be an early entrant, but not first to market.

Overall, the results suggest that timing may be an important factor when planning to extend across all sectors across all industries.

Perceived Fit

Research on brand extensions has considered "perceptions of fit" as a major consideration when attempting to extend (Grime 2001). The idea of perceived fit is achieved "when the consumer accepts the new product as logical and would expect it from the brand" (Tauber 1988, p.28).

Although it is generally agreed that fit is vitally important, there is considerable conflict concerning its dimensions (Muroma and Saari 1996). Researchers often conceptualise and operationalise perceived fit in different ways (Bhat and Reddy 1997). Specifically, according to the literature, fit comprises a number of dimensions, including similarity, typicality, relatedness and brand concept consistency (Aaker and Keller 1990; Farquhar et al. 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Park et al. 1991; Herr, Farquhar and Fazio 1996; Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 1998). However, similarity, typicality and relatedness are often confused in discussions of fit and there appears to be little distinction between them (Muroma and Saari 1996).

The most frequently referred to dimension of fit is "similarity" (Muroma and Saari 1996; Bhat and Reddy 1997). Similarity refers to how alike the current and the new product

classes are in terms of features, attributes or benefits (e.g., Consumer Behaviour Seminar 1987; Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Park et al. 1991; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994). The Consumer Behaviour Seminar (1987) concluded that the greater the similarity between the current and the new product, the greater the transfer of positive or negative beliefs to that new product.

The relatedness or typicality of the new product class to the existing product class has also been mentioned as a dimension of fit (Farquhar et al. 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Herr, Farquhar and Fazio 1996; Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 1998). Typicality has been defined as how representative the extension category is of the family brand (Neduhnadi and Hutchinson 1985). It has also been viewed as "the degree to which category members (e.g., different products manufactured by Sony Sanyo) are representative of the family brand image" (Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 1998, p.486). As there is a lack of concrete distinctions between similarity, relatedness and typicality, it is extremely difficult to clearly differentiate between these concepts (e.g., Muroma and Saari 1996 suggest that similarity is a measure of the relatedness of the two product classes; see also Grime et al. 2002). In addition, another popular conceptualisation of the concept of 'perceived fit' distinguishes between two components of 'product similarity' and 'brand concept consistency' (see Figure 2.2.)

Perceived Fit and Its Dimensions

Figure 2.2 below depicts the two dimensions of fit, product level similarity and concept consistency. The figure also illustrates how the core brand with the extension affects consumers' formation of these two types of perceptions regarding the extension, and how the latter overall may affect evaluation of the extension.

Figure 2.2 Process of Brand Extension Evaluation
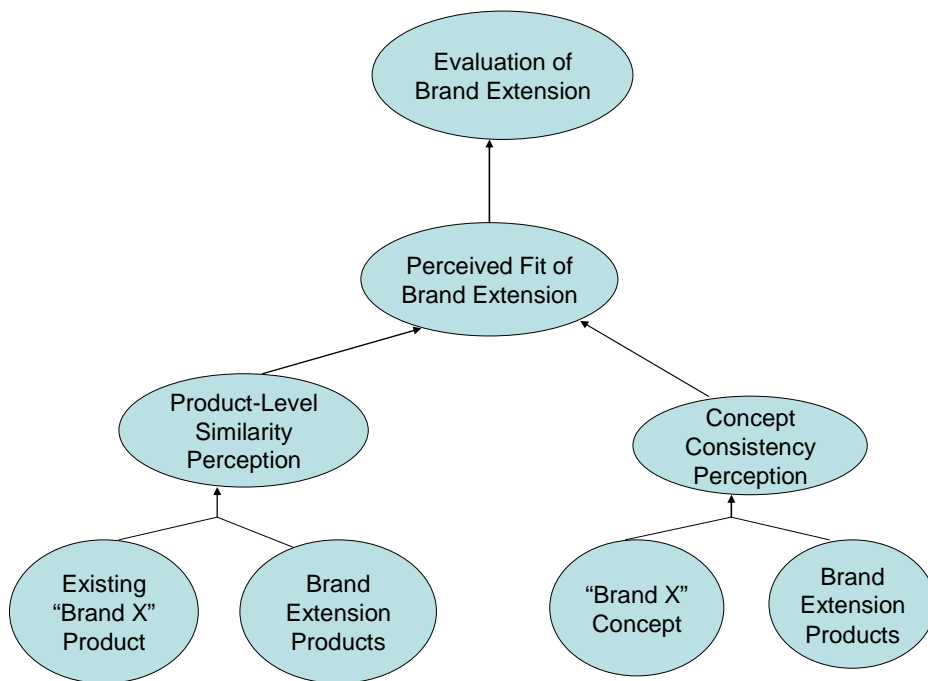
Source: Adopted from Park et al. (1991)

Perceived Fit Product Similarity

Understanding how consumers judge the goodness of fit between an extension and a parent brand requires knowing exactly which aspects of the new product and the existing brand category they will compare. Following the past literature in object categorisation (Rosch and Mervis 1975; Tversky 1977), prior brand-extension research has conceptualised and measured perceived fit as a function of product-similarity judgments in which consumers compare some aspects of the existing set of products with those of the extension product. The University of Minnesota Consumer Behaviour Seminar (1987) measured subjects' evaluations of various extensions for a fictitious manufacturer of calculators.

Aaker and Keller (1990), using real brand names, examined how consumers form attitudes toward brand extensions. They identified various bases of perceived fit between the original and extension product classes. In particular, these bases were (1) complementarity, or the extent to which extensions and existing products share the same usage context; (2) substitutability, or the extent to which one product can replace the other which is not satisfying the same need; and (3) transferability, or the degree to which the manufacturing

skill that is required for the extension overlaps with what already exists. Two measures take a demand-side perspective to consider the economic notions of substitutes and complements in product use. The third measure takes a supply-side view to consider aspects of the firm's manufacturing abilities.

The first fit measure, complement, indicates the extent to which consumers view two product classes as complements. Products are considered complements if both are consumed jointly to satisfy some particular need (Henderson and Quandt 1980). The second fit measure, substitute, is the extent to which consumers view two product classes as substitutes. Substitute products tend to have a common application and use context in such a way that one product can replace the other in usage and satisfy the same needs. Consider Rossignol, which makes downhill skis: an example of a complementary extension might be Rossignol ski clothing; a substitute extension might be Rossignol cross-country skis or ice skates. In both cases, because fit is present, the transfer of positive associations should not be inhibited. When fit is high, consumers are hypothesised to accept the extension concept and not activate thought processes challenging the quality and characteristics of the extension.

The other fit measure, transfer, pertains not to how consumers view relationships in product usage, but how consumers view relationships in product manufacturing. Specifically, transfer reflects the perceived ability of any firm operating in the first product class to make a product in the second product class. Do consumers feel that the people, facilities, and skills a firm uses to make the original product would "transfer" and be employed effectively in designing and making the product extension? If not, the perceived quality of the brand or beliefs about the brand in the original product class may not transfer to the extension. In fact, if a firm appears to be stretching excessively beyond its area of competence, negative reactions such as skepticism or even laughter might be stimulated and lead to negative associations (Aaker and Keller 1990).

Smith and Park (1990) also identified multiple bases of product feature similarity and measured their effects on sales of brand extensions. Other researchers have examined how the "relatedness" (similarity) of the product category that is associated with existing brand products and brand extensions mediates brand extension evaluations and/or purchase intentions (Chakravarti, Maclnnis, and Nakamoto 1990; Farquhar, Herr, and Fazio 1989). In general, these studies found a positive relationship between product feature similarity and consumers' evaluations, purchase intentions, and sales of brand extensions.

The notion of similarity among products is certainly an important basis for determining the perceived fit between a brand and its extensions. However, the presence or absence of identifiable relationships between existing brand products and potential extensions may not be the only basis on which consumers judge perceived fit. Category members also may "hang together" because they are understood to share some concept. For example, objects such as a pet, a photo album, and a wallet do not appear to be similar, but they may be seen as fitting together when a conceptual label, such as "objects removed from a house during a fire" is provided (Barsalou 1983). According to Murphy and Medin (1985), people may have their own theories, other than object-to-object similarity relationships, about why entities belong in the same category. Therefore, to understand category coherence and categorisation phenomena, they suggest that other aspects of a concept category, such as concept relationships among objects, need to be considered along with object similarity. Murphy and Medin's (1985) view is applicable to understanding the perceived fit of brand extensions.

Perceived Fit Brand Concept Consistency

In another research, Park et al. (1991) examined how a brand-name concept or image affects consumers' perceptions of the fit between the brand name and its extensions. Brand concepts position products in the minds of consumers and differentiate given products from other brands in the same product category (Park, Jaworski, and Maclnnis 1986). Product features are attributes that can vary from concrete levels (e.g., engine size) to abstract levels (e.g., used in outdoor activities; Johnson 1984, 1988). Brand concepts are brand-unique abstract meanings (e.g., high status) that typically originate from a particular configuration of product features (e.g., high price, expensive-looking design, etc.) and a firm's efforts to create meanings from these arrangements (e.g., "the relentless pursuit of perfection" by Lexus).

To illustrate this distinction, the Seiko and Rolex names both belong to the watch product category and share many product-level associations at various abstraction levels. Through brand concept management activities (Park et al. 1986), however, only the Rolex name has become associated with the concepts of luxury and high status. It is important, therefore, to recognise that studies of consumers' evaluations of brand extensions should consider not only product feature similarity but also brand concept consistency (see also Bridges's 1990 concept of brand schema cohesiveness).

Whether an extension product is seen as consistent with the brand concept depends on how readily it can accommodate a certain brand-name concept. Evaluations of brand extensions depend on the degree of perceived fit between the extension product and the brand name. The degree of perceived fit is a function of both product-feature similarity perceptions and brand-concept-consistency perceptions. Product-feature-similarity perceptions depend on identifying the relationships between product extensions and the brand's existing products, whether concrete (e.g., feature correlations, attribute matching) or abstract (e.g., shared-usage situations). Concept consistency perceptions rely on the extension product's ability to accommodate the brand concept.

Furthermore, Broniarczyk and Alba (1994) demonstrated that unique brand-specific associations that were valued in the extension category could dominate parent brand affect and category similarity in predicting extension evaluations. In their study, the "sweet flavour" Froot Loops association transferred more readily to physically dissimilar categories such as lollipops than to physically similar categories such as hot cereal because of the relevance of unique brand-specific associations in the dissimilar extension category (Bridges, Keller and Sood, 2000).

Bridges et al. (2000) broadened the definition of brand-specific associations by using explanatory links. High perceived fit results when consumers identify explanatory links that make the brand category "hang together" and permit it to remain cohesive when an extension is introduced. Murphy and Medin (1985) proposed the notion of 'category coherence' to describe the robust formation of categories even when its members are physically dissimilar. For example, "apple" and "prime number" are two objects that do not seem to go together. The authors note, however, that if a person knows Wilma, a maths professor whose only two interests are apple farming and prime numbers, then the dissimilar objects can be grouped into the cohesive category of "topics of conversation with Wilma". Conceptualising perceived fit in terms of explanatory links has the advantage of not being confined to product category associations. Explanatory links broaden the definition of brand associations, of which product category associations are but one type. Brand associations by definition can be any association linked to the brand in memory, including attributes, benefits, users, packaging, pricing, etc. (Keller 1993). Explanatory links are created when salient parent brand associations are seen as relevant in the extension context (Bridges, Keller and Sood, 2000)

Hence, Bridges et al. (2000, p.2) propose a definition of perceived fit which suggests that "any parent brand association including category, brand concept or brand specific associations, can connect the parent brand with an extension and serve as the basis for perceived fit". The critical determinant is not the type of association but whether the association is salient (i.e., accessible from memory) and relevant (i.e., deemed appropriate and important) in the extension context (Keller and Aaker, 1992). Salience of associations depends, in part, upon the dominant parent brand associations; relevance depends, in part, upon the parent brand to extension category relationship (Bridges, Keller and Sood, 2000). For example, the Fisher Price brand can remain cohesive with physically dissimilar toys, bath care products and car seats if consumers unite the products with the link "products for children". Finally, Martin and Stewart (2001) found perceived similarity to be a multi-dimensional construct in which the number and structure of dimensions are different when products differ in their degrees of goal congruency. Their results suggest that extensions may not be successful even if they appear similar, unless consumers link the extension with the same goal as the parent brand.

From another point of view, Estes, Gibbert, Guest and Mazursky (2012) distinguish between taxonomic feature-based similarity and thematic relation-based similarity. Both types of similarity were found to affect extension acceptance individuall. However, the distinction between thematic and taxonomic was not found relevant in the context of this research as it uses extension stimuli from within the same taxonomy.

This doctoral research takes a broader perspective regarding fit, and defines it as anything that the consumer finds to relate the parent brand with the extension.

Intervening Extensions

Keller and Aaker (1992) conducted laboratory-based experiments with fictitious brands within the potato chip (crisp) category in order to evaluate the impact of the perceived quality of the core brand, and the number, success and similarity of intervening brand extensions, on the evaluations of proposed new extensions. The findings of the Keller and Aaker (1992) study can be summarised as follows: high quality brands can stretch further than average quality brands, while successful intervening extensions improve evaluation of an extension for average quality brands. Perceived company credibility (expertise and trustworthy status) and fit mediate effects of intervening extensions on evaluations of a proposed extension. An interesting observation is that authors found more support for the company credibility dependent variable than perceived fit.

Perceived Product Category Risk

Hem, Gronhaug and Lines (2000), in a small scale study of assurance services, car rental and restaurant services, provided further support for the hypothesis that 'strong brands' are in an advantageous position when it comes to extending into product categories perceived high in risk. The authors found that consumer knowledge of and `belief in' these 'strong brands' may have compensated for a consumer's lack of direct product knowledge. 'Belief in' these strong brands might be otherwise interpreted as 'trust' in the brands, since such language appeared to overlap closely with the many definitions of trust reviewed earlier.

On the other hand, Kim, Lavack and Smith (2001) researching in both the US car and wristwatch categories found that the introduction of vertical brand extensions (or upscale - downscale extensions, Aaker, 1991) had a negative impact on the consumer evaluation of the core brand. The researchers found that regardless of whether the extension was upscale or downscale, and regardless of whether the core brand was prestige-oriented or function-oriented, the net result was always a reduction in the favouring of the core brand evaluation. This finding was supported by Dacin and Smith (1994), who suggested that brand extensions differing significantly in quality as compared to the core brand, would have a tendency to weaken the core brand (Ries and Trout, 1986; Loken and John, 1993). This phenomenon was perhaps explained by Fishbein's attitude theory (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which suggested that inconsistent information can weaken beliefs. The latter studies suggest that managers should choose the product category to which they plan to extend carefully, as it may convey negative associations towards the parent brand.

Line Extension Cannibalisation Effects

Speed (1998) developed a model to predict branding strategies for given product positioning decisions. The results suggest that different positions have different transfer and reciprocity benefits and cannibalisation risk attached to them. Lomax et al.'s (1996) study of new entrants in a mature market and the risk of cannibalisation have found that only radical line extensions do not cannibalise. However, Reddy et al. (1994) in their article on success determinants of line extensions in the cigarette industry, found that even with cannibalisation, the incremental sales generated by the extension seem to be reason enough to make a line extension viable. Therefore, line extension managers should be aware that under certain conditions, even if extensions cannibalise, the product can still be profitable.

Perceived Difficulty of Manufacturing the Extension

Perceived difficulty of manufacturing the extensions has a linear relationship with the extension acceptance, according to Bottomely and Holden (2001). Yet, a recent and more elaborate study (Mariadoss, Echambadi, Arnold, Bindroo 2010) modelled the relationship as curvilinear. The study found that easy and extremely difficult extensions are actually less easy to transfer than moderate extensions. This finding enhances understanding regarding the possible effects of this concept on different types of extensions.

Market-Related Factors

Nijseen (1999) collected data from 49 marketing and product managers in the FMCG industry and found that the market variables - level of competition, retailer power, and variety seeking behaviour - all have a negative impact on line extension success. However, a more recent study by Milberg, Sinn and Goodstein (2010) on consumer reactions to brand extensions in a competitive context, found that the effects of fit are mediated by brand familiarity in competitive settings and by perceived risk in non-competitive settings. This enhances our understanding regarding the effects of competition on brand extension success and how to control for these effects.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by stating the importance of the brand extension business strategy and the intention of this doctoral research to contribute to theory and practice. In general, brand extension business strategies have been flourishing in the last two decades. Therefore, it has become a concern as much for academics as for managers, to explore and enhance their understanding regarding this business strategy. Brand extension strategy is defined as the use of an established brand name to launch a new product either in the same product category as the brand or in a new product category (Völckner and Sattler 2006).

This study has presented a critical literature review on brand extension success factors. The literature review categorised the success factors in three main categories, i.e., brand characteristics; consumer characteristics; and extension characteristics. From the literature review it appears the category of consumer criteria on the adoption of extension products has received the most attention by researchers, mainly owing to the changes in consumption patterns that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The current study

plans to make a meaningful contribution to this effort by adding three potentially relevant factors in adoption of extension products (i.e., virtual brand tribal communities; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value).

Moreover, an extensive analysis of brand extension success factors shows that perceived fit and parent brand quality constitute the principal factors of extension acceptance. These two constructs have been included in almost all the studies. Perceived fit is defined as anything the consumer can find to relate the parent brand with the extension, and perceived parent brand quality is defined as consumers' overall perceptions of a brand's excellence or superiority.

The chapter has presented an evaluative literature review and identified a number of gaps that this study aims to contribute to filling, firstly, *theoretically* by merging with relationship marketing and the S-D logic (see also Chapter 4); secondly, *conceptually* by examining the potential effect of virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value on extension acceptance with different levels of co-creation. Thirdly, *methodologically* by using actual consumers, and an actual brand, and in an actual consumption environment using realistic co-creative scenarios, and conducting the research with European consumers and using a mixed methodology. Fourthly, *contextually* the research is conducted in the under-researched product category of video games, with implications for sectors with similar characteristics. Almost all previous work investigated products within the FMCG sector (see Appendix A, Table A-1), leaving examination of some specific product category brands under-researched. In addition, in terms of context, the current research uses brand (line) extensions as experimental stimuli rather than brand (category) extensions. The study aims to contribute to the scarce research on that part of the brand extensions literature. However, the results are not expected to vary significantly when applied to other types of extensions under the same conditions.

The next chapter explains the overall change in the consumption environment from static to interactive through the enhancement of the consumer role in the "production-consumption" process and the increase in importance of consumer relationships. Specifically, it will explore the literature in virtual brand tribal communities; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value, as well as their underpinning theory and overall logic.

Table 2.1 Literature Gaps and Inconsistencies

Gap Identified	Need Addressed
Brand Extensions Literature	
Brand extension literature focuses on categorisation theory to rationalise its findings.	Need for insights from other prominent theories, such as relationship marketing and the S-D logic.
Literature on brand extensions has neglected the effects of virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value on extension acceptance.	Need for integrative theoretical framework that can holistically capture extension acceptance triggers and synthesise a multilevel perspective.
Remarkably little is written about products where diffusion follows an exponential decay pattern and generates the highest revenues immediately after the product has been made available to consumers. This is often the case of budget media products, such as motion pictures, books and games (Aislie, Drèze and Zufrvden 2005; Henning-Thurau, Houston and Heitjan 2009).	Need for more research on brand extension acceptance in the entertainment sector and particularly of products where diffusion follows an exponential decay pattern.
Most brand extension research has used brand (category) extension stimuli rather than brand (line) extensions stimuli. Yet, most extensions in the marketplace are line and not category extensions (Grime et al. 2002); and extensions congruent to the brand are likely to cause brand equity dilution if they fail (Aaker 1996; Loken and John 1993; Lahiri and Gupta 2009)	Need for more research into brand (line) extensions.
Brand extension literature has largely neglected qualitative insights on consumers' evaluations of extension products. The experimental design followed was mostly conducted with hypothetical brands and extensions stimuli. The sample unit was undergraduate students; while the research was almost never conducted in the actual consumption environment. Recent consumptions studies have shown that consumers' cultural background also plays a role in accepting extension products (Sharon 2010; Buil, de Chernatony and Hem 2009) and most of the research in conducted in US with US consumers.	Need for more qualitative approaches to help identify potentially relevant antecedents to brand extension acceptance in actual consumption environment, on actual brands with actual extensions and actual consumers from cultural background than the US.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER THREE**</div>

<div align="center">**THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND VALUE**</div>

<div align="center">**CO-CREATION**</div>

3.1 Introduction

The opening section of this literature review chapter provides an overview of the areas to be covered. The chapter starts with a review of the marketing approaches within the academic literature, which spans a lengthy time period and illustrates the origins of relationship marketing and the conditions that constitute its relevance in today's marketing practices. Discussion of the concept and definitions will follow. Having looked at this stream of research, the chapter will review a much broader paradigm shift that incorporates the relevance of relationship marketing and also brings to the forefront the concept of value. The new dominant logic stresses the importance of value co-creation between the company and the customer for more innovative, unique and customised offerings.

The chapter then narrows down to discuss three key concepts within the relationship marketing and value co-creation literatures. These concepts identify the different relationship bonds that post-modern customers create with entities such as brands, and the importance of involving customers into co-creating with the brand.

The chapter discusses the contemporary issues around the concepts of brand communities and tribes aiming to clarify the terms; evaluate the literature around the concepts, identify gaps and inconsistencies, and create a more elaborate conceptualisation of the virtual brand tribal community concept. Next, the chapter discusses contemporary issues around another form of relationship the customer creates with the brand as an individual. This study aims to contribute to the consumer-brand relationship literature by exploring the concept, its origins, underlying theories, and theoretical disagreements; and contribute to existing literature by offering a more theoretically sound background for the support of this concept.

Finally, this study considers the concept of co-creation of value, its origins and its relationship with the other two relational elements; i.e., *the level of co-creation offered by the brand* and *consumers' intentions to co-create value with the brand*. In this way, the

study contributes to the co-creation of value literature by bringing together two previously dispersed dimensions of the concept (which will be empirically tested as antecedents to brand extension success in Chapter 7).

Overall, the study plans to contribute conceptually to the brand-line success antecedents' framework discussed in the previous chapter by incorporating the three concepts analysed in this chapter. The chapter closes with a short conclusion summarising the key points and preparing the reader for the next chapter that explains the conceptual framework of the study.

3.2.1 Relationship Marketing Origins, Definition and Relevance

Marketing as a discipline was born out of economics around the beginning of the 20th century. During the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, the primary focus was on transactions and exchanges (Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995). The subsequent development of marketing as a discipline has seen a re-conceptualisation in its orientation from transactions to relationships (Grönroos 1994b; Gummesson 1987; Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995; Storbacka and Lehtinen 2001; Grönroos and Helle 2012). However, the emergence of a relationship marketing school of thought is not so much of an emergence, but of a re-emergence of an approach that formed the cornerstone of marketing practices during the pre-industrial era. In this way marketing practices historically can be separated in three historical periods, i.e., marketing in the pre-industrial period; marketing in the industrial period; and marketing in the post-industrial period. Relationship marketing has been central to marketing practice in both the pre- and the post-industrial periods (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Evolution of the Relationship Orientation
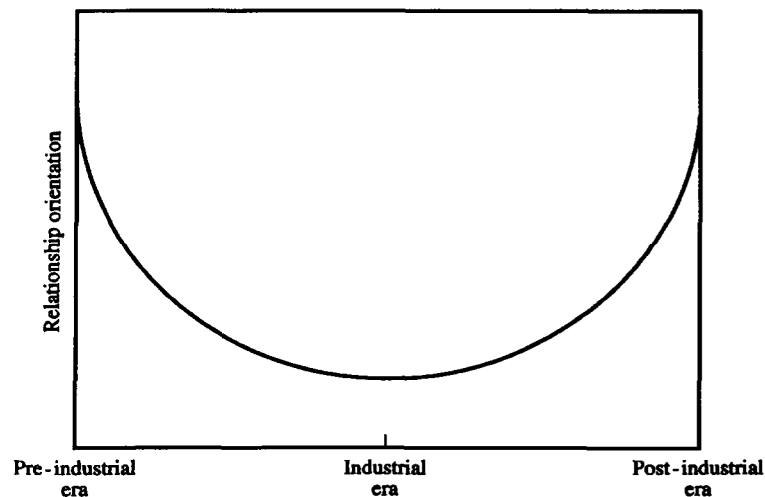
Source: Adopted from Sheth and Parvatiya (1995)

Relationship Marketing during the Pre-industrial, Industrial and Post-industrial era

A relationship marketing orientation was evident in the pre-industrial period when the economy was based on agriculture and trade of food and artifacts. Consumers and producers gathered together face-to-face in local bazaars and traded products. The producer was both the manufacturer and the retailer of his own products. Artisans would also make customised products for customers. Relationships were important in a business to business environment too, as management of the business was linked to ownership and the family name was used as the brand (Room 1987). Therefore, trust was an important condition for clan-trade relationships.

During the industrial era, mass production and mass consumption led to the expansion of the transactional approach. Economies of scale led manufacturers to lower the cost of goods, while at the same time the cost of inventory led to aggressive selling strategies and the use of other marketing intermediaries (wholesalers and distributors). Evidently the contact between the customer and the manufacturer was lost. Soon marketers realised the importance of repeat purchase by customers and re-invented direct marketing approaches to achieve this. As a result, the post-industrial era has seen great advances in relationship marketing, both in theory and in practice. Many studies have resulted in the complementarity of the two approaches - transactional and relational - for the achievement of better results (Zineldin and Philipson 2007; Constantinides 2006). The relational

orientation in the post-industrial era was mainly fostered by the rapid technological advancements that facilitated direct relationships between the producers and the consumers. The adoption of total quality programs by companies, the growth of the service economy, increased competition with concern for customer retention, and the consumer empowerment movement of teams and individuals led to the re-birth of relationship marketing.

To date, relationship marketing has been assigned no precise meaning. Rather, it is used as a buzzword to reflect differing perspectives. Some of the most popular definitions of the term are presented in (Table 3.1). While the definition of the term is still blurred, its axioms and purpose are clearly differentiated from that of the transactional marketing approach.

Table 3.1 Relationship Marketing Definitions, Axioms and Purpose

Relationship Marketing Definitions
Marketing from a relational perspective has been defined as "the process of identifying and establishing, maintaining, enhancing and when necessary, terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties involved are met, where this is done by mutual giving and fulfillment of promises" (Grönroos 1997, p. 407).
Relationship marketing means "establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan and Hunt 1994 p20). "Adequately conceptualising relationship marketing requires a definition that accommodates all forms of relational exchanges" (Morgan and Hunt 1994, p.21)
Marketing from a relational perspective has been defined as an approach "involving interactions, relationships and networks"(Gummesson 1995, p.5).
Relationship marketing has been defined as "a customer-centered approach whereby a firm seeks long-term business relationships with prospective and existing customers" (Evans and Laskin 1994, p.440).
The relationship marketing approach "is based on a thought that two (or several) parties establish a business engagement that enables both (or all) parties to gain something"

(Grönroos and Helle 2012, p.344).

Axioms and Purpose of Relationship Marketing vs. Transactional Marketing	
Relationship Marketing	**Transactional Marketing**
Interactive relationships between marketing actors	Marketing as an activity restricted to the marketing department
Interdependence of choice	Choice independence
Co-operation reduces transaction costs and generates higher quality products	Competition and conflict create a more efficient system for creating and distributing value
Purpose of Relationship Marketing	
To achieve business efficiency through lowering operating costs i.e., customer retention, sharing resources	
To achieve business effectiveness by offering customized products	

Source: The Author's Development

In the early years of academic research in relationship marketing, the concept was primarily researched in a business-to-business context (Selnes 1998; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Kumar 1996). However, in 1987 Dwyer, Schurr and Oh proposed that consumer markets could also benefit from attention to conditions that encourage relationship bonds leading to repeat business. Thus, the relationship marketing paradigm has been gaining increasing credence in consumer markets (O'Malley, Patterson and Evans 1997; Fournier 1998; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), although research on it is limited. The current study aims to contribute to filling this gap in the literature. Moreover, relationship marketing is part of a much broader conceptual development expressed in the principle of service as a dominant logic (S-D logic).

3.2.2 Service as a Dominant Logic

The S-D logic describes a paradigm shift by unifying disperse literature streams of marketing management under the principle that service is the new dominant logic, as opposed to the goods dominant logic (G-D logic) that reigned for most of the 20th century. This new logic has at its centre the customer as a co-creator of value. The S-D logic emphasises that "value can only be created with and determined by the user in the consumption process and through the use of what is referred to as value-in-use" (Vargo and Lusch 2006, p.284). It is important to clarify here that the term "service" (singular),

means the process of use of the resources of one's entity for the benefit of another's (Vargo and Lusch 2004; 2006; 2008a,b).

Evolving to an S-D logic signifies a marketing shift from offering the customer relevant products to understanding the potential for co-creating relationship experiences (Payne, Storbacka and Frow 2008). According to Normann and Ramirez (1993, p.69), "The key to creating value is to co-produce offerings that mobilize customers". Creating customer experiences is less about the product and more about the relationship the customer has with the total offering. Hence, the emphasis is on the value-in-use. The S-D logic regards customers as active participants who can co-develop and personalise their relationships with the suppliers and adopt multiple roles: e.g., customer as a payer; a competence provider; controller of quality; co-producer; and co-marketer (Storbacka and Lehtinen 2001; Payne et al. 2008). However, the concept of co-creation also exists also in the G-D logic. It is therefore important to specify that in the S-D logic there are two components of value co-creation, i.e., co-creation of value and co-production. These two components have a different meaning in the S-D logic. The concept of co-creation of value in S-D logic argues that value can only be created and determined by the user in the value-in-use stage. This statement constitutes a significant departure from G-D logic that views value as something added to the product at the production phase. The second component of value creation is the concept of co-production (i.e., customer participation in the creation of the core offering). Both co-creation of value and co-production are different under the S-D logic, as they consider the customer an endogenous resource. Co-creation of value and co-production are nested concepts, with the former being superordinate to the latter (Lusch and Vargo 2006).

In general, this paradigm shift in marketing is the result of social and technological changes that affect consumers' lifestyles. Moreover, the dawn of post-modernism has found the individual alone, alienated from traditional family bonds, in highly industrialised cities, craving for a link with other human beings or entities with animated characteristics (e.g., pets, brands, celebrities). The abundance of products has led the individual to seek for the "link" (relationship) more than the "thing" (object) (Cova 2002). In other words, an individual consumes a product, not necessarily because of physical need to do so, but because a product constitutes a chance for that person to socialise with other persons who also like the same product. This socialisation process takes place in so called "communities", where people who share the same interest in a product gather. However, since the products belong to different brands, there are also "brand communities". From

another perspective, a person could also choose to consume that product because of a personal relationship he/she has with the brand of the product/service.

Furthermore, technological advances such as the Internet have facilitated this process. The Internet is a medium through which people access not only information, but also other people to discuss and co-create (Sproull and Faraj 1997). The internet enhances empowerment of the individual in two ways: a) facilitate interactions with others; b) provide a non-threatening environment to co-create (the psychological cost of failure is much lower than in offline environments) (Füller et al. 2010). Similarly, Kozinets et al. (1999) claim that the internet is a powerful tool that enables users not only to observe reality, but also to enter and actually experience it.

The present study is an attempt to enrich the traditional framework of brand-line extensions (mainly following the transactional approach), with new concepts that have arisen from the paradigm shift described through the S-D logic and relationship marketing. Within these literatures, the concepts of *virtual brand tribal communities*; *customer-to-brand relationship* and *co-creation of value* have prominent roles. The following paragraphs will discuss the latter concepts.

3.3 Virtual Brand Tribal Community

Virtual brand tribal community in this study is defined as *a group of people with a common interest in being with other people of the same type, and a common interest in their favourite brand, who interact mainly through a specific site in cyberspace*. The characteristics of this community are the online environment and the members' understanding of belonging to a broad group of people who share the same interest (in video games), and simultaneously belonging to a narrower group that is interested in the activities of a particular brand related to their interest.

To better understand this concept and its definition it is imperative to look at its origins. A community is mainly characterised by the relational interaction or the social ties that draw people together (Heller, 1989). A community can also be seen as a group where individuals come together based on an obligation to one another or as a group where individuals come together for a shared purpose (Rothaermel and Sugiyama 2001). Gusfield (1975) distinguished between two kinds of communities. The first is the traditional territorial or geographic community. In this sense, community refers to a neighbourhood, town, or

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region, and thus, sense of community implies the idea of belongingness to a specific spatial setting (Obst, Zinkiewicz and Smith, 2002). The second is a relational community, concerned with human relationships without reference to location. For example, there are communities of interest such as hobby clubs, religious groups, or fan clubs. These two types of communities are not necessarily mutually exclusive; many interest groups can also be location-based communities. Most of the communities emerging on the Internet, called virtual communities, seem to fall under the definition of relational community, since their members are not physically bound together (Wellman and Gulia 1999).

However, instead of simply exchanging e-mail messages, members of a virtual community actively interact with each other for knowledge sharing on a specific site in cyberspace, thus displaying the same kind of emotional attachment to their site as people do towards their physical place of relationship (e.g., house, workplace) (Brown and Duguid, 2000). Fernback and Thompson (1995) characterised the virtual community as social relationships forged in cyberspace through repeated contacts within a specified boundary. Virtual brand communities used to emerge from consumer initiatives, but companies have also started to create communities as part of brand management strategies (Arnone, Colot, Croquet, Geerts, Pozniak 2010).

A brand community, on the other hand, is a community of individuals formed around a brand of interest to the members of the community (Muninz and O'Guinn, 1995, 2001). In more literal terms, a brand community is as an enduring, self-selected group of consumers who share a system of values, standards and representations, and who accept and recognise bonds of membership with each other and with the whole. The members of the community have some degree of a sense of belonginess and obligation towards to the brand community (Muninz and O'Guinn, 2001) and they tend to influence each other (Algesheimer et al. 2005).

More precisely, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001, p. 412) define a brand community as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand." Brand communities are composed of people who identify socially with others and who share their interest in a particular brand (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). In turn, this social identification with other users leads to behaviour that is consistent with the characteristics of a community, namely, consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The latter define

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consciousness of kind as "the intrinsic connection that members feel toward one another, and the collective sense of difference from others not in the community" (Muniz and O'Guinn, p. 413). As a consequence of this, users of a particular brand sense that they are somehow different and distinct from users of other brands. Rituals and traditions may include sharing stories about using a product's performance, celebrating the brand's history, displaying old logos, or greeting fellow brand users in particular ways. Finally, a sense of moral responsibility is observed to lead to community-oriented actions, such as sharing information about products, offering advice to newer members, and encouraging a certain pattern of behaviour that is acceptable within the community and is in accordance with the values of the brand and the community members.

Brand communities may take the form of form of local clubs based on direct interaction (Algesheimer et al. 2005), or they may exist entirely on the Internet (Granitz and Ward 1996; Kozinets 1997; Muniz and Schau 2005). Brand communities can be run entirely by customer enthusiasts, e.g., Nikon camera enthusiasts, or by the company, e.g., the Sony brand community resides on the company's website (Dholakia and Vianello 2011).

Brand communities can bring many benefits to the firm such as a) conducting marketing research; b) generating new product ideas; c) delivering prompt and high quality to customers; d) measuring, moderating and minimising negative feedback through continuous communication with the customers; e) educating and socialising customers; f) strengthening the attachment of existing customers to the brand, to the extent that they may even show oppositional loyalty to other brands; and g) increasing brand reputation through word of mouth (Dholakia and Vianello 2011).

A key characteristic of brand communities is the general absence of barriers to membership (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). People can purchase the brand and join the community without prior approval. As a result, they may be members of multiple, overlapping communities, even within the same product category. For example, a consumer could own two car brands and actively participate in online communities dedicated to both brands, providing assistance to fellow owners and seeking information on other vehicles being released under each brand. Indeed, in many product categories, it is not uncommon for consumers to own multiple brands of the same product.

During the past decade, communal approaches to consumption have been a heavily researched topic. However, a brief analysis of this body of literature reveals three main

irregularities: a) inconsistent use of terminology; b) lack of clear theoretical support for the similarities and distinctions between the neighbouring communal concepts; and c) lack of empirical support for the multi-dimensionality of the concepts.

Through this literature review, the study aims to contribute towards rectifying the first two irregularities by advancing knowledge related to the conceptualisation of several communal approaches to consumption, which have attracted research efforts recently. For example, Noble, Noble and Adjei (2012) distinguish between primary and extended brand communities; Acosta and Raj Devasagayam (2010) broaden the term 'brand community' by looking at the brand cult; Drengner, Jahn and Gaus (2012) conceptualise the social psychological sense of community; and Cova and White (2010) and Fournier and Lee (2009) distinguish between different types of brand communities.

It is important in the current case to distinguish between the concept of tribe and community in order to better understand the term 'virtual brand tribal community'. The term 'tribe' in social-anthropology denotes a social-political organisation consisting of a number of families or clans who share common culture, and unite into a unit with no formalised or permanent leadership (The Dictionary of Anthropology 2000). In a broader sense, the term tribe denotes a group of people who share common cultural characteristics at a "supra local" level (The Dictionary of Anthropology 2000). The term community refers to a collection of people with a particular social structure and sense of belonging, whose activities take place in a geographical area (Dictionary of Sociology 2006).

To begin with, all the concepts (i.e., tribe; brand community) refer to groups of people who share a philosophy of life. However, these people differentiate themselves in the way they identify themselves; that is, by a) the type of bonds they create - cognitive in communities, emotional in tribes; b) the internal structure of the grouping - formal hierarchical structure or informal in tribes; c) the level of temporality - temporal or enduring; and d) type of origins and location boundaries (Bazaki and Veloutsou 2010). Chalmers, Schau and Price (2011) have moved a step forward and proposed that brand communities (subcultures of consumption and tribes) differ in terms of time; appeal; ease with which consumers can join; focus; orientation towards the marketplace and heterogeneity. Overall, the existing use of terminology is complicated and often context- specific. However, it is important to note that tribes and communities in their nuanced sense are not mutually exclusive. Some communities may exist in a tribe, constituting the tribal phenomenon. In addition, within the community there might be several sub-tribes (Bazaki and Veloutsou 2010).

The dimensions used to represent the concept of virtual brand tribal community are based on the theories of social identity and social capital, central to which are the notions of community identification, engagement and normative community pressure. The dimension of community identification refers to Muniz and O'Guinn's (2001) type of consciousness; community engagement refers to rituals and traditions; while the community norm measures the strength of barriers to exit the community. This third dimension derives from the individuals' need to belong to community, group or category of people with common interests and distinct differences from other categories. Given the fact that the present research is looking at a tribal community, it is measuring the notion of tribalism inside the community. Cova and Cova's (2001) work on tribal marketing emphasises the "linking value" of the notion of tribalism. Tribalism is a distinct dimension of the community; it is different from the notion of community identification that refers to a person's sense of belongingness to a group of people, but does not refer to the reasons for belonging that relate to their common interest. The notion of tribalism is different from the notion of engagement in the community, which refers to a person's willingness to interact with other members; and is also different from the notion of community norms which refers to a person's pressures from informal rules and principles.

3.4 Consumer-brand relationship

The concept of consumer-brand relationship characterises the relationship between a person and a brand as an "interpersonal relationship". In the contemporary marketing literature, there are two distinct approaches.

The first approach discusses the consumer's love for a product (Ball and Tasaki 1995; Rozanski et al. 1999; Thomason et al. 2005; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Some of the studies assessed the emotional attachment to products while others researched consumer-product relationships (Shimp and Madden 1988; Whang et al. 2004). Shimp and Madden's (1998) work on love in consumption was inspired by the triangular theory of love by Stenberg (1986). Ahuvia (1993; 2005) provided empirical support for this construct. From the same point of view, Whang et al. (2004) decided to measure the construct of love based on the love attitude scale of Lee (1977). In all cases, the brand is perceived as a mere product with no opportunity for emotional exchange and two-way communication.

The second approach focuses on the consumer's relationship with a brand (Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier 1998; Monga 2002; Swaminathan et al. 2007; Veloutsou 2007; Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004; Ji 2002; Kates 2000). Despite the increase in relationship marketing research, there have been few attempts to study relationships from a consumer's perspective at a brand level. These studies support the fact that consumers engage in a relationship with a brand as they would with a person.

This research has chosen to explore the "the person- brand relationship", derived from the metaphor of "the brand-as-a-person", based on the evidence that consumers have been observed to switch stores or postpone their purchases when their desired brand is not in store (Veloutsou 2007). Even for those who deny the possibility of developing relationships with brands, past research has shown that the consumer-brand relationship can take many forms, depending on the personality of the consumer and the way he/she develops relationships in general (Fournier 1998). Yet, a brand is perceived as a distinct entity with its own personality; i.e., "a set of human characteristics associated with the brand" (Aaker 1997, p.347). A distinctive brand personality can communicate unique and favourable associations in the mind of the consumer (Diamantopoulos et al. 2005). Thus, a brand relationship is considered as a logical extension of brand personality (Blackston 1992), once the brand is perceived as a person to whom one can relate to personally. Further evidence that humans relate to entities beyond the tangible, visible, human world is suggested by the fact that humans have been observed to create relationships with God and other unanimated entities; this fact allows us to extend the partnership analogue to the brand domain as well (Fournier 1998).

In order to conceptualise the concept of *consumer-brand relationship*, one needs to first understand its components. However, because the concept of consumer-brand relationship is relatively new, investigations into this concept are rather limited. Brand relationship has been linked to life stories in several qualitative studies looking at the development of the construct (Fouriner 1998; Fournier and Yao 1997; Ji 2002; Robinson and Kates 2005); but qualitative studies on it have to date been restricted to information processing (Park et al. 2002; Swaminathan et al. 2007). Although some studies have attempted to link the brand relationship with other literatures such as brand extension (Park, Kim and Kim 2002) and brand personality (Chang and Chieng 2006; Hayes et al. 2006; Smit, Bronner and Tolboom 2007), they suffer a common drawback, which is the lack of theoretical underpinnings.

For instance, researchers who have applied interpersonal relationship theories to brand relationship have been highly selective. For example, theories of love (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Shimp and Aadden 1988), commitment (Thomson, McInnis and Park 2005), trust (Hess and Story 2005), and self-brand connection (Escalas and Betteman 2003) excluded other important relationship constructs. In other words, the dimensions of the construct are under debate in the literature. Some suggest that brand relationships consist of brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand attachment (Esch et al. 2006), while others propose commitment, immediacy, satisfaction and self-commitment (Aaker et al. 2004), commitment, immediacy, self-commitment (Gaus et al. 2006); and others again focus on the communication aspect of the relationship (Veloutsou 2007; Veloutsou and Moutinho 2009). Some even attempt to measure brand relationships through the investigation of brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). However, the constructs of "satisfaction", "trust" and "commitment" are the most questionable in terms of whether they constitute components, outcomes or antecedents to brand relationship. Garbarino and Johnson (1999), for example, found that trust, commitment and satisfaction have different roles depending on the strength of the relationship that the customers have with the brand.

In more detail, Morgan and Hunt (1994) theorised that successful relationship marketing requires both commitment and trust and included them as key variables in their relationship model. Trust in the model is seen as an antecedent to commitment. While commitment is regarded as a key mediating influence on consumer behaviour (Sargeant and Lee 2004), others consider commitment the foundation for a relationship (Berry and Parasuraman 1991). Furthermore, Sung and Campbell (2009), in their view that commitment is a central relationship-specific motive, compared the interpersonal relationships model (i.e., passion; self-concept connection; personal commitment; behavioural interdependence; intimacy; partner quality) with the investment model (i.e., satisfaction, alternatives and investment) in their ability to predict level of relationship commitment. Sung and Campbell (2009) found strong support for the investment model effects on brand commitment. In this sense, if commitment is a relationship component, satisfaction should be considered as an antecedent to that relationship.

Breivik and Thorbjørsen (2008), in a similar attempt, compared the brand relationship quality (BRQ) model (i.e., passion; self-concept connection; personal commitment; behavioural interdependence; intimacy; partner quality) with the relationship investment (RI) model (i.e., satisfaction; quality of alternatives; relationship investment) on the basis of empirical fit and model interpretation. It is important to note that they modified both

models in order to accommodate less involving relationships. Findings suggest that the modified RI model offers a straightforward interpretation of consumer–brand relationships, while the results for the BRQ model are not very clear; nonetheless the model demonstrates increased potential compared with traditional attitude models. One could argue that results of the use of this model are not clear, because of the large number of dimensions it incorporates and the lack of theoretical support. The present research aims to contribute to this gap in the literature by offering more in-depth theoretical support for the chosen dimensions of this interpersonal relationships model.

In the same paradigm, Monga (2002) used intimacy, partner quality and interdependence as the three dimensions of BRQ to examine whether gender plays an importance role in the way consumers relate brands. However this author moved one step forward and considered the reciprocity of the emotions, measuring every dimension from both sides, i.e., "consumer as actor" and "brand as actor" (Monga (2002).

Using the BRQ model, Thorjørnsen, Supphellen, Nysveen, Pedevsen (2002) found no evidence in their research on how interactive communication on the internet (personalised web sites and customer communities) affects BRQ, while internet experience moderates the effect on the relationship. More specifically, personalised Web sites developed stronger consumer-brand relationships for respondents with extensive Internet experience. Conversely, customer communities developed stronger relationships among respondents with limited Internet experience compared with respondents with extensive experience.

From another point of view, Hess and Story (2005), in an effort to define relationship constructs, created a trust-based model where the relationship conditions are trust and satisfaction, with satisfaction affecting trust and both trust and satisfaction affecting commitment dimensions (personal and functional connections). Personal connections with the service provider and functional connections will affect the outcome. Other research, on the impact of value congruence on consumer-service brand relationship, has also conceptualised the concept or relationship quality through the variables trust, satisfaction and affective commitment (Zhang and Bloemer 2008).

Research has also considered the inter-relationships between the brand relationship components. Aaker et al. (2004) examined the importance of acts of transgression and brand personality on partner quality. Partner quality, acts of transgression and brand personality would then have a different effect on the relationship strength indicators (i.e.,

commitment; intimacy; satisfaction and self-connection) depending on the type of brand. In addition, Esch, Langner, Schmitt, Geus (2006) developed a model that combines brand knowledge and brand relationship and their effects on current and future purchases. The latter suggest that brand knowledge is not sufficient for building strong brands. The influence of brand knowledge is through brand relationship (i.e., trust, satisfaction) which affect brand attachment, and which in turn affects behaviour (purchases). Bergkvist and Larsen (2010), in their study on antecedents to brand love, have considered brand identification and sense of community as antecedents to brand love; the latter in turn affect brand loyalty and active engagement with the brand. It is important to note here that the latter model (Bergkvist and Larsen 2010) follows Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) where the brand is considered as an object, and therefore the love to the brand is uni-directional; as opposed to the Fournier (1998) school of thought that considers the brand as a person, and therefore that love should be bi-directional.

Also important in the field is the study of Swaminathan, Page and Gürhan-Canli (2007), who suggest that consumers can form relationships at an individual and at a group level. For the individual level, the latter chose the concept of self-concept connection with the brand to represent the consumer-brand relationship. For the group level connection, they have chosen the country of origin connection concept to represent the relationship. Results suggest that both types of relationship are subject to self-construal connection. Self-construal connection with the brand depends on the cultural background of the consumer. Moreover, Albert, Merunka and Florence (2008) also conducted a study on brand love in two countries (France and the United States) and found that the dimensions of brand love (i.e., passion; duration of the relationship; self-congruity; dreams; memories; pleasure; attraction; uniqueness; beauty; trust; declaration of affect; functional perceptions; well-being and; attachment) differ in their significance among consumers of the two countries. In a similar manner, Aggrawal (2004) found that consumers form relationships with brands using norms of interpersonal relationships. Both in the case of exchange relationships and in the case of communal relationships, adherence or violation of these relationship norms influences the overall assessment of brand evaluations.

From another perspective, Kaltcheva and Weitz (1999) identified two dimensions in the brand-consumer relationship mediation (the extent to which the consumer can derive their principal benefit from the relationship with the brand) and reciprocity. These two dimensions affect the attributes of intention and selfishness that make for pleasant and unpleasant experiences with the brand and consumers' reactions to unpleasant experiences.

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The latter authors also found that there are four types of consumer-brand relationship, namely, communal, congenial, matching and market, depending on the level of reciprocity and mediation of the relationship.

Finally, a number of researchers have stressed the importance of the concept of brand personality in the type of relationship the consumer will create with the brand. Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004) conducted a longitudinal experiment with two different types of brands (sincere and exciting brands). The results show that the effects of consumer-brand relationship dimensions differ depending on the type of brand. Similarly, Hayes, Alford, Suver and York (2006) argued that brand personality (excitement; ruggedness; sincerity) is an antecedent to partner quality relationship. In the same manner, Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) used the brand relationship quality model (adopted from Fournier 1998 comprising passionate attachment; love; self-connection; nostalgic connection; personal commitment; brand partner quality; and intimacy) to measure the relationships consumers create with different type of brands. It was found that brand personality plays an important role in the type of relationship the consumer will create with the brand. Moreover, brands with an exciting personality qualify better as relationship partners.

Overall, the concept of "brand relationship" appears to be a complex phenomenon. However, by examining how existing marketing literature has conceptualised the phenomenon, it appears that the quality of the relationship between the consumer and the brand depends upon the brand personality (Aaker et al. 2004); the type of the consumer and how he/she creates relationships, and the cultural background. In addition, it is evident that previous conceptualisations aim to reflect the strength and quality of the relationship through summative evaluative concepts (e.g., partner quality) or subject to individual characteristics (e.g., "self-construal"). The current research holds that for a concept conceptualisation to be generic, evaluative criteria regarding the quality of the relationship cannot represent the fundamental dimension of the concept. The reason for this is that standards for relationships vary across individuals (Karney, McNulty and Brandbury 2001). This variation suggests that general beliefs and values regarding the quality of partnership always depend on how the individual perceives specific aspects of the relationship to influence his/her judgment of the relationship as a whole (Kelly et al. 1983).

3.4.1 Re-Conceptualisation of Consumer-brand relationship

Consumer-brand relationship refers to the person-brand interpersonal relationship, and Shimp and Madden (1988) were the first to consider the concept. However, the latter considered the brand as an object rather than as a person, and as a consequence they did not consider interactive communication dimensions. In addition, they used the Triangular Theory of Love to support their understanding of the relationship. What was described as a love relationship included dimensions such as passion and commitment in terms of momentum decision making. It cannot therefore, be considered as a general pattern for relationships.

Fajer and Schouten (1995) suggested three criteria for evaluating a relationship, i.e., satisfying liking criteria; substitutability of the relationship partner; and pleasure-cost ratio of the relationship; while Fajer and Schouten (1995) conceptualised a brand relationship mirroring a certain relationship type - a friendship relationship. However, the criteria for evaluating a brand relationship should go beyond relationship type, e.g., romantic; friendly; professional (Wish, Deutch and Kaplan 1976). Therefore, more work is needed in identifying the fundamental characteristics of a relationship.

Aggrewal (2004) developed a consumer-brand relationship concept based on the norms of interpersonal relationships. The latter proposed that relationships can be characterised as communal or exchange relationships, depending on whether they represent social or economic relationships respectively. However, the concept here does not address the fundamentals of a relationship's existence, and is limited to its contextual basis.

Lee (1977) developed a scale to measure attitude towards love styles. His conceptualisation is limited to the type of love relationship. A similar approach was followed by many other interpersonal theorists; the following table depicts some of the main interpersonal theories considered.

Table 3.2 Popular Interpersonal Relationship Theories Dimensions

Theory	Dimension	Source
Love Attitude Scale	Eros, Ludus, Storage, Pragma, Mania, Agape	Lee (1977)
Relationship Rating Form	Viability, Intimacy, Passion,	Davis and Todd (1982,

	Caring, Satisfaction, Conflict	1985)
Triangular Theory of Love	Intimacy, Passion, Commitment	Stenberg (1986)
Passionate Love Scale	Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioural	Hatfield and Spencher (1986)
Attachment Styles	Avoidant, Anxious-Ambivalent Secure	Shaver and Hazan (1987) Hazan and Shaver (1987)

Source: Adopted from Whang, Allen, Sahoury, Zhang (2004)

It is evident that no single interpersonal theory (see Table 3.2) may claim to capture all its components, which means that choosing any particular interpersonal theory may be constraining. The present study plans to address this gap by offering sound theoretical support for the dimensions chosen to represent the concept. The selection criteria are based on the frequency of use of the dimensions among interpersonal theories. Moreover, the study has also chosen to include the concept of interdependence (Fournier 1998), and argues that further understanding of the concept of communication is central in any relationship that involves interaction between two parties (Veloutsou 2007; Hinde 1995; 1979). The following section presents the dimensions of the concept and related theoretical support.

3.4.2 Consumer-brand relationship - Dimensions and Theoretical Support

Intimacy

Intimacy is associated with an awareness of the internal self, the most inward reality of the other person (Perlman and Fehr, 1987) and can be defined as a continuing desire for experiences of close, warm and communicative interpersonal exchange (McAdams and Vaillant, 1982). Emotional closeness without intimacy is therefore impossible by definition. The idea that consumers can also establish strong connections and closeness to products and brands, or even think of these objects and brands as parts of themselves and their personality, is supported by many studies (Ahuvia, 1993; Belk, 1988; Belk, 1992; Belk, 2004; Price, Mould, and Curasi, 2000; Richins, 1994a; Richins, 1994b; Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan, 1989; Solomon, 1986; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988).

According to Prager (2000), intimacy can be conceptualised as a form of interaction, and intimate relationships are built upon intimate interactions. Moreover, intimate relationships are characterised by frequent intimate interactions. Thus, for intimacy to develop in a relationship, both partners need to engage in intimate behaviours towards each other. In addition, a relationship also provides a context for intimacy. The extent to which intimacy develops in a relationship depends on the way in which partners define their relationship. Different types of relationships (best friend, lover, casual friend) elicit different types of intimate behaviours. For example, a relationship between best friends may elicit in-depth self-disclosure, while a relationship between strangers will not. In addition, other aspects of a relationship such as commitment can also influence the intimacy that develops in a relationship.

Following this school of thought, Monga (2002) suggests that a consumer's perception of intimacy of the relationship should be influenced not only by his/her intimate actions towards the brand, but also by the brand's intimate actions towards the consumer. This is a very important issue because firms today employ customer intimacy practices, which involve reaching out to consumers at a personal level and changing product development and marketing plans accordingly. Cross (2000) says that a firm's survival may be based on its personnel's ability to develop intimate relationships with customers that are based on excellent communication and listening skills, strategic thinking and inside knowledge of a client's business. Since firms today are engaging in intimate behaviours towards their consumers, it is important to understand if these have any influence on the consumer. Thus, in his study, Monga (2002) examines whether consumers create intimate relationships with the brand and if they can evaluate the brand's intimate actions towards them.

In the context of video games, the intimacy component refers to those feelings in the relationship with the video game brand that promote closeness and connectedness.

Two-way communication

The relationship concept connecting the customer and the brand is the interaction between the attitudes of the two parties (Blackston 1992; 1993). Recent research indicates that the positive brand and personal interaction is central to the building of a successful brand relationship (O'Loughlin Szmigin and Turnbull 2004). In her research, Veloutsou (2007)

describes communication in which the source is the consumer and the receiver the brand owners. In the marketing literature relationship analogies have been questioned and it has been suggested that what marketers call 'intimacy' is what some customers see as 'interaction' (Smith and Higgins 2000). However, the existing concept of intimacy as measured in the literature does not include the two-way interaction between the brand and the consumer.

Commitment

Commitment can be interpreted as a person's intent to maintain a relationship (Rosenblatt 1977). Moreover, it is also associated with "feelings of attachments to a partner" (Rusbult and Buunk 1993). The construct of commitment can easily be transferred to the consumer-brand context since consumers can also display varying degrees of commitment to certain objects. Redden and Steiner (2000), for instance, even explore consumers' fanatical commitment to brands. They describe these consumers as "brand worshipping consumers" or "obsessive consumers" of certain brands (p. 322).

High levels of commitment (i.e., the intention to behave in a manner supportive of relationship longevity) were also common across strong brand relationships. Commitment in its various forms fosters stability and encourages derogation of alternatives in the environment (Fournier 1998, p. 365).

Love

Brand love is defined as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name. Consistent with the literature on the love prototype (Ahuvia 2005b), brand love includes passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand and declarations of love for the brand. However, we recognise that consumers tend to speak loosely when using the word 'love' in reference to commercial products. As such, many instances of brand love will not be fully analogous to the stronger forms of interpersonal love (Ahuvia 1993, 2005; Oliver 1999; Shimp and Madden 1988; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006).

Interdependence

Interdependence is also a property of a relationship. Berscheid and Peplau (1983, p.12) propose that "two people are in a relationship with one another if they have an impact on each other, if they are interdependent in the sense that a change in one causes a change in

the other". Accordingly, a close relationship is usually characterised by high interdependence, which can be observed by the partners having frequent impact on each other; by the degree of impact per occurrence being strong, by the impact involving diverse kinds of activities for each person and by all these properties occurring over a relatively long duration of time. Interdependence by definition means that both partners have an impact on each other (Kelley et al. 1983).

Strong brand relationships were also distinguished by a high degree of interdependence enjoining consumer and brand (Hinde 1995). Fournier (1998) found that interdependence involved frequent brand interaction, increased scope and diversity of brand-related activities (use of the product and its extensions), and heightened intensity of individual interaction. Consumption rituals emerged as a central process through which interdependence was fostered and celebrated. Interpersonal research suggests that a relationship inextricably woven into the fabric of daily life can endure, despite low levels of affective involvement and intimacy (Hinde 1979).

Therefore, the consumer's evaluation of interdependence should include items that tap into the brand's impact on the brand. For example, my evaluation of my interdependence with the bank should be determined by both the bank's impact on me and my impact on the bank.

The components of the consumer-brand relationship concept here were defined after considering the interpersonal theories of love relationships and in conjunction with recent literature on relationship marketing. Yet another aspect that denotes the importance of the consumer perspective in the consumption process is that of co-creation of value. The following section will discuss this concept and its significance in detail.

3.5 Co-creation of Value

With the empowered post-modern consumer being at the forefront of interest and the emphasis on the "link" (relationship), it is important to see how the notion of the "thing" (object) has changed from being "given" to being "co-created". The emergent "service-dominant" logic challenges the view of customers as passive consumers and includes customers in the value creation process by asserting that the customer is always a co-creator of value (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006). Therefore, goods are merely "intermediate products that are used by other operant resources (customers) as

appliances in value creation processes" (Vargo and Lusch 2004, p.7). Consumers act as resource integrators (Lusch and Vargo 2006) when they use their competence, tools, raw materials, and sometimes professional services to produce products/services for themselves. The realization that consumers are actively involved in creating value for their own consumption is aligned with the post-modernist view that the consumer is a "participant in the customization of one's world" (Firat et al. 1995). This perspective has similarity to the concept of the "customer as a part-time employee" (Bowers et al. 1990) and is consistent with the notion of "prosumption" (Toffler 1980; Kotler 1986b).

Prosumption is a process rather than a single act (e.g., purchase). The concept of prosumption consists of an integration of physical activities, mental effort, and socio-psychological experiences. People participate in this process by providing their input of money, time, effort, and skills. The physical activities needed include manufacturing-like activities such as procuring, assorting, moving, combining, and changing inputs. The mental effort involved includes planning, evaluating, monitoring and regulating progress; while the socio-psychological experiences are inherent in various aspects of the process and its outputs, and they affect oneself and others. Therefore, prosumption is defined as a sum of value creation activities undertaken by the consumer that result in the production of products and product consumption experiences they eventually plan to consume.

This definition of prosumption is consistent with the notion of "value co-creation" (Lusch and Vargo 2006, p. 284) which has two components. The first is value-in-use, which implies that "value can only be created with and determined by the user in the 'consumption' process and through use." The second component is co-production: "It involves the participation in the creation of the core offering itself. It can occur through shared inventiveness, co-design, or shared production of related goods, and can occur with customers and any other partners in the value network." This definition of the concept of value creation is wider than Dabholkar's (1990) notion of customer participation, where customers' contributions are tied to given service offerings, and is more in line with the last two of the three levels of customer participation suggested by Meuter and Bitner (1998): firm production, customer production, and joint production. The first two consist of exclusive production by a company or customer respectively; joint production entails mutuality. However, the particular processes constituting prosumption cover both joint and customer production. From one perspective, prosumption-like behaviour is not new. The concept of prosumption dates back to antiquity, since the majority of community members

were producers and only a few could afford to trade food and clothes for services produced by others.

The increased opportunities in a wide variety of industries through digitisation, biotechnology and smart materials, as well as major discontinuities in the business environment such as deregulation and globalisation have further accelerated the trend of prosumption. In addition, from a business perspective, managers are under great pressure to create value, while competition is intense and traditional strategies of cost reduction cannot solve the problem. Thus, the need to innovate is more important than ever. Yet it is obvious to managers that neither value nor innovation can any longer be successfully generated through a company-centric, product-service focused system. The convergence of industries and the active role of consumers brings into question the connection between value and the process that led to its creation. Customers are willing actively to co-construct their own consumption experiences and co-create unique value for themselves (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004).

The latest research emphasises the usefulness of experience environments (online/offline platforms where the consumers can interact with the company; other consumers and co-create) (Prahald and Ramaswamy 2004). Moreover, experience environments can be supported by a network of companies and consumer communities to accommodate a range of possible customer-company interactions and thereby a variety of co-creation experiences. Experience environments can involve consumers as individuals and as communities, and be flexible enough to accommodate individual context and time-specific needs and preferences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004).

A significant number of companies are hosting virtual customer environments (VCEs) to involve the customer in product development and support activities. Virtual customer environments provide services ranging from online discussion forums to virtual design and prototyping centres, encouraging customers to become involved in product design, product testing and other activities. For instance, Microsoft has been able to enhance its product portfolio by leveraging support provided by its "expert" customers in the virtual customer environment without significant additional investments. However, while the benefits to companies from hosting such VCEs are clear, customer support activities in VCEs stem primarily from their beliefs concerning the benefits of engaging in such activities. Moreover, Nambisan and Baron (2009) found support for the effects of perceived customer benefits on voluntary customer participation in value creation.

A number of studies have examined the concept of co-creation, its antecedents, effects and inter-relationships with other factors. Fundamental in the field is the work of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), who developed the first conceptual framework to help companies deal with the change from the traditional system. The change begins with the recognition that the post-modern consumer has information access, networks, makes informed decisions, and has the ability to experiment with products. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) suggest that dialogue, access, risk management and transparency (D.A.R.T), all coupled together, can provide avenues for the company to cope efficiently and effectively with change. Similarly, Huhn (2004) in his article entitled "Liberate your customers and reap the benefits" discusses how to restructure the organisation to accommodate a new segmentation strategy ("self-segmentation") to let the consumer choose or mix their own value propositions from a company's offerings. This strategy is based on Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) concept of co-opting customer competences. The self-segmentation strategy is different from mass customisation in that it institutionalises mutual learning. It does so in two ways: a) through co-creation at the production phase; b) through acting as an organisation consultant in the value creation process.

Based on the Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) work, Payne Storbacka and Frow (2008) created and tested a process conceptual framework for understanding and managing value co-creation. The framework is constructed around the key foundational propositions of S-D and places the customer at the same level of importance as the company. The framework addresses the question of how the process of co-creation should be undertaken. Furthermore, Zhang and Chen (2008) examined the interacting mechanism among the constructs related to value co-creation with customers and found that co-creation activities impact on the firm's customerisation capabilities and also on service quality. Results also suggest that service capability affects the firm's customerisation capability.

More recently, Cheung and To (2011) created a theoretical model that links customer involvement to perceived service performance, and identified the moderating role of co-production in the relationship. The model was tested on Chinese bank customers, and confirms that customer involvement was related to positive service involvement, and that the positive relationship between customer involvement and perceived service performance was stronger for customers of a high rather than a low level of co-production.

From another perspective, Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi's (2004) customer value chain involvement (CVCI) model for co-creating customer delight proposes that it is not sufficient for companies to pursue customer satisfaction. Customer 'delight' is a step forward from satisfaction, and will arise from including the customer and his/her family in the co-creation process and gaining their trust and confidence in return. Similarly, the study of Tynan, McKechnie and Chhuon (2009), on co-creating value for luxury brands, found that it is the variety of interactions taking place between luxury brand owners, their customers and members of their respective networks, which help to differentiate luxury brands and co-create a superior value proposition

A few studies have also focused on the concept of user-generated content as part of the customer value co-creation process. Daugherty, Eastin and Bright (2008) undertook an exploratory study on consumer motivation for creating user-generated content, and found that attitude has a mediating role between use and creation of user-generated content. Christodoulides, Jevons and Bonhomme (2012) investigated how involvement with brand-related user-generated content (UGC) affects consumers' perceptions of brands. The findings indicate that consumer perceptions of co-creation, community, and self-concept have a positive impact on UGC involvement that, in turn, positively affects consumer-based brand equity.

The current research focuses on customer co-creation of value in the video game industry. The proliferation of Web 2.0 technologies has encouraged consumers to become part of non-traditional networks in which their productive resources are mobilised. Massive multiplayer online games that are played in virtual worlds by several people simultaneously without the co-presence of all the players demonstrate the effective organisation of consumers into new collective forms of knowledge and work. Companies use advances in Web technologies to provide efficient platforms to organise resources for co-creating activities. In online gaming, industry cooperates with consumers to design and define the game itself. This relationship allows consumers to act out their desires while helping the company to innovate and generate profits (Tsai 2008).

Video game firms are also successfully outsourcing parts of their game design and development process to digital consumer networks. Video game producers have an incentive to partially open game content to their users and to remunerate the most innovative ones. Similarly, digital consumer networks (online communities of consumers) who share similar interests in certain product genres have the incentive and opportunity to

both discuss products and engage in the design, development and distribution of new digital products. The game user community is a digital consumer network that comprises game players and modders. The development toolkits are bundled with the original game and can be accessed by all consumers in the network. Most consumers do not experiment with toolkits and remain passive consumers who are content with just playing the game. The rest form the modding community of the game, a substructure that is embedded in the larger user community. Its members are users who have the motivation and the creative technical skills to develop fully functional mods. While players perform important tasks in terms of market research and testing, it is the modders who contribute to product innovations (Arakji and Lang 2007).

This perspective of co-creation is encapsulated in the theoretical notions of "value co-creation" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; 2004) and the "service-dominant logic" (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006) and emphasises the centrality of firm customer co-operation and the production stage. This ideology considers "co-creation" as the pursuit of mutually beneficial relationships between marketers and customers in the production process. In line with the two components of the "value co-creation" concept (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006), the current study is not focused on the "co-production" part of value co-creation, but on the value co-creation part which considers "co-creation of value" at a value in-use-stage.

Nevertheless, co-creation can also occur during the actual use of the product, and not only in the development process. Company and gamers can co-operate to increase the availability of choices in the content of the game, which would then give greater power to the gamer. For instance, more user-generated content could be incorporated in the characters available to the gamer. Overall, gamers with the use of the company toolkits could have a greater influence on the game and gain enhanced control over the direction of the game. The current research focuses on two components of co-creation of value, i.e., consumer intentions to co-create value and desired level of co-creation offered by the company at the value-in-use stage. The following chapter will discuss these concepts in more detail.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the second theoretical strand of this study. The chapter describes a paradigm shift in marketing practices and thinking within which the concepts of relationships and co-creation of value have a prominent role. The study explains the important contribution of relationship marketing and S-D logic in current consumption behaviour. Moreover, the research views the importance of relationships from a consumer point of view. The study explains how post-modern consumers create links (relationships) with brands either directly through the *consumer-brand relationship* concept or indirectly in the form of a community around the *virtual brand tribal communities* concept.

Specifically, the chapter positions the study in relation to other research that has attempted to conceptualise the personal relationship of the consumer with the brand, explains the reasoning underlying the dimensionality of the concept, and identifies its underpinnings based on the theories on personal relationships and self-identity. In other words, the study offers a theoretically sound background to the consumer-brand relationship concept. This reflects the core elements of a relationship based on the origins of the concept of relationship in the social psychology field. The study positions this conceptualisation of the term in relation to past conceptualisations and in this way aims to contribute to the literature that criticises the atheoretical nature of the term and the lack of consensus around its dimensions.

Similarly, the chapter positions the concept of virtual brand tribal communities, within the study of consumption communities, as a separate type of community that has a tribal character; and identifies dimensions for the concept and links it to its origins in the field of sociology and self-identity theory. The chapter identifies similarities and differences between neighbouring concepts, and therefore advances knowledge in the field regarding the definition of the term upon which many recent studies have concentrated their efforts (Shau and Price 2011).

Furthermore, the chapter explains how the role of the consumer has changed from that of a passive to an active contributor at the co-production and value-in-use stages. The chapter presents the concept of co-creation of value and its dimensions, and aims to contribute to the limited research undertaken on consumer individual influences on co-creation and post-modern consumer preferences on the type and level of co-creation. In this way, a number of gaps have been identified that will be evaluated in the empirical research (see Table

3.3). The following chapter presents the conceptual framework of the study; the underlying theories; the reasoning for the selected approach; and a set of hypotheses that will test the predictability of the theories involved, and the contribution of each concept to the adoption of brand-line extension products.

Table 3.3 Literature Gaps and Inconsistencies

Gap Identified	Need Addressed
Relationship Marketing and the S-D Logic	
The relationship marketing theory from a consumers' perspective has not clearly distinguished between the notions of different communal approaches to consumption	Need for advancing knowledge regarding different communal approaches to consumption, particularly through defining the concept of virtual brand tribal community; identifying its dimensions and implications in relation to other relational and co-creative elements arising from the same theory.
The relationship marketing theory from a consumers' perspective has not reached a consensus regarding the dimensionality of the consumer-brand relationship concept, while its implications on other literatures are 'uncertain' (Huang 2008) or 'speculative' in nature (Park, Kim and Kim 2002)	Need to re-conceptualise the concept; provide theoretical justification of its dimensions and better measures.
The concept of co-creation of value has only come into view very recently and is still undergoing development (Sheth, Sisodia and Sharma 2000; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo 2008; Payne Stroback and Frow 2008; Rajah, Marshall and Nam 2008; Christodoulides, Jevons and Bonhomme 2012). Its effects in many literatures, including the brand-line extension literature, remain unknown.	Need for more research into the potential dimensions of the concept, its relationships with other factors and effects on other literatures.

CHAPTER FOUR

MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter develops a theoretical basis for the main empirical investigation. The chapter starts by presenting the theoretical framework. This conceptual framework highlights the impact of perceived brand quality and perceived fit in conjunction with virtual brand tribal community dimensions, consumer-brand relationship dimensions and co-creation of value dimensions, i.e., consumer intentions to co-create value and level of value co-creation, on the acceptance of the extension. This conceptualisation has been constructed from insights provided by the literature on extensions and relationship marketing (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 respectively). Subsequently, justification for the proposed conceptual framework is discussed and a set of research hypotheses is introduced correspondingly. These hypotheses specify the effect that the selected constructs are likely to have on extensions success. Next, the relationship between relationship marketing theory, S-D logic and categorisation theory as the theoretical rationale behind the extension decision is discussed. Finally, the justification for focusing on the consumer perspective is provided.

Figure 4.1 Conceptual Framework

A Consumer's Perspective on Antecedents to Brand Extension Acceptance
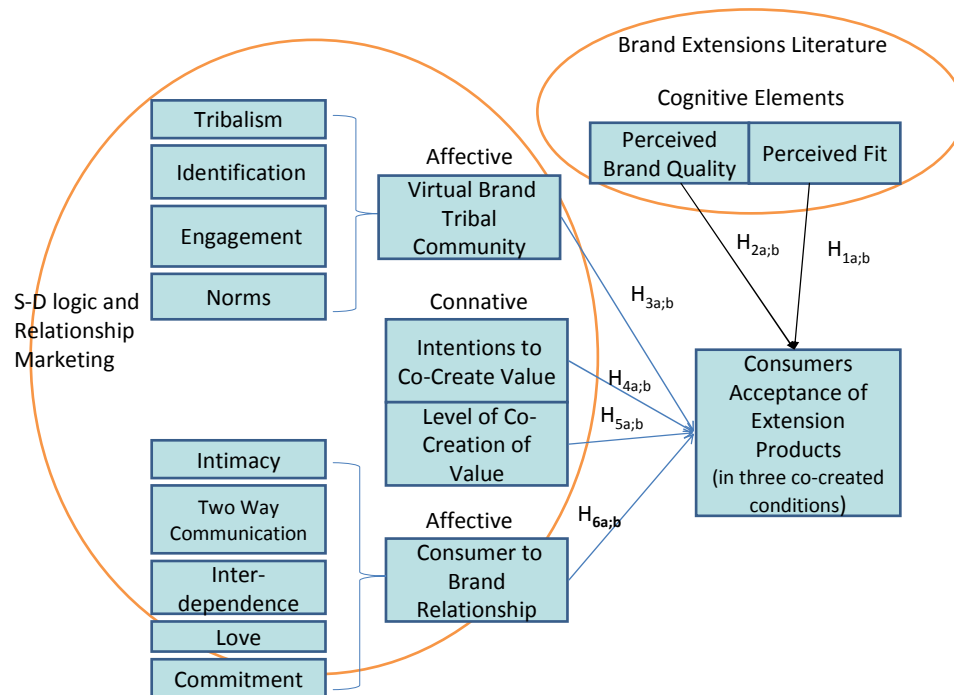
Consumer behaviour is complex in nature. Numerous factors can have a significant effect on consumer acceptance of an extension product (see Chapter 2). The current research selected two constructs from the brand extension literature and examined their influence. The two constructs were chosen because previous research has provided substantial empirical evidence of their significant influence on extension acceptance. More specifically, perceptions of fit have been at the core of the conceptual frameworks of almost all studies in the field; perceived quality is the second most well researched construct, but findings regarding its effect do not appear to be consistent. Both constructs constitute the heart of Aaker and Keller's (1990) principal model in understanding consumer behaviour towards extension products. The present study extends their model to include relational and co-creative elements and provide an improved understanding of extension acceptance.

Furthermore, the study has chosen to include relational and co-creative elements as potential antecedents to the extension acceptance, due to the increase in popularity of the S-D logic and relational approach during the postmodern era and the lack of categorisation theory to account for connative (co-creative) and affective (relational) elements. The

importance of this gap is brought to our attention by a stream of researchers who have recently started to experiment with the effects of other relational elements such as brand likeness (Yeung and Wyer 2005), brand attachment (Fedorikhin et al. 2008), brand trust (Reast 2005), and consumer emotions towards the brand (Park et al. 2002). In addition, theories from consumer behaviour raise the importance of the connative and affective part of the mind in consumer decision making (Agarwal and Malhotra 2005; Grimm 2005). The present research aims to make a valuable contribution to this developing area of research, by providing a complete conceptual framework that takes into consideration the most relevant constructs as the appear in the literature and represent different parts of the brain. The following table (Table 4.1) offers the definitions of concepts depicted in the model and analysed in the literature review chapters.

Table 4.1 Antecedents and Definitions

Perceived fit is defined as anything the consumer can find to relate the parent brand with the extension.
Perceived parent brand quality is defined as consumers' overall perceptions of a brand's excellence or superiority.
Virtual brand tribal community is defined as a group of people with a common interest in being with other people of the same type, and a common interest in their favourite brand who interact mainly through a specific site in cyberspace.
Consumer-brand relationship is defined as an interpersonal relationship between a consumer and a brand.
Consumers intentions to co-create is defined as consumer willingness to participate in the co-creation process.
Consumer perceived level (of participation) in the co-creation offered by extension product is defined as a consumer view of the level of co-creation, the extension product incorporates.

4.2 Construct Selection Criteria

In Chapter 2, the literature on brand extensions was reviewed. From all the factors considered, perceived fit and perceived brand quality, were chosen as the most relevant constructs in this literature. Other factors could have also been included, but they have been omitted: a) because of minimal significance in previous studies; or b) because their inclusion would have increased the complexity of the study and minimised the generalisability of the results; or c) because, based on the type of the consumer, the context

of the study and the type of the extension, they were not considered to be of substantial explanatory significance. For instance, the following constructs were excluded for the reasons set out below (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Excluded Constructs

Concepts	Literature	Reasons for Exclusion
Difficulty in producing a product from the extension's product class	Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Sunde and Brodie 1993	Minimal significance
Consumers' knowledge of the extension product class	Smith and Park 1992; Reddy, Holak and Bhat 1994)	Increase model complexity
Order and direction of previous brand extensions	Dawar and Anderson 1994; Reddy, Holak and Bhat 1994)	Increase complexity
Consumers' mood	Barone, Miniard and Romeo 2000	Minimal significance
Timing of line extension	Wilson and Norton 1989; Reddy, Holak and Bhat 1994; Munthree, Bick and Abratt 2006	Increase complexity
Cannibalisation effect	Lomax, Hammond, East, Clemente 1996	Increase complexity
Ownership effect	Kirmany, Sood and Bridges 1999	Increase complexity
Intensity of competition	Nijssen 1999	Increase complexity
Retailers' buying power	Nijssen 1999	Increase complexity
Variety seeking behaviour of consumers	Nijssen 1999	Increase complexity
Overall marketing budget	Nijssen 1999	Increase complexity; not applicable (no access to such information)
Extension-specific	Nijssen 1999; Reddy, Holak	Increase complexity; not

advertising expenditure	and Bhat 1994	applicable (no access to such information)
Distinctive marketing competencies	Reddy, Holak and Bhat 1994	Increase complexity; not applicable (no access to such information)
Parent brand experience	Völckner and Sattler 2006	Not applicable; the consumers in question are already members of the community
Perceived risk	Völckner and Sattler 2006	Not applicable
Consumer innovativeness	Klink and Smith 2001; Grime et al. 2002; Völckner and Sattler 2006; Xie 2008	Increase complexity; minimal significance
Parent brand conviction, marketing support and retailer acceptance	Völckner and Sattler 2006	Increase complexity; not applicable (no access to such information)
Branding strategy	Kirmany; Sood and Bridges 1999	Increase complexity; not applicable (no access to such information)
The symbolic value of the parent brand	Reddy, Holak and Bhat, 1994	Not applicable
Brand Loyalty	Hem and Iversen 2003	Increase complexity
Uncertainty Avoidance	Hawkins and Singh 2012	Not applicable (the type of extension examined is low risk)

Furthermore, the current literature in relationship marketing has emphasised the change of consumption trends (Veloutsou, Saren and Tzokas 2002; de Chernatony and Christodoulides 2004; Zineldin and Philpson 2007; Christodoulides 2009). It focuses on the change in the consumption process as a result of the relationships the consumer creates with and around the brand as well as his active participation role in the consumption-production process.

In support of the above comes the technological advancements with Web 2 technology to facilitate interactivity through the creation of relationships and user-generated content (Christodoulides 2009). The current study aims to establish the relevance and the effect of these relatively new constructs (i.e., consumer-brand relationship; virtual tribal brand communities; intentions to co-create value and level of co-creation) on consumer's acceptance of the extension. The conceptual framework (Model 4.1) presents these concepts with their dimensions, which have been conceptualised from prior literature in the field as multi-dimensional (see Chapter 3).

In summary, the literature review identified five success factors as "potentially relevant" for consumer acceptance of the extension. These factors were included in the empirical study. The term "potentially relevant" seems adequate because there are many examples of mixed results for a particular factor, such as reputation/overall perceived quality of the brand (e.g., Dacin and Smith 1994 and Reddy, Holak and Bhat 1994) or insufficient previous work regarding the effect of other factors (e.g. co-creation of value; consumer-brand relationship; virtual tribal communities).

Finally, consumer expert knowledge through focus groups with consumers (i.e., online video gamers) was used as an additional information source to build confidence in the relevance of the chosen factors (see Chapter 5 Methodology).

4.3 Research Hypotheses

4.3.1 Perceived Fit

Based on the brand extension literature, perceived fit between the extension and the brand is considered important (Bhat and Reddy 1997; Rangaswamy et al. 1993). Generally, a higher degree of fit entails a better assessment of any type of extension (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Boush and Loken, 1991; De Ruyter and Wetzels, 1999) since individuals will transmit their beliefs about the brand to the category of the extended product (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986).

 Aaker and Keller (1991) focus on the physical similarity between the parent brand and the product. From this perspective, line extensions by their very definition will always have good fit and thus researchers may have found no need to investigate them. Park et al.

(1991) were the first to suggest that level of brand concept fit has to be taken into account also, even in the case of line extensions. Therefore, given that brand image similarity between the brand and the extension is another dimension of fit, it is anticipated that the fit between the core brand and the extension will have a major impact on consumer evaluations of the extension and the core brand even in the case of line extension. Alternatively, although a physical similarity between the new and the original products may be obvious, both the new and the original product belong to the same product category and a mismatch may still occur (Nijssen 1999).

Two recent studies on extensions in similar product categories and in an online environment have also considered the effects of fit in their research. The research of van Riel and Ouwersloot (2005) on the usefulness of traditional extension models in the online electronics industry, found that the fit between the two involved service categories has a direct positive effect on the attitude toward the extension. Song et al. (2010), in his research on brand extension of online technology products, also found support for the hypothesis that positive perceptions of fit affect positively the perceived quality of the extension, and the latter affects behaviour towards the extension. In the current study perceived quality of the extension product is considered as part of consumers' overall attitude towards the extension.

Admittedly, perceptions of fit are more researched in brand rather than line extension because of variations in physical similarity. Grime et al. (2002) fundamental article in line extensions argued that it is not the type of extension (category or line but the type of fit that matters. In support to this argument research has highlighted brand (line) extensions asymmetric effects of fit across different types of extensions (Heath, DelVecchio and McCarthy 2011). Indeed, it should not matter whether an extension is categorised as brand or line, since it is the overall level of perceived fit that will affect its evaluation (Nijseen 1999; Grime et al. 2002). The current research investigates how within a category there can be quite some variation among the physical product and the image (i.e. when a company that is known for producing products high in company involvement would introduce a high in consumer involvement game). Although past research has not directly addressed this concern it is reasonable to hypothesise that since perceptions of fit was not found to have a consistent effect on extensions with different levels of fit or quality, it is likely that the effect of perceptions of fit will not be consistent across extensions with different levels of co-creation.

The above argument is strengthened by the fact that Nkwocha, Bao, Johnson and Brotspies (2005) in their study on the moderating role of consumer involvement in consumer evaluations of brand extensions, found differentiating effects for one of the perceived fit dimensions on product involvement. Nkwocha et al. (2005) measured perceived fit in terms of complementarity, substitutability and transferability in different product involvement categories, found a diminishing effect of complementarity in high product involvement situations. The main effect of complementarity is positive and significant in low involvement situations, but becomes non significant in high involvement situations. In contrast, the other two fit dimensions are both significant and do not change much across involvement situations. The finding that perceived fit complementarity is non-significant in high involvement situations is consistent with the findings of related research. For example, Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (1998) in their research on the effect of consumer motivation on extension acceptance, manipulated respondents' level of motivation and found that category thought valence (i.e., product fit alike thoughts) influenced extension evaluation only in the low motivation condition, but not in the high motivation condition. Given the strong positive connection between product involvement and level of motivation, it seems reasonable to assume that the effects of perceived fit may not be consistent across products that include different levels of involvement or motivation. Despite the fact that past research has not directly addressed the effects of fit on products that require different levels of co-creation between the company and the consumer, given the strong associations between the concepts of involvement, motivation and co-creation, the following can be assumed.

It is hypothesised that:

H1a Perceptions of Fit will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H1b The effect of Perceptions of Fit will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

4.3.2 Perceived Brand Quality

In addition to perceived fit, which is indicated as being important by almost all existing research work, there are numerous other studies which indicate a prominent role for the perceived quality of the brand (e.g., Sunde and Brodie 1993; Nijseen and Hartman 1994; Bottomley and Doyle 1996). Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived brand quality as

consumers' perceptions over the superiority and excellence of the brand compared to its competitors. Zeithaml (1988) concludes that perceived brand quality represents a higher level of abstraction than a specific attribute of the product. Once the product is recognised as a member of a category, the consumer will immediately activate cognitive judgments; and if the brand is associated with high quality, the consumer's memory rehearsal about the new product will centre on pleasant thoughts in relation to its expected value. As one's perceptions of quality towards the original brand increase, trust of the new product and satisfaction will also increase. It seems logical to suggest, if the brand is associated with high quality, the extension will benefit, whereas if it is associated with inferior quality, the extension would be harmed (Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991).

Nevertheless, there is conflicting evidence on whether high quality perceptions of the core brand increase consumer evaluations of an extension (due to the transfer of positive quality associations from the core brand to the extension). For example, while Bottomley and Doyle (1996) found support for a direct effect of core brand quality, Aaker and Keller (1990) provided evidence to suggest that there was no direct link from the perceived quality of the core brand to the extension evaluations. In any event, using core brand quality to predict extension and core brand evaluation may not be sufficient when used in isolation (Aaker and Keller 1990). Hence, it has been proposed, for example, that the impact of fit on extension and core brand evaluations is moderated by the level of quality (Keller and Aaker 1992; Grime et al. 2002).

There are also different views as to how core brand quality will affect the relationship between fit and consumer evaluations. Aaker and Keller (1990) found that good fit and high quality were necessary for favourable consumer evaluations. Similarly, Park and Kim (2001) also found the effect of original brand quality to be significant on the extension, provided that there is also congruence between the extension and the original brand.

In contrast, Keller and Aaker (1992) suggest that the higher the level of quality, the lower the impact of fit on consumer evaluations; in other words, a high quality brand should be able to extend further from its product category/image than a lower quality brand (Grime et al. 2002). This happens as beliefs about the perceived quality of the brand will transmit to the extension, if consumers observe a fit between the brand and the extension (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Rothbart and Lewis 1988). From another point of view, in a relatively recent study conducted by Völckner and Sattler (2006), which included fifteen important

factors for extensions, the concept of perceived brand quality was not found to have any significant effect on extension acceptance.

However, most researchers who replicated the Aaker and Keller principal model and included perceived quality in their analysis, both for service and product brands, have verified the direct influence of perceived quality on the assessment of extensions (Sunde and Brodie, 1993; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Van Riel et al. 2001). This relation is even supported with online brands, such as Amazon or Easyjet, which are leveraged with electronic service brand extensions (van Riel et al. 2001; van Riel and Ouwersloot 2005; Song et al. 2010; van Riel and Ouwersloot 2005); this is an industry and a type of extension similar to the one in question in this study. A higher quality perception of the core brand implies a more positive evaluation of the extension, since the market considers that the present perceived quality is a guarantee of the quality of the new product or extended service.

Moreover, van Riel and Ouwersloot (2005) also found that the effects of perceived quality on the extension depends on the type of extension (i.e., complement or substitute), and on whether physical order fulfillment is necessary. The former result suggests that if the core brand and the extension product are perceived as substitutes instead of complements, perceived brand quality may have a different effect on the extension product. This result is also supported by the principal work of Aaker and Keller (1990), which highlighted the importance of the basis of similarity (complement or substitute) for predicting the strength of the relationship between perceptions of fit and extension acceptance. In addition to this, the latter found that perceived brand quality had a significant impact on extension acceptance only when there was a strong basis for fit.

Studies have reported differences on the effects of perceived quality on products within the same category (Heath et al. 2011; Meyvis, Glodsmith and Dhar 2012; He and Li 2010). Specifically, the effects of parent brand perceived quality on the extension product may differ in terms of fit (close, moderate, far), in terms of type (brand/line) and in terms of quality of the extension (when quality is manipulated to reflect different types). Meyvis et al. (2012) show that adding pictures and enabling brand comparisons can shift consumers' preferences from extensions involving better fitting brands to extensions of higher quality brands. This happens as pictures and brand comparisons create a more concrete representation of the extension, which in turn increases the importance of parent brand quality relative to brand extension fit. In other words, by adding pictures to the extension

stimuli, consumers' preference may shift from high fit to high parent brand quality; or the strength of effect of parent brand quality on consumers' extension acceptance may not be equal across extensions with different types of fit.

He and Li (2010) found that brand loyalty has major effects on brand extension, as prior research suggested that fit reinforces the effects of parent brand quality evaluation (Keller and Aaker 1992; Völckner and Sattler 2006). Similarly, the reinforcing effect of fit on perceived quality can extend to brand loyalty. Much of prior research as well as the He and Li (2010) study confirm an interaction between fit and quality. The latter found that fit moderates the effect of brand loyalty on brand extension. For example, when fit is high, brand loyalty's effect is positive; when fit is low brand loyalty can have a negative effect on brand extension. The effect also varies depending on whether the extension's quality level is upwards or downwards from the core brand.

On exposure to a new extension, consumers are likely to evaluate its quality which requires a high level of processing (Brodie et al. 2009). Compared with consumers in low involvement contexts, those in high-involvement situations tend to concentrate more on exerting greater cognitive effort. Perceived brand quality is a diagnostic factor related to long-term attitudes (Olshavski 1985; Snoj et al. 2004). Therefore, the perceived quality of the new extension should directly influence consumers' involvement with it and it is also likely to vary in the same direction. In addition, Boisvert (2012) found support for his hypothesis that better the perceived quality of the brand, the better the perceived quality of the extension (a newly launched vertical service line extension) and the greater involvement the consumer wants to have.

Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H2a Parent Brand Quality will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H2b The effect of Parent Brand Quality will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

4.3.3 Virtual Brand Tribal Community

Brand communities have been advertised as the gateway to "the Holy Grail of brand loyalty" (McAlexander et al. 2002 p. 38). A number of companies, such as Chrysler,

Saturn, and Apple, have devoted a large amount of their marketing budget to encourage customers to join and participate in such communities in the hope that this strategy will help to increase customer loyalty. For instance, Apple openly and vigorously supports the formation of customer-run Macintosh user groups. Although these groups are created by volunteers for fun, Apple promotes customer participation in them through its Web site and by hosting events at conferences such as MacWorld. By encouraging customers to join and participate, the company hopes to foster greater loyalty among its customers.

Relations and attitudes toward the brand depend largely on the social interactions between members of the group. Brand communities influence member perceptions and actions (Muniz and Schau 2005), increase member knowledge (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry, 2003), and offer marketers the opportunities to engage and collaborate with highly loyal customers (Franke and Shah, 2003). Brand communities offer a network of relationships with the brand and with other consumers (Keller 2003; Quinn and Devasagayam, 2005). Consumers communicate about the product and influence each other through this interactive exchange process (Ahonen and Moore 2005; McAlexander et al. 2002).

Strong consumer–brand relationships produce positive outcomes for both relationship partners. On one side, the customer achieves satisfaction through building and maintaining relationships; on the other side the brand benefits from the loyalty and advocacy of such customers (e.g., Algesheimer et al. 2005; Fournier, 1998; McAlexander et al. 2002). Brand communities are one instrument that helps in strengthening consumer–brand relationships (e.g., Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

From a theoretical point of view, existing research has shown that information and word of mouth are important in the adoption and diffusion of new products (Mahajan, Muller, and Bass 1995; Rogers 2003). Developing this point, research on diffusion theory suggests that social systems and communication channels influence the adoption of products by controlling the information to which people are exposed (Gatignon and Robertson 1985; Rogers 2003). Hence, as brand communities are social systems and communication channels through which information about new products is transmitted, brand communities have the potential to influence members' adoption behaviour by selectively exposing them to information about new products.

In addition to exposure to information, the literature on brand communities has found that members develop a sense of social identification based on the sense of belonging to a

certain community (Algesheimer et al. 2005). This fact is in accordance with social identity theory which suggests that people tend to define themselves according to their group memberships (Hogg and Abrams 2003). In general social identities, even weak ones, give rise to in-group bias and more favourable assessments of members' own group and products. In the context of brand communities, this suggests that the higher the levels of social identification with the brand community, the greater the likelihood of adopting a new product from the preferred brand.

Finally, the combined impact of exposure to information and social identification provides a basis for understanding how membership and participation in brand communities may influence the adoption behaviour of members. Higher levels of participation in a brand community are also believed to lead to a member being exposed to more information about the merits and uses of the preferred brand. Diffusion theory suggests that exposure to such information enhances the likelihood of adoption (Rogers 2003). To conclude, diffusion theory suggests that higher levels of participation in a brand community should lead to greater knowledge about its products and a greater likelihood of adopting such products.

On the other side, the social identification that members develop with the brand community can affect their adoption behaviour. Social identification theory has found that participation with a certain social group enhances the strength of the identification to that group through various mechanisms (Hogg and Abrams 2003).

From an empirical point of view, a number of studies have examined the effect of brand communities on the adoption of new products. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), in their article on antecedents and purchase consequences of customer participation in small group brand communities, found evidence that in addition to cognitive and motivational variables related to the product and the brand, related behaviour can also be influenced (positively); this occurs through encouraging interactions with small groups of like- minded consumers in a social space offered by the firm and the brand and controlled by customers.

Another piece of evidence comes from the research of Thompson and Sinha (2008) on brand communities and new product adoption. The study examines the impact of brand community membership on new product adoption behaviour. The research was based on longitudinal data collected from four brand communities and two product categories. The study examined the participation behaviour, the membership duration and adoption behaviour of 7506 members. Using a hazard modelling approach, the authors found that

higher levels of participation and longer term membership duration can increase the likelihood of adopting a new product from a preferred brand.

Cova and White (2010), in research on the tribal phenomenon in marketing, found that groupings of consumers are capable of developing potentially dangerous competitive offerings with little or no assistance from companies. This finding suggests that a virtual brand tribal community can affect positively offerings with different levels of co-creation.

Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H3a Virtual Brand Tribal Community will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H3b The effect of Virtual Brand Tribal Community will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

4.3.4 Co-creation of Value

The previous chapter (Chapter 3) has discussed the importance of relationship marketing and how co-creation is part of it. In addition, value co-creation is a current trend in the video game industry and very much promoted through the internet that facilitates interactivity. Despite its importance, the literature on extensions has still not investigated its potential as an antecedent to extension success.

Moreover, modern technological advancements have provided consumers with access to unlimited amounts of information and an ability to communicate with other consumers and companies anywhere in the world. This has provided them with a sense of ''empowerment,'' encouraging them to play a greater role in the process of value creation (Ernst, Hoyer and Rübsaamen 2010). Co-creation can occur in a variety of contexts (Bolton and Saxena-Iyer 2009) and is considered as an important manifestation of customer engagement behaviour (van Doorn et al. 2010). One area in particular where consumer co-creation is increasingly used, is the area of new product development (NPD). Consumers provide ideas for goods or services that may fulfill needs that have not yet been met by the market or to improve existing offerings (Ernst et al. 2010). Company internet websites, e-mail, and social networks facilitate the communication of these ideas.

From a company perspective, consumer co-creation represents an attractive process opportunity as ideas generated through co-creation will more closely mirror consumer needs. Successful NPD (new product development) depends on a deep understanding of consumer needs and product development efforts that meet those needs (Hauser, Tellis, and Griffin 2006). However, this process is often rather difficult because consumer needs are often complex and difficult to identify through traditional marketing research methods (von Hippel 2005) and can often result in product failure (Ogawa and Piller 2006). However, by involving consumers more actively in the NPD process, more "consumer valuable" new product ideas can be generated, thereby increasing the likelihood of new product success.

In addition, involving consumers in the NPD process can improve product quality, reduce risk, and increase market acceptance (Arakji and Lang 2007). So, firms that manage this process effectively are likely to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage over the competition (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). In addition, the research of Christodoulides et al. 2012 on how user generated content really affects brands, found quantitative support for consumer's intentions to co-create content and a significant impact on consumer-based brand equity.

Despite its importance, this phenomenon has been scarcely researched in consumer settings. For example, studies on consumer relationship management have almost completely ignored innovation and NPD, and even more so consumer intentions to co-create value at the value-in-use stage.

Relatively recent research by Arakji and Lang (2007) on producer-consumer collaboration efforts in the context of product innovation in the video game industry found that this can be a successful collaboration; where consumer demand is heterogeneous and changes rapidly; there is an absence of high product performance and resource requirements, and; there is complementarity between the derivative and the original product. However, research in the area has not extensively looked at different situations. The present study adds to and expands existing understanding

From the above, it is evident that co-creation is an important market trend and it appears essential for marketers to develop a better understanding of the impact of co-creation on key marketing outcomes of consumers. A potential context for that would be consumer evaluations of brand (line) extensions. Specifically this research examines two dimensions

of the co-creation of value concept as found dispersed in the literature, first, the effects of consumers' intentions to co-create value; and, second, perceptions of the level of co-creation offered by the extended product.

Consumer Intentions to Co-Create

Recent research has focused on identifying the motives behind consumers' motivations to participate in the co-creation process. Ernst et al. (2010) have identified four type of consumers who are likely to participate in the co-creation process owing to different motivations, i.e., innovators, lead users, emergent consumers, and market mavens: i) Innovators owing to their desire to adopt innovative products. ii) Lead users who are always the first to use a product, acquire knowledge and then be willing and capable to share it. iii) Emergent consumers who are especially capable people to suggest product improvements. And iv) Market mavens who are knowledgeable consumers of a variety of products and are willing to participate in related discussions and answer questions of less knowledgeable consumers.

The consumer segments described above may be keen on engaging in co-creation activities. Consumers generally are found to compare the relative costs of participating in the co-creation process with the benefits derived from it (Etgar 2008). Costs include the monetary and nonmonetary costs of time, resources, physical and psychological effort to learn and participate in the co-creation process (van Doorn et al. 2010). Popular motives for participating in the co-creation process include financial, social, technical, and psychological reasons (Füller 2010).

In general, consumers are found to be willing to participate in the co-creation process because of financial rewards either directly through profit sharing or indirectly through recognition that they may gain. Another motivator related to the latter are social rewards, as recognition does not only bring monetary compensation, but social benefits such as titles, increased social status, self esteem and also strengthening community bonds with other members when this is happening collectively (Nambisan and Baron 2009). Finally, it may be psychological motivations that trigger participation in the co-creation process. Such basic psychological motivations are pride, enjoyment of contributing and altruism (Ernst et al. 2010).

Kirmani et al. (1999) examine the effects of ownership status on consumer responses to price-based brand stretches. The ownership effect is suggested to affect owners' responses to brand extensions more favourably than non-owners responses. Kirmani et al. (1999) found that the ownership effect occurs for upward and downward stretches on non–prestige brands and for upward stretches of prestige brands. In other words, the effect of the ownership effect on consumers' responses depends on the type of brand (prestige or non-prestige) and on the stretch direction (up or down). Although the present research examines the acceptance of horizontal rather than vertical extensions, based on the close relationship between the concept of ownership and intentions to co-create, it is possible to draw upon related findings.

The study of Christodoulides et al. (2012) investigates how involvement with brand-related user generated content affects consumers' perceptions of the brand. Findings indicate that consumer perceptions of co-creation, community and self-concept have a positive impact on user generated content involvement; and in turn the latter positively affects consumer based brand equity. Overall, consumer involvement is found to be a strong mediating factor between stimulus factors and outcomes, such as choice and preference for a brand (Zaichkowsky 1985; Boisvert 2012).

Many attempts have been made to define involvement in the literature. According to Laaksonen (1994) definitions of involvement can be classified in three categories: a) cognitive based; b) individual based and c) response based. Researchers following a cognitive based approach view involvement as perceived personal relevance of an item based on their personal preferences and needs (Zaichkowsky 1985). The individual based approach on involvement refers to the mental state of involvement evoked by the stimulus. This type of involvement does not require personal relevance. Rothschild (1984) and Mittal (1989) characterise involvement as an "unobservable state of motivation". In this case involvement varies continually from very low to very high according to the level of motivation. Finally, the response- based approach to motivation views involvement from an information processing point of view.

In this study, the focus is on the individual based approach that considers involvement as a motivational state. This is because consumers may accept an extension product not only because of relevance and information processing, but also because of the hedonic characteristics it evokes.

Brand extension strategies may not be equally successful across all product categories because consumers may evaluate products with various levels of involvement in different ways (Nkwocha and Johnson 1999). However, very limited research has addressed the role of product involvement in consumers' acceptance of brand extension (Nkwocha et al. 2005). Therefore, it is important to study consumer involvement in deciding what product features, benefits and brand information are required to influence purchase decisions (Nkwocha et al. 2005). Since Aaker and Keller's (1990) fundamental study on brand extensions, the role of involvement in brand extension is identified as an important avenue for future research.

Srivastava and Sharma's (2011) study is unique in that it examines consumer involvement with brand extension as a multi-dimensional concept, through different facets such as relevance, pleasure, and symbolic value risk related to the product category. This is of importance because the conditions associated with involvement generally affect purchase decision (Kapferer and Laurent 1985; Laurent and Kapferer 1985; McWilliam 1993). Perceived relevance of the involvement situation is found to be the most influential, followed by pleasure (Srivastava and Sharma 2011). Although there is no direct link between involvement and intentions to co-create, owing to the close relationship between the two concepts, it can be assumed that that intention to co-create are triggered by the level of involvement the product category evokes for the consumer; or that co-creation is a form of pleasure consumers enjoy from the product.

Therefore, it is hypothesised that:
H4a Consumer Intentions to Co-Create Value will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H4b The effect of Consumer Intentions to Co-Create Value will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

Level of Co-Creation of Value
Increasingly, customers are actively involved in the co-creation process, either by serving themselves (e.g., the use of an ATM), or by cooperating with service providers (e.g., Starbucks) (Dong et al. 2008). Encouraging customers to be value co-creators reflects a major shift from a goods dominant logic to service dominant logic (Bendapudi and Leone 2003; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006). Encouraging customers to co-create

also emphasises the shift from value added to value co-creation from products to experiences; from value delivery to value proposition; and from operand resources to operant resources.

The current research focuses on customer co-creation of value in the video game sector. Video game firms are successfully outsourcing parts of their game design and development process to digital consumer networks. Video game firms have an incentive to partially open game content to their users and to remunerate the most innovative ones. Digital consumer networks, or online communities, comprise consumers who share interest in certain products, and who take advantage of the Internet and other digital technological developments in order to discuss products and engage in their design, development and distribution. The game user community is a digital consumer network that comprises game players and modders. The development toolkits are bundled with the original game and can be accessed by all consumers in the network.

However, co-creation can also occur during the actual use of the product, not only in the development process. The focus of traditional marketing is the firm-centred value in exchange, that is making a value proposition for the passive customer to accept or decline (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Recent studies however, emphasise the co-creation of value by the supplier and the "connected, empowered and active customer" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p.8), who determines value "uniquely and phenomenologically" (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, p.7) during consumption. Thus, the concept of 'value-in-use' supercedes that of value in exchange (Lusch and Vargo, 2006), and suggests the use of marketing approaches, which are experiential, interactive, progressive, evolving and flexible (Tynan, McKechnie and Chhuon 2009).

The customer and the supplier co-create value at "multiple points of interaction" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p.13) through co-creation experiences which take place throughout the life of the product/service and not just at the point of exchange. Company and gamers could co-operate to increase the availability of choices in the content of the game, which would then give greater power to the gamer. For instance, more user-generated content could be incorporated in the characters available to the gamer.

Customer participation is defined as "degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service" (Dabholkar 1990, p. 484). Meuter and Bitner (1998) categorise customer participation into three types based on their level of participation: firm

production, joint production and customer production. The current study asks consumer to assess the level of co-creation they perceive the extension product incorporates at the value in use stage. The research empirically tests the concept of perceived level of co-creation by investigating the extent to which consumers who experience a co-created customer experience derive increasing levels of extension acceptance.

The customer participation literature suggests that as the level of customer participation increases, customers are more motivated and committed to co-creation (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). In addition, as their satisfaction is directly related to what and how they contribute to service quality, the increased service quality of the outcome that has been co-created will result in greater satisfaction and hence acceptance of the extension product. In other words, as customers' participation increases, customers' self-esteem increases, and satisfaction through their hard work leads customers to evaluate their work more positively. Dong, Evans and Zou (2008) also found support for the hypothesis that as customer participation increases, customers gain greater role clarity in the value co-creation process, which influences positively their ability to co-create in the future.

Moreover, Bendapudi and Leone (2003) found that customer satisfaction with a firm differs depending on whether a customer participates in production. Overall, customers are found to be more favourable towards the new product when they have participated in the production process. They are also more likely to share blame for the outcome when it is worse than expected, but the customers have been provided with a choice in whether to participate. Similarly, Dong et al. (2008), in their research on customer participation in service recovery, indicate that when customers participate in the service recovery process they are more likely to report satisfaction with the service recovery. Whereas, customer attribution of firm level responsibility for failure in co-produced service contexts had a negative effect on customers' satisfaction of the service recovery. Although existing research has not directly examined the effects of level of consumer participation in the co-creation process on different co-creation levels, based on the above theoretical development the following hypotheses can be generated.

It is hypothesised that:

H5a Level of Co-Creation of Value will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H5b The effect of Level of Co-Creation of Value will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

4.3.5 Consumer-brand relationship

During the last decade, the re-emergence of relationship marketing in the area of consumer consumption behaviour has stimulated considerable new academic research. Building strong brands is a strategic goal for brand management. Strong brands can promote profitable revenue streams for many decades and can be leveraged in different product categories and markets. Brand researchers have developed several conceptualisations of brands and how brands can affect purchase intentions. Relatively recently, researchers have argued that consumers' relationships with the brand can affect their consumption behaviour (Fournier 1998; Veloutsou 2007; de Chernatony and Christodoulides 2004; Reast 2005; Park and Kim 2001; Park et al. 2002).

Brand managers have followed a similar path for a lengthy period. Emphasis was given to establishing brand awareness and image. Brand marketers spend considerable resources to assess consumer brand awareness and image. Recently, sophisticated forward looking thinking in the field has incorporated relationship-based ideas, such as bonds and trust with a brand, into brand management and measurement (Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus 2006).

Research on brand relationships suggests that brands affect consumers not only because of the knowledge that consumers have in their minds, but also as part of the psycho-social-cultural context (Fournier 1998). Consumers engage in a certain type of relationships with brands similar to the one they engage in with other people. In the brand relationship literature overall, however, there is a dearth of clearly defined and operationalised constructs. There is lack of theoretical support regarding the notion of the concept and its dimensions (Fournier 1998; Gabriano and Johnson 1999; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Esch et al. 2006).

Although there are a range of different conceptualisations of the concept in the field, all agree that the concept affects consumer behaviour to a greater or lesser extent. The effect may depend on the consumer's ability to form relationships; the brand knowledge the consumer possesses (Esch et al. 2006); the personality of the brand (Aaker et al. 2004; the psychological-social cultural context (Albert et al. 2008); and for online brands, the technological expertise of the consumer (Thorjørnsen et al. 2002).

Moreover, in the brand extension literature, the effects of the relationship between a consumer and his preferred brand have been expressed as: a brand elicited affect (Yeung and Wyer 2005); brand trust (Reast 2005); brand attachment (Fedorikhin et al. 2008); and intimacy, commitment and love (Park et al. 2002). More specifically, Yeung and Wyer (2005) conducted three studies to examine the influence of brand-elicited affect on consumers' evaluations of brand extensions. Consumers appear to form an initial impression of the brand's new extension based on the brand's ability to spontaneously elicit affective reactions; or, the affect that they experience for other reasons and attribute to the brand, can influence their evaluations of the extensions products as well. Yeung and Wyer (2005) found that this is true regardless of the similarity between the extension and the core brand.

Previous research has also provided proof for the effect of relational elements on consumer evaluations of extension acceptance. However, Barone et al. (2001) and Barone (2005) argue that there is an indirect effect of relational elements on extension acceptance; whereas the latest research of Park and Kim (2001) and Yeung and Wyer (2005) found support for a direct effect. Yeung and Wyer (2005), however, have asked respondents to evaluate similarity before they proceed with the evaluation of the extension, whereas Barone et al. (2001) and Barone (2005) had asked them to evaluate similarity after they had evaluated the extension. The present study, in accordance with the latest research, explicitly asked consumers to evaluate core-extension similarity before they proceed with the evaluation of the extension; and, therefore, a direct association between the relational concept of consumer-brand relationship can be expected.

In his article on the relationship between brand trust and brand extension acceptance, Reast (2005) found significant support for an association between the variables. Brand trust in the study is measured via two correlate dimensions (credibility and performance satisfaction) and is significantly related to brand extension. Reast's (2005) results are based on the much earlier work of Aaker and Keller (1990) which found a significant association

between "company credibility" (via a brand's "expertise" and "trustworthiness") and brand extension acceptance. The present study conceptualises brand trust as an antecedent to brand relationship. Therefore, if brand trust is significantly related to brand extension, it is legitimate to hypothesise that brand relationship will be significantly related to brand extension.

Park and Kim (2001) proposed that the cognitive-affective part of consumer evaluations can be seen from a relational perspective, and found that consumer brand relationships can also be important for an extension's success. These authors originally proposed that consumers having a strong relationship with a brand will accept its extensions more positively than those lacking such a relationship; and that this effect is above and beyond the effect that the perceived quality might have on judgments about the extension (Park and Kim 2001). The findings suggest that brand relationship had a direct effect on purchase intentions about the extensions, regardless of whether the extensions were similar or dissimilar to the original brands. Moreover, brand relationships indirectly influenced purchase intentions by affecting the perceived quality of the extension; although the effect was mostly significant in dissimilar extensions.

The work of Park et al. 2002 examined the strategic importance of creating and maintaining strong consumer brand relationships when introducing extensions of the brand. The findings suggest that perceived brand relationship quality had a significant and positive impact on the extent to which consumers accepted the proposed extensions. More specifically, brand relationship quality significantly interacted with benefit typicality and category similarity. To explain this further, when the extension category was similar to the original brand category, for subjects in a weak relationship with the brand, an extension appeared to be evaluated more positively when the claimed benefit was typical of the original brand association than when it was not. By contrast this pattern was reversed for subjects in a strong brand relationship. When the extension category was dissimilar to the original brand category, however, the extension with a typical benefit being claimed was always evaluated more favourably than the one with an atypical benefit; this was regardless of whether consumers had a strong or a weak relationship with the brand. Therefore, it can be expected that effect of consumer-brand relationship will vary on extensions with different levels of co-creation.

Simiarly, Fedorikhin, Park and Thomson (2008) have examined the effects of brand attachment (a relationship-based construct) on consumer evaluations of extensions

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products. The authors found that brand attachment goes beyond overall attitudes towards the brand and perceptions of fit in determining consumers' behavioural reactions to brand extensions. It may include, for example, purchase intentions, willingness to pay, word-of-mouth, and forgiveness. The positive effects of this relational element, reinforces other research results that consumer-brand relationship in all its components should have a positive effect on consumers' evaluation of extension products. The latter also found that the effect of brand attachment on extension acceptance varies depending on the level of fit of the extension. The effect of brand attachment on consumer evaluations of extension products is evident at high and moderate but not at low levels of fit.

To sum up, existing literature has not directly considered the effects of any relational elements on extensions with different levels of co-creation (given that the effects of the several relational elements discussed above have not been found to be consistent across different types of extensions). However, in terms of fit and typicality, it would be logical to assume that the effects of consumer-brand relationship will also not be consistent across extensions with different levels of co-creation.

It is therefore hypothesised that:

H6a Consumer-brand relationship will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.

H6b The effect of Consumer-brand relationship will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.

4.4 Conceptual Background

Extension research has typically relied on categorisation theory as the basic theoretical rationale behind its investigations (Park et al. 1993, 1996). Categorisation theory helps to explain the cognitive processes by which extensions will be favourably or unfavourably evaluated (Rangaswamy et al. 1993). When extending a brand name, the transfer of brand associations is largely determined by categorisation judgments (Park et al. 1989, 1991). A category exists whenever people treat two or more different objects equally (Mervis and Rosch 1981; Boush and Loken 1991; Boush 1993). Distinguishable concepts such as brand names can help to define membership in a particular category (Consumer Behaviour

Seminar 1987). Upon distinguishing a brand name a consumer will form a summary description in his/her memory that represents the category with which the brand and its existing products are associated (Thompson 1997). The extension will then either be perceived as part of this existing brand category or not. With categorisation theory as the foundation of extension research, it has been shown that when consumers perceive a good fit between the parent brand and the extension, they will accept the new extension and the core brand associations will be transferred to it (Chakravarti et al. 1990; Park et al. 1991). It is the construct of fit that is at the core of most proposed conceptual frameworks.

However, one could say that this is a rather simplistic way of thinking, as the individual does not only use the cognitive part of the brain to make decisions, but also the connative and the affective. The research of Agarwal and Malhotra (2005) was one of the first to incorporate and empirically test the interaction effect of cognitive-emotion and found that both affect consumer choice. This result supports the earlier work of Lazarus (1982) that feelings and thoughts are inseparable. Another study which investigated the relative importance and interaction of cognitive, affective and connative elements in their ability to predict brand preferences, found that all three components are significant in explaining brand preferences (with the cognitive having the most significant impact) (Grimm 2005). Another issue related to cognitive and affective branding concerns the causality and interaction between the two. Recent attempts (Agarwal and Malhorta 2005; Grimm 2005) to understand the interaction between cognition and emotion do not investigate the hierarchy sequence or causality of the two. In fact there is no consensus about the sequence or causality between emotion and cognition (Oliver 1997; Franzzen and Bouwman 2001).

From the above discussion, most related literature seems to suggest that both cognitive and affective attributes are important for consumer evaluation of brands (Brown, 1998; De Chernatony, 2002; Keller, 2003; Agarwal and Malhotra, 2005). However empirical research of this kind is very limited (e.g., see Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Selnes, 1993; Merrilees and Fry, 2003).

The present study contributes to this lack of empirical research by examining the effect of cognitive, affective and connative elements (i.e., virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship; and intentions to co-create value) that have been introduced from relationship marketing theory and S-D logic on consumer evaluations of extensions products. This research is in line with recent efforts to complement categorisation theory (Fiske and Pavelschak 1986) by introducing antecedents in the brand extension literature

that addresses both affective and connative elements in addition to cognitive (Bosh and Loken 1991; Yeung and Wyer 2005; Park, Kim and Kim 2002; Fedorikhin et al. 2008).

For example, the underpinning rationale regarding the effect of positive consumer-brand relationship is that an extension into a dissimilar category may be viewed as abnormal and unwelcome behaviour. However, if consumers have established a strong relationship with the parent brand and feel committed to their relationship, they might exhibit pro-relationship behaviours. For example, they may interpret the dissimilar extension in the light of an existing positive relationship schema (e.g., perceiving the extension as an "exploratory" rather than as a "thoughtless" act; c.f., Higgins, Rholes, and Jones 1977). Alternatively they may see the possibility of its success rather than its failure. Similarly, consumers with high intentions to co-create value with the company can be keen on extension products that offer them this opportunity. Consumer research highlights that involvement is an influencing factor in consumers' decisions. This happens, as when customers actively participate in co-production, they exercise perceived control not only of the production of final services, but also of the process of service delivery. Hence, customers have a higher propensity to like the service and favourably evaluate the perceived service performance. Moreover, in brand extension literature Baker, Hunt and Scribner (2002) found that when introducing a new brand, similarity effects with existing brands may affects its image. However, brand knowledge, experience and involvement may moderate the effects of similarity on consumer perceptions of the new brand in association with existing brands.

Cognitive, affective and connative processes are likely to lead to more favourable perception of the extension's quality, which in turn would increase the purchase intention of the extension. In addition, consumers in a good relationship with the original brand may simply accommodate the extension as it is; or at least, be willing to try it, as they can contribute to its development. As a consequence, their purchase intention for the extension might increase. In sum, it is expected that brand relationships and intentions to co-create value might play an important role in extensions success; and one that is above and beyond the original brand quality and fit role as suggested by the traditional extension model of Aaker and Keller (1990).

4.5. Why choose the consumer perspective?

Brand extension success can be measured in a number of ways, including market share, profitability or number of years the extension/core brand has survived (Reddy et al. 1994; de Chernatony et al. 1998). This research concentrates on the consumer perspective due to its extensive empirical testing in brand extension research (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990), and due to the recent change in consumption habits (Chapter 3). The most important reason for the focus on the consumer perspective, however, is that consumer acceptance of the extension can enhance brand equity, which in turn is closely tied to the development of a competitive advantage in the eyes of the consumer (Nakamoto et al. 1993). Brand equity is defined as the "added value" that a brand endows to a product (Farquhar et al. 1990, p. 856); this added value can be viewed from the perspective of the company, the market or the consumer. Relatively recently, research has concentrated on conceptualising brand equity from a consumer perspective in the online environment (Christodoulides and de Chernatony 2004; Christodoulides, de Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu, Ambobola 2006).

4.6 Conclusion

The chapter describes, explains and provides relevant reasoning for the chosen conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework proposes the potential effect of new factors arising from the S-D logic and relationship marketing literature (i.e., consumers' intentions to co-create value; level of co-creation; virtual brand tribal communities; and consumer brand relationship) on the success of extensions; in addition to factors of pivotal importance in brand extension literature (i.e., perceived brand quality and perceived fit). The framework aims to build a complete picture around consumer decision making criteria on consumer acceptance of extension products.

Furthermore, the chapter explains the selection criteria and provides reasoning for the exclusion of other potentially influencing factors. Next, the chapter presents the research hypotheses and relevant literature findings to support these hypotheses. In particular, two hypotheses were chosen to test the effects of each factor on consumer acceptance of the extension. The main hypotheses have examined the potential positive effect of the factor on consumer acceptance of the extension product and the sub-hypotheses (H_b) examine the relative effect of the factor on extension products with different levels of co-creation. Finally, the chapter explains the researcher's choice to examine the consumer perspective and its relevance in the literature.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The chapter aims to describe and provide supportive evidence for the methodology followed to achieve this PhD project's objectives. To begin with, the study explains the philosophical and methodological approach chosen, before outlining the research design and the research process followed (see Figure 5.2). This concerns the qualitative data process and its underpinning reasoning and details of how the research was conducted and the findings. Next, the chapter discusses the quantitative research process: this relates to the process followed to design the questionnaire, the reasoning for the selection of items and measures, the description of the extension stimuli development, the sampling decision making process with related justification over the choice of the industry and the use of appropriate statistical techniques. The quantitative research process continues in the next chapter (Chapter 6) with the results from the pilot-test and the refinement of the research tool; in (Chapter 7) the data analysis techniques are explained and justified and the results from the main data collection are presented.

5.2 Research Philosophy

This section explores the philosophical stance of the study. Easterby-Smith et al. (1997) identify three reasons why the exploration of the research philosophy is significant. *First,* it can help the researcher design the overall research strategy, i.e., identify the research methods to be used in the study in respect of the type of evidence gathered and its origin; the way in which evidence is interpreted, and how it can assist in answering the research questions. *Second*, awareness of the research philosophy can allow the researcher to evaluate different methodologies and techniques, thereby avoiding inappropriate use and unnecessary work by identifying the limitations of particular approaches at an early stage. *Third*, it enables the researcher to be creative and innovative in either selection or adaptation of research methods.

An important consideration underlying the scientific investigation and related to the study's research philosophy is the identification of an appropriate theoretical paradigm. A

paradigm is described as the *"basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation"* (Guba and Lincoln 1994, p. 105). A theoretical paradigm is defined as *"a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts, and propositions that orientates thinking and research"* (Bogdan and Biklan 1982, p. 30).

A research philosophical paradigm is composed by three elements: ontology, epistemology and methodology. *Ontology* relates to the nature of reality, i.e. the essential assumptions that are made regarding the basic elements of reality (Parkhe 1993), their character and configuration (Guba and Lincoln 1994). *Epistemology* examines the character and basis of knowledge or the characteristics of the relationship between the reality and the researcher (Parkhe 1993). *Methodology* is the procedure carried out by a researcher to explore that reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Parkhe 1993).

5.2.1 Research philosophy of the present study

As shown in (Figure 5.1) there are alternative philosophical stances. In examining theoretical paradigms, this study assumes the organising idea of a continuum, with positivism and constructivism lying at opposing anchors. Each position is described with reference to ontology, epistemology and research purpose (Carson et al. 2001; Lee 1992; Healy and Perry 2000; Kidd 2002; Guba and Lincoln 2000).

Positivism asserts that an objective reality is out there to be found, and epistemologically this can be accomplished with obvious degrees of certainty and through employing objective scientific methods (Carson et al. 2001; Lee 1992; Long et al. 2000; Neuman 2003). This reality is composed of discrete elements whose character can be recognised and classified (Hirschman 1986; Cohen 1992, 1994; Guba and Lincoln 1994; McClelland 1997; Nancarrow et al. 2001). Hence, the primary mode of the research inquiry of positivism is *theory-testing based on deduction* (Layder, 1993). The use of this hypothetico-deductive approach allows for statistical testing and generalisation (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Principal data collection techniques under this paradigm include quantitative experiments and sample surveys that are outcome-oriented and assume natural laws and mechanisms. Finally, data collection for positivism is carried out with the researcher being remote from the phenomena under investigation (Anderson 1986).

Constructivism, lying at the other end of the continuum, is an approach for examining the beliefs of individuals instead of examining a tangible external reality (Hunt 1991). Its ontological position is relativism which assumes that reality is subjective and multiple, i.e., each person has his/her own reality (Carson et al. 2001; Lee 1992; Long et al. 2000; Neuman 2003; Roy 2001). Epistemologically, emphasis is given on individual understanding of particular perspectives (Morgan and Smircich 1980). Hence, the theory-building inductive method of constructivism necessitates the researcher to interact with participants and acquire subjective knowledge through that interaction (Anderson 1986; Guba and Lincoln 1994).

This study follows a more positivistic approach in addressing its research objectives (Figure 5.1). However, the philosophical stance of this study incorporates elements of both *theory–refining* and *theory-testing* research. In that respect, the present study follows a more balanced approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research (Newman et al. 2003). Indeed, the nature of this study's research questions is such that it combines "how" and "what" types of questions. Consequently, these two paradigms are not opposing research methods, but complementary to each other in this study. More specifically, the research approach for the current study is sympathetic to the dominance of quantitative examination and supplemented with qualitative analysis.

Figure 5.1 The Philosophical Stance of the Study
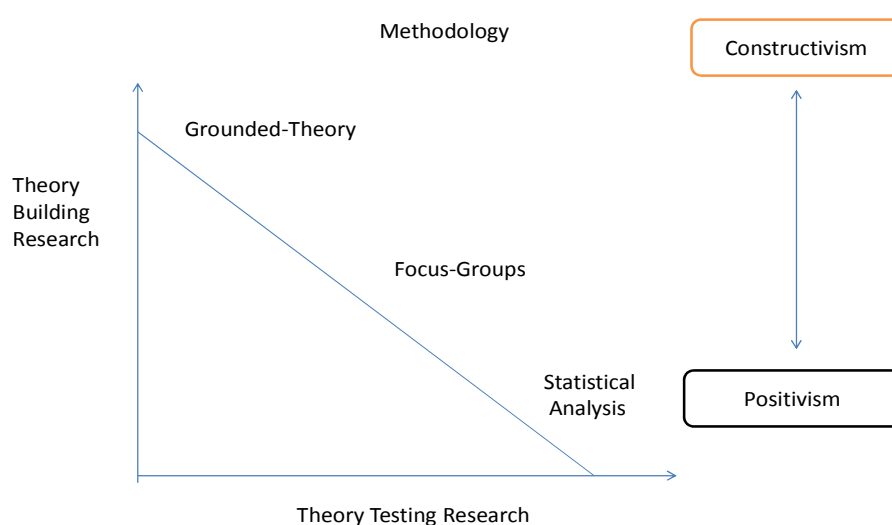
Source: Adapted from Healy and Perry (2000)

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5.3 Methodological Approach

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that the selection of methodology may depend on the perspective of the study and the nature of the questions being asked. The researcher's experience, understanding of philosophy and personal beliefs could also influence which methodology is selected. The philosophical level of a research method correlates to its assumptions founded on the most common characteristics of the world, encompassing such aspects as the mind, matter, reality, reason, truth, nature of knowledge, and proof of knowledge (Hughes, 1994). The present study follows a mixed method approach, but tending towards the more positivistic side of the philosophical spectrum.

Moreover, the quantitative (positivist) approach and the qualitative (interpretivist) approach are the research methods used at different stages in this study. The qualitative (interpretivist) approach was used during the preliminary phase of the study (primary exploratory study and focus group) to facilitate and complement the use of the quantitative method. The choice of the product category (i.e., video games) also had to be taken into consideration when choosing the constructs and the scales. Without the use of qualitative research, the appropriate scale dimensions and items would not be recognised and this would diminish the effectiveness of the scales and make the findings misleading. Whilst qualitative research is relatively exploratory and seeks to provide insights and understanding of the problem setting (i.e., constructs and dimensions relevant in this product category), quantitative research is statistically based and therefore can quantify data and provide conclusive results (Malhotra 1999).

Patton (2002) indicated that studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method (e.g., loaded interview questions, biased or untrue responses) than studies that use more than one method in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks. Using multiple methods allow inquiry into research question with "an arsenal of methods that have non-overlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths" (Brewer and Hunter 1989). As mentioned previously, the qualitative research method was used during the exploratory phase of the study to give a guide to the use of the quantitative approach, i.e., to help determine the major issues that the study should cover and the specific research questions that should be addressed. Using the qualitative and quantitative research methods in a complementary manner is ideal, as the findings will have high validity and reliability.

Furthermore, the quantitative research method, which is associated with the deductive approach, is more appropriate for studies that are intended to test hypotheses (Bryman, 2004; David and Sutton 2004). To achieve the objectives of the study, a set of hypotheses was developed, with quantitative research being used to test these. The majority of the studies in the extensions' literature have followed quantitative rather than qualitative methodologies and have used experimental design to evaluate an extension and/ or its effects on the core brand (see Appendix A, Table A-1).

Deshpande (1983) argued that the marketing literature to that point had been dominated by quantitative paradigms. AlShebil (2007) employed the content analysis method to see whether the quantitative paradigm still dominated the marketing literature twenty years after Deshpande's (1983) "Paradigms Lost" article. He reviewed all articles from the years 2002 to 2004 published in the top three marketing journals; namely, the Journal of Marketing (JM), the Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), and the Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) and found that just under half of all the articles published used quantitative methodology; while the second most preferred was mixed methodology and less than 10% used solely qualitative methodology.

More specifically, quantitative research articles focused on experiments, while qualitative research articles were dominated by interviews. It was, therefore, confirmed that the dominance of the quantitative method over qualitative method in the marketing literature still existed. Nevertheless, articles utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods were the second most preferred methodology. This could indicate that research employing both methodologies are currently gaining importance in the marketing literature. A multi-method approach can offer a better understanding of a phenomenon than if just one method is employed. Additionally, it can improve research findings (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, this research pursues a multi-strategy approach in addressing its research purposes.

5.4 Research Process

There are several steps to be considered when conducting research. The literature has considered similar research processes that have provided a general framework to follow when designing and implementing a study (e.g., Churchill 1999; Malhotra 1999). The overall methodological approach is demonstrated below as a process flow chart (Figure 5.2). The chosen research methodological design involved many stages from the initial

literature search and review through to the final analysis of the main quantitative survey data and preparation of the research report. This section of the chapter will provide an overview of the process prior to more detailed examination of individual elements.

Figure 5.2Research Process Flow Chart

Formulate Problem

↓

Determine Research Design

↓

Design Data Collection Method and Forms

↓

Design Sample and Collect Data

↓

Analyse and Interpret the Data

↓

Prepare the Research Report
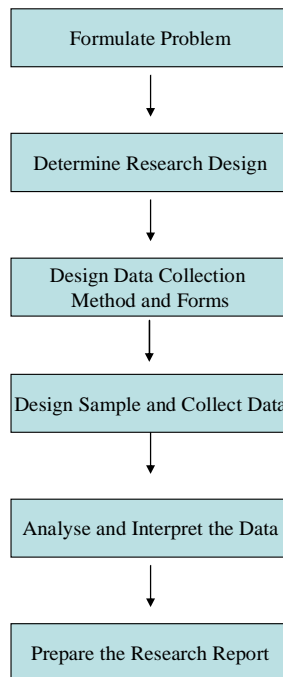
Source: Adopted from Churchill (1999)

5.4.1 Formulate a Problem

Defining the research problem is the most critical part of the research process (Tull and Hawkins 1993). Only when the problem is appropriately defined can research provide relevant information (Churchill 1999). The research problem was identified through the literature review, and a set of specific research questions was developed using the deductive approach. However, the problem was not fully formulated until after the qualitative study that helped to select all the relevant and context specific information. A conceptual model was then derived from the literature and the insights from the focus groups. Based on existing and relevant knowledge a set of research hypotheses was proposed, as shown in Chapter 4.

5.4.2 Research Design- Mixed Method

According to Malhotra (1996), a research design can be regarded as an outline or a skeleton for conducting a marketing research project. It is the plan or framework for a study, employed as a guide for collecting and analysing data. A research design can guarantee that the study will apply efficient processes and be related to specific problems (Churchill 1999). Thus a successful research outcome can be achieved by a well-designed research. Following what has been discussed above, whilst research might concentrate on one core research method, a number of techniques can be applied, frequently combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Such mixed methodological approaches are inclined to regard qualitative and quantitative research methods as a continuum rather than a dichotomy (Newman et al. 2003).

Cresswell and Clark (2007, p.33) state that "one situation in which mixed method design could be used is when researchers need to enhance a study with a second source of data. For example, researchers may need qualitative data to support designing an experiment or to explain the relationship identified between variables in survey research." In the current study, qualitative data were used for designing the second part of the empirical study, the development of the questionnaire and especially the design of the extensions stimuli. The specific type of mixed method design employed in this study is embedded sequential design. "Embedded design includes the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, but one of the data types plays a supplemental role within the overall design" (Creswell and Clark 2007, p.68). This design is selected because the qualitative phase plays a secondary role, while the quantitative phase is the primary focus of the study whereby the conceptual model is tested.

Choosing the embedded sequential mixed method design for this study demonstrates that the current study follows a robust methodological design that is suitable for the purpose of the research. However, more detailed discussion of the objectives of each phase and the rationale for selecting different data collecting method is discussed in the sections detailing each of these phases.

5.4.3 Design Data Collection Method and Forms

In order to implement the research design a set of data collection methods were considered. For the first stage of the study the researcher considered collecting information from consumers either with the help of focus groups or structured interviews. Focus groups were preferred at that stage because they allow the researcher to see how people position in relation to each other, while the dynamic that develops within the group helps new ideas to come to light (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). For the second stage of the study the researcher considered conducting either an online experimental design or a classroom experimental design. However, a classroom experimental design would not have allowed us to examine consumer behaviour in an actual consumption environment such as the online environment. An experimental design was considered necessary in order for the results to be comparable with existing studies in the field (Appendix A). The researcher has also considered conducting a longitudinal study on the effects of the factors on brand extension acceptance. However, it could not be realised due to time constraints.

Stage One of the Empirical Study

The focus group is considered an appropriate method to serve the research objectives of this part of the study. This section reports the issues related to focus group discussions. It starts with the rationale for the use of focus groups; explains the process and presents the findings that are relevant for the next stage of research.

Qualitative Data- Focus Groups

The qualitative focus groups undertaken for this study represented the first element of primary research within the methodology. For the purposes of the present research study, the researcher conducted 5 focus groups (the first focus group was not included in the analysis; it was conducted solely to help the researcher familiarise herself with the process); in total 24 video game players participated in four focus groups. The focus groups were conducted in an offline context to avoid difficulties with online real-time communication. For instance, although online focus groups give the opportunity to the researcher to collect information from geographically dispersed individuals, it can be hard to organise and co-ordinate it, due to differences in times and technological support (some users may not have as fast internet connection as others). In addition, the participants are likely to write down much less than they would say, and also interact less with the other

participants which would result in the loss of useful data. In addition, the researcher would have to sacrifice the depth of response from the lack of body language. Therefore, it was decided that offline, face to face focus groups could offer richer insights (Krueger 2000).

The researcher announced that she was interested in conducting focus-groups for her research during the community upcoming events, via posts on forums and web pages devoted to the massively multiplayer role-playing game community at large. A similar process for recruiting video gamers was followed by Seay, Jerome, Sang Lee, Kraut (2004). According to Bloor et al. (2001), participants of the focus groups should reflect the respondents of the survey. In order to achieve this goal, participants of the focus groups were members of the same online video game community.

Table 5.2 Characteristics of the focus groups

Group Size	4-8
Group Composition	Homogenous group, all members of the same video game community
Physical Setting	Informal, relaxed setting
Time Duration	45 minutes-1 hour
Recording	Digital audio-recording
Moderator	The researcher

The snowballing technique was used to recruit focus group participants. More specifically, the researcher arrived at an event, which was posted at online video game site, early in the evening and informed the community leader of her presence; the research aim and objectives; how data from the focus groups were going to help the research; and how data would be treated in respect to confidentiality regulations. The leader then gave a speech to the participants who were gathered there to play, emphasising the importance of the research for the future of the game development research; that the research was conducted for the University of Glasgow; and that if they could participate in the focus groups (during their break) their contribution would be valuable. The researcher then walked around the people getting herself and her intentions known.

The advantages of this approach are that it allows the researcher to assess how people position in relation to each other; the dynamic that develops within the group helps the

researcher to avoid premature closure on understandings of particular issues; it allows the proliferation of multiple meanings and perspectives; it saves time; it is cost efficient; and the participants are more likely to express their opinions as they do it from the comfort of their own space. A similar process was used by Cova, Park and Pace (2007) in the Warhammer brand community.

In this manner, one focus group was conducted every weekend from early December (2009) until early January (2010) in Glasgow. In order to make sure that the participants of each focus group reflect the respondents of the survey to a reasonable extent, great effort was placed on maximising group differences within groups (heterogeneity) and minimising differences across groups (heterogeneity). This is consistent with Fern (2001), who notes that if the researcher's interest is in generating potential items for a survey, within-group heterogeneity may be best. The focus groups comprised a mix of age, gender, education, and occupation. Overall, 16 males and 8 females took part in the focus group discussions. The sample achieves a reasonable representation of the population as, according to Business Insights (2009), video game players are around 60% men and 40 % women.

Focus Group Size

The size of a focus group can range from three participants to fourteen (Pugsley 1996). However, it is argued that between six and eight participants is the optimum size for focus group discussion (Bloor et al. 2001). Accordingly, this research tried to keep the size of the groups to between six to eight participants. More importantly, since English is not the facilitator's native language, relatively smaller sized groups were considered more appropriate for this research. It was expected to help the researcher to achieve considerable control of the discussion. In addition, smaller groups increase participants' opportunity to fully express ideas without interruption (Morgan and Scannel 1998; Krueger 1994).

The Entire Process

The Principles of Ethical Research and the Consent Form are delivered to the participants before the discussion starts. The participants are informed that the discussion will be audio recorded in order to ensure less loss of richness of data, and are reminded of the voluntary nature of participation as well as confidentiality of the information gathered. Then the participants are given time to read the aim and the objectives of the research and the Principles of Ethical Research, and are asked to complete the standard University of Glasgow Departmental Consent Form and return this to the researcher. When the

discussion starts, the researcher first introduces herself and the observer to the participants, then follows with a brief introduction to this research and the objectives of the focus group discussion. Thereafter, each member of the group is asked to state their names and to say a few words about themselves. Subjects are also told that there are no right or wrong answers and they should consider only their personal perceptions, and if they feel uncomfortable they can withdraw at anytime.

The researcher asks several general questions about video games (e.g., Do you play video games? How long have you been playing video games? What types of genres of games do you prefer?) This is with the aim of warming up the participants. This method ensures that the participants can ask questions about the current research and allows the researcher to create a friendly, relaxing atmosphere. The researcher then followed the focus-group topic guide (see Appendix B).

Focus Groups' Research Objectives
1) Ensure that all the constructs included in the model are relevant
2) Identify new constructs that may be relevant
3) Identify dimensions of the constructs involved
4) Create items under the dimensions of the constructs involved
5) Familiarise the respondents with the wording
6) Decide on the type of extension that is likely to be more successful

Research Conceptualisation (Pre Focus-Groups)

The concepts below were identified as influential through the literature review on brand extension (Chapter 2) and relationship marketing (Chapter 3).

Figure 5.3 Focus Group Model Before
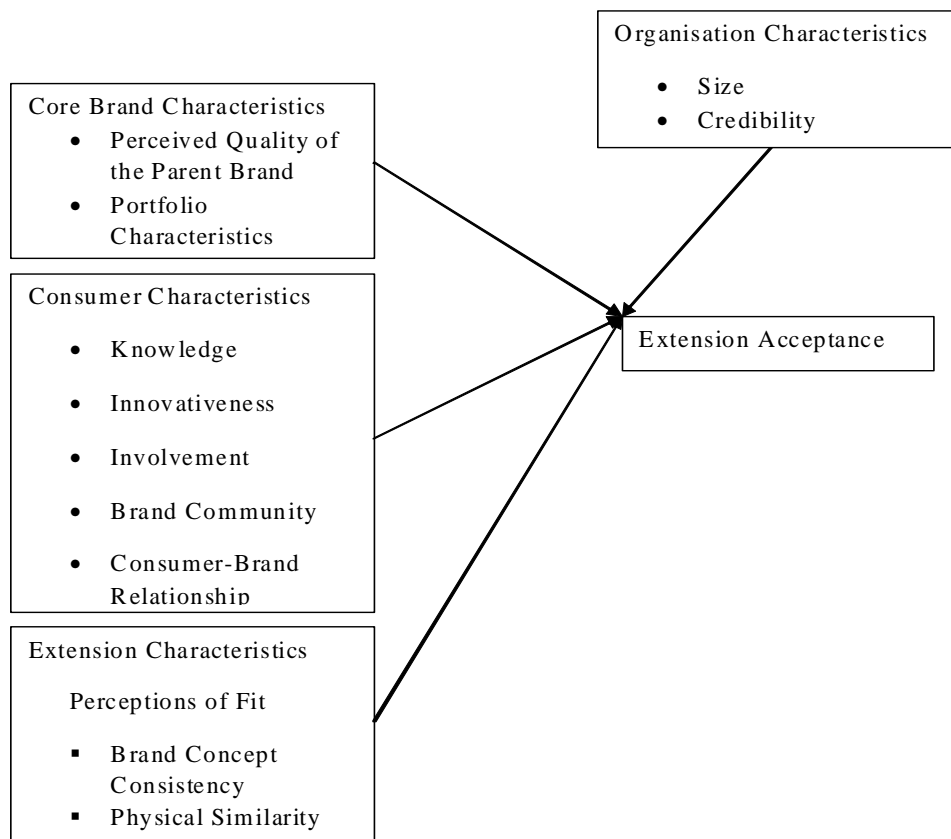
Research Conceptualisation (Post Focus-Groups)

The concepts presented below are those which are remaining and have been further developed from the conceptual framework that was explored through focus groups. The explanation for the changes implemented is presented below.

Figure 5.4 Focus Group Model After
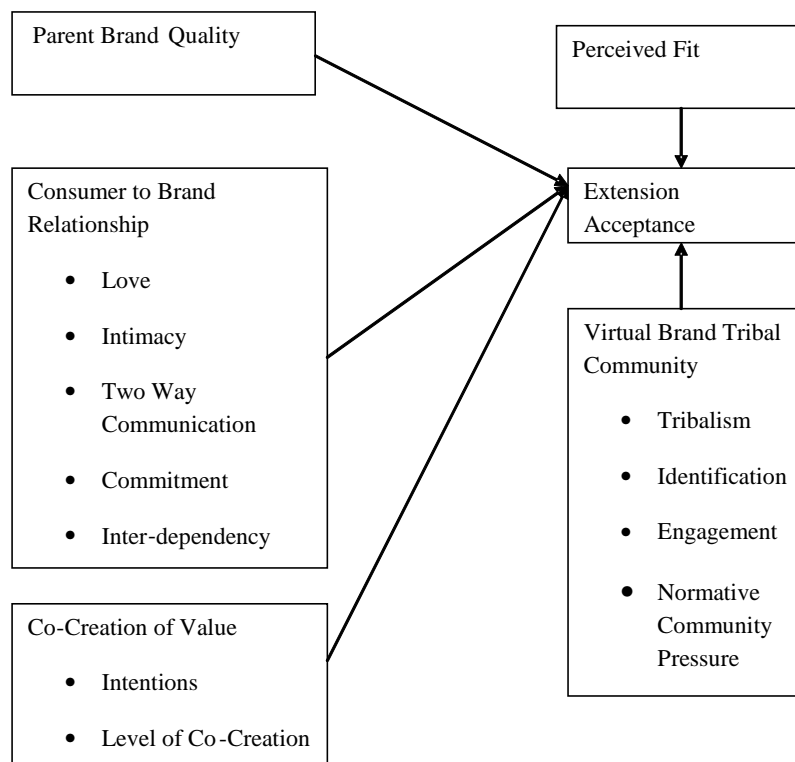
Relevance of the focus groups for the next stage of the research process

Co-creation of value has been found to be a valuable concept, acknowledged as being important within the S-D logic marketing literature and in the context of video games. Specifically, the focus groups revealed that gamers were eager to embrace games with different co-creation standards. Recent literature also supports the need for the development of this concept (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo 2008; Christodoulides et al. 2012) and its applicability in the video game industry (Arakji and Lang 2007; Bonsu and Darmody 2008).

A much greater understanding of the terminology used by consumers has been achieved. Variables such as physical and conceptual fit and perceived quality of the parent brand received very broad support from all focus groups.

The focus groups provided an awareness of potential issues surrounding some of the variables. For example, consumers need to communicate with the brand on a one to one basis. Veloutsou (2007) and Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) have also highlighted consumers need to communicate with their preferred brand as an essential part of any relationship.

The concepts of involvement, innovativeness and knowledge did not seem to be of prime importance in consumers' acceptance of extension products. All the consumers who participated in the study seemed to be knowledgeable and involved with the brand and its products; while it was innovative or not, did not change their perceptions regarding the brand's products. It is recommended that future research looks at these concepts as antecedents to the conceptual framework presented in this study.

Overall, the qualitative research provided outline support for the development and testing of a "model" with constructs and sub-constructs that can affect extension acceptance. The focus groups were supportive of the potential selection of constructs that would be most relevant in affecting extension acceptance. Overall, the qualitative focus groups were helpful in developing a working model of extension acceptance.

Stage Two of the Empirical Study

The next stage after the analysis of the focus groups is the review of the literature to help develop a concise empirical model that can then be tested through quantitative analysis. To proceed to the second part of the empirical study, therefore, it was necessary to create a survey instrument.

Survey Instrument Development

Questionnaire Design

The procedure suggested by Churchill (1999) for developing a questionnaire was utilised in the present study (Figure 5.5). Similar approaches are advocated by other authors in the methodological literature, for example, Tull and Hawkins (1993), Aaker et al. (1997) and Malhotra (1999).

Figure 5.5 Questionnaire Design Process
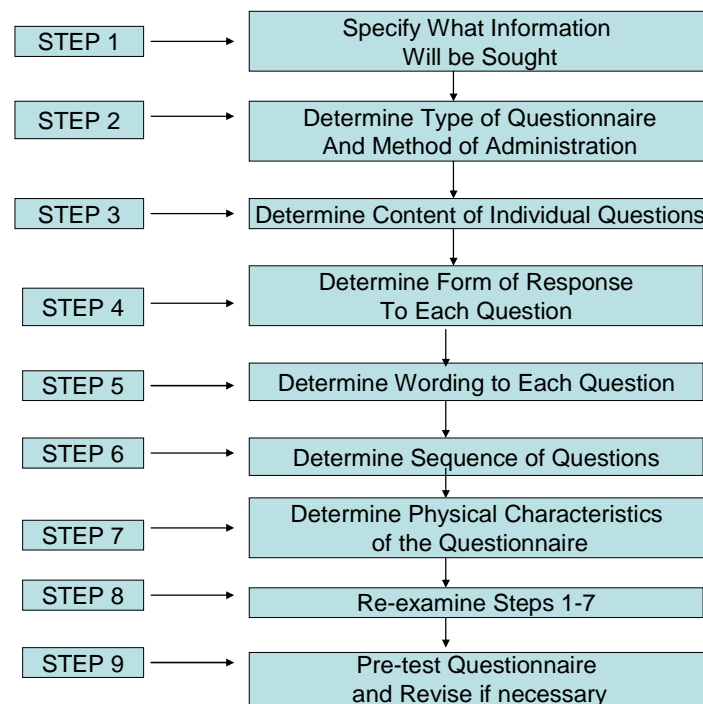
Source: Adopted from Churchill (1999)

Information Sought

The information sought was guided by the research objectives and the conceptual framework of the study. The hypotheses generated guided the information sought and the method of collecting the information.

Table 5.3 Issues to be Included in the Measurement Instrument

Constructs	Information Requirement
Brand Reputation	The perceived strength/quality of the brand
Perceptions of Fit	Appropriateness of different types of extensions
Brand Community	The strengths of the community feeling of each player
Brand Relationship	The strength of the relationship feeling of each player with the brand
Co-creation of Value	Consumers' intentions to co-create value with the company and consumers' perceptions of the level of co-creation of value for every extension
Background Information	Classification variables i.e., sex; occupation; age; number of online games they play; number of hours they play every game

Type of questionnaire and method of administration

Structured

The type of questionnaire chosen was structured with closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were found to be more relevant to the information required for the hypotheses being tested. Respondents were asked to respond to a range of scale questions, designed to capture attitudes towards the brand and possible extensions' concepts in a brief and timely manner (Aaker, Kumar and Day 1998). Brief, clear and easy to answer questions were included in the questionnaire. As the researcher wished to collect statistical data for establishing relationships between variables, the use of open-ended questions was

not appropriate. This type of question is also mostly used in online surveys, producing results that are easy to categorise and analyse. Finally, clear instructions were provided throughout the questionnaire.

Online administration

Video game playing has become of interest for many social scientists. Video game researchers are increasingly using online methods to gather their data. The Internet constitutes a good medium for carrying out video gaming research for the following reasons (Wood et al. 2004):

- It is accessible to gamers who are usually proficient.

- It allows large scale sample surveys to be administered.

- It can facilitate automated data inputting.

- It reduces the need for social desirability and therefore increases validity in the case of self-report.

- It provides a potentially global pool of participants.

- Individuals who are "socially unskilled" may take part, whereas if it was offline they would not do so.

- Participant recruitment can be facilitated through advertising in various bulletin boards and web-sites.

Source: Adopted from Wood et al. (2004)

A comprehensive discussion around the advantages of online research and associated challenges is included in Appendix C.

Questionnaire Design and Item Selection

The questionnaire was designed following guidelines regarding web-surveys (Hewson et al. 2003). Moreover, the following paragraphs present the justification for the measures chosen to represent the selected constructs. Generally items were selected based on their conceptual fit with the constructs in the video game context. Items that were more inclusive, clear and represented the construct well were selected to ensure construct validity. In addition, where two items overlapped, the one that best fitted the above criteria was selected. Finally all scales used had first been published in reputable journals and were

pre-tested by a small sample of experts (academics) and non-experts (video game players). The researcher also ran a pilot survey in an online video game community similar to that of the main study.

Justification of Brand Perceived Quality Measurement

In the extension literature, brand reputation has been defined in terms of consumer perceptions of quality associated with a brand (Aaker and Keller 1990; Barone et al. 2000, p. 390). Perceived quality of the brand in extensions research is defined as 'the overall judgment about the superiority or excellence of the brand' (Zeithaml 1988; Hem, de Chernatony and Iversen 2003).

Table 5.4 Perceived Quality of the Parent Brand Measures

Aaker and Keller (1990); Sunde and Brodie (1993) measured the overall quality of the brand	Single Item measure 1= inferior, 7=superior
Keller and Aaker (1992) measured the perceived expertise of the company	Tree Item measure 1=overall low quality of products, 7=overall high quality of products 1=not at all good at manufacturing, 7=very good at manufacturing 1= overall inferior products , 7= overall superior products
Park and Kim (2001); Martinez and de Chernatony (2004) measured the perceived quality of the parent brand	Two Items measure 1=bad products, 7= good products 1= poor quality, 7=good quality
Smith and Park (1992) measured brand strength	Single Item measure 1=very low, 7=very high
Park, Kim and Kim (2002) measured perceived quality of the focal brand	Three Items measure 1=bad quality, 10=good quality 1=highly inconsistent, 10=highly inconsistent

	1=low need fulfillment, 10=high need fulfillment
	(The three items were highly correlated and combined into one composite index)
Pina, Martinez, de Chernatony and Drury (2006) measure the perceived quality of the parent brand in services	Three Items measure Worse quality/better quality than other companies Lower quality/higher quality than other companies Inconsistent quality/consistent quality
Thamaraiselvan and Raja (2008) measured the perceived quality of the parent brand in services	SERVQUAL model

As we can see from the table above, most research in field has used single or highly similar measures. In this study the measures of perceived focal brand quality are taken from Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009). The reason for choosing this scale is because these measures have a satisfactory reliability - Cronbach Alpha higher that 0.8 (Hinkin 1995; Peter 1979). In the Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) research, respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree with the statements, similar to the questionnaire design of this research. In addition, their measures were more inclusive and general and in this way managed to avoided high inter-correlation problems between items. Lastly, their measures were in accordance with Hem et al. (2003) who conceptualised perceived brand quality as the overall reputation of the brand.

Justification of Consumer-brand relationship Measurement

Following the consumer-brand relationship definition in Chapter 3, measures were selected from the study of Park et al. (2002) on the effects of brand relationship on extension acceptance. However, the measures used in this study were characterised as "crude" (Park and Kim 2001, p.184) and the relationships between the constructs "speculative" (Park et al. 2002, p.197) in nature. Therefore, in order to advance research in the field and present more valid results, we have provided a more complete definition of the construct of

consumer-brand relationship in Chapter 3 that includes the notion of the relationship as a two-way process. Measures from Monga (2002) and Veloutsou (2007) were also taken into consideration**.**

Following Fournier's (1998) conceptualisation of brand relationships, numerous researchers have adapted this scale (commitment, interdependence, trust, self-connection, intimacy, love/passion, nostalgic connection and partner quality). Thorbjornsen, Supphellen, Nysveen and Pedersen (2002) examined Fournier's (1998) scale on the internet. Park et al. (2002) in their article on the acceptance of brand extensions used eight components or dimensions previously identified in the literature. These dimensions include commitment, interdependence, self-connection, intimacy, love/passion and partner quality as conceptualised by Fournier (1998); and trust and nostalgic connection as found in other literature. In more recent research, Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004) measured relationship strength indicators (i.e., commitment, intimacy, satisfaction, self-connection and partner quality). In the current study, support was found (from the literature and the focus-groups) only for the sub-constructs of commitment, intimacy, inter-dependency and love. The remainder of the indicators were not included because: i) they were not conceptualised as dimensions of the construct (e.g., trust is seen as an antecedent to the relationship concept and satisfaction as an outcome; see Chapter 3); ii) there was no support for these dimensions in the context of the research (e.g., nostalgic connection); iii) they were not considered at all as dimensions of the relationship construct (e.g., self-concept connection) or iv) they were considered evaluative constructs of the whole relationship (e.g., partner quality).

However, even this conceptualisation would have been incomplete if we had not considered the most recent research in the field that supports the reciprocity of the relationship concept. Monga (2002) based on Fournier (1998) chose and developed statements that assess both sides of the relationship. For most items, there are two forms: one with the "brand as actor" (e.g., the brand understands me") and the other with the "consumer as actor" (e.g., I understand the brand").

In line with Fournier (1998), Veloutsou (2007) created an instrument with 13 items and measured the two dimensions of a relationship, namely, the emotional exchange (including all the emotions that the consumer may develop for the brand); and the two- way communication that was measuring the type of communication the consumer had or would have liked to have with the brand. Measures were selected from these pivotal studies in the

field in an effort to offer improved measures for this construct. The pre-test and the pilot test also helped to ensure internal consistency and validity of the scales.

Justification for Virtual Brand Tribal Community Measurement

A virtual brand tribal community is defined as a group of people with a common interest in being with other people of the same type, and a common interest in their favourite brand, which interact mainly through a specific site in cyberspace. The concept is conceptualised with four dimensions (i.e., tribalism; engagement; identification; and normative community pressure). There is no consensus in the literature regarding the definition of this concept or its dimensions (see Chapter 3). Therefore, there is no universally applicable measure. To address the measurement concerns of this concept it was necessary to review scales used in research on online communities; brand communities and tribes. This technique is very similar to Casalo, Flavia and Guinaliu (2008) in their study on virtual brand communities. The latter had to combine scales from Koh and Kim (2003) and Algesheimer (2005) on virtual communities and brand communities respectively. The qualitative study with the focus groups and the instrument preparation (pre-test and the pilot test) also helped to identify relevant items and tested for internal consistency of the constructs.

This section will discuss the measures of the four sub-constructs in detail.

Tribalism, as the phenomenon of people coming together to share common interest, was measured with items from the focus group that best described the phenomenon. Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) also developed a scale emphasising on the linking value between the members of the tribe. Tribalism was measured using 4 items.

Identification and Engagement with the community was measured with items from Koh and Kim (2003) who undertook their research in an online environment. Their research was conducted in an online video game community; and given the similarity of the context it was considered relevant. In addition, their research is considered pivotal in the area as more recent researchers in the area of online communities have used their scales (e.g., Teo et al. 2003; Casalo, Flavia and Guinaliu 2008; Lin 2007; Chu 2009);

The *Normative Community Pressure* scale was adapted from Algesheimer et al. (2005).

Justification of Perceived Fit Measurement

Perceived fit is achieved "when the consumer accepts the new product as logical and would expect it from the brand" (Tauber 1988, p. 28). Perceived fit is measured in terms of *physical similarities* and *concept consistency* between the parent brand and the extension. The definition and measures are adopted from Loken and John (1993). This scale was chosen based on high internal consistency and its popularity in the brand extension literature, and its suitability with the type of extension used in the present research. Moreover, this study argues that it is not the type of the extension that matters to success but the level of fit. In addition a recent study on brand extensions in the online video game industry has emphasised the importance and the difficulty of achieving a digital fit (Wuts et al. 2012) It was therefore, important to choose a scale that would not only measure the physical similarity but also the concept consistency between the new product and the parent brand. To reach this conclusion, however, an additional literature review on the measurement of fit was conducted (Hem and Iversen 2009). The literature review revealed that to date most research on extensions has used single item measures to capture the overall dimension of perceived similarity. Yet single items measures can easily be misinterpreted, and a major disadvantage is that they do not permit as much flexibility as multi-item measures when measuring attitudes (Hinkin 1995). Finally, concerns have been raised regarding their usefulness when applying data analysis methods of the second generation (Fornell 1982).

Furthermore, other decomposed measures of perceived similarity were also considered but were not found suitable to the type of extension investigated in the present study. For instance, measures referring to the intrinsic similarity between the parent brand and the extension (Smith and Park 1992) could not have been used here as the video game extension stimuli scenario did not offer such detailed information. In a similar vein, company competence (Hem and Iversen 2009) was not considered important in the present study as the new product belongs in the same product category as the parent brand.

Justification for the Co-Creation of Value Measurement

Studies on co-creation up to now have focused primarily on understanding and clarifying the concept. Strong empirical evidence between co-creation and key performance measures is currently lacking (Rajah, Marshall and Nam 2008). Co-creation as defined in Chapter 3 is measured in terms of *level of co-creation* and *intention to co-create*.

Level of co-creation was measured from a scale in Rajah et al. (2008), as this was the only scale found to measure the construct. In their study the authors have applied the scale to measure the success of co-creative scenarios for a travel agency. In the current study, three video game scenarios were created, each representing different levels of video game co-creation. The video game scenarios were created with the help of the focus groups with gamers, based on the conceptualisation of Bendapudi and Leone (2003) i.e., high creation from the company, low from the consumer - low level of co-creation; joint co-creation - medium level; and low creation from the company and high from the consumer - high level. Each video game scenario includes co-creation for the three components of the video game (i.e., content; music; graphics) following the conceptualisation of a video game by (Jepessen and Molin 2003; Arakji and Lang 2007).

Moreover, the study adopted a scale from Rajah et al. (2008) who measured value co-creation using scenarios designed to generate a broad range of perceptions of co-creation in the tourism industry. After reading the scenario, each respondent answered the research questions, finishing with three questions asking about their perceptions of the amount of co-creation in the scenario. The intentions to co-create value from the consumer's side were measured using a scale drawn from Bonhomme, Christodoulides and Jevons (2010) as the only scale identified.

Justification for Extension Acceptance Measurement

Consumers' evaluation of the extension's success has been conceptualised as their attitude towards the product/service and the likelihood of purchasing the product/service (Aaker and Keller 1990). It seems that just about every study measuring this construct has utilised a similar set of items. *Attitude towards the extension* was measured based on the scale of Maoz and Tybout (2002) as being the most inclusive; yet most of the scales on brand extension literature have been using the same items (although not more than three items). *Purchase intentions* was measured using the Fu et al. (2009) scale, as previous research

that measured purchase intentions of brand extensions used single item scales. Finally, both *purchase intentions* and *attitude towards the extension* are summed into one index. Similar measures were used by previous research.

Description of the Extension Stimuli Development

The use of projective scenarios is well argued in the psychology and marketing literatures and has been shown to have considerable external validity when the extension is described to the research participants, giving them enough information to make an informed judgment (Klink and Smith 2001).

In more detail, for the purpose of this study, the researcher developed scenarios to describe purchases of three products within the same product category. The scenarios were constructed to represent one of the three experimental conditions. Insights for the content of the scenarios were derived from the focus groups. The video game players were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher used a mixture of protocol and procedure techniques. The respondents were first given the questionnaire to fill in and put a tick next to the question they found difficult to understand. After the respondents returned with the questionnaire, the researcher would ask them to make general comments and suggestions on the format, structure and the language of the questionnaire. The researcher would then go through the questions the respondent has ticked and asked him whether he found the question irrelevant, difficult to understand or not well adapted to the video game context. In certain cases the respondent would volunteer to re-write the question in his own words. The researcher would keep the phrasing the same for the next respondent, but at the end of the process the latter respondent would be asked his opinion upon the newly written question by the previous respondent.

At a second stage, the scenarios were carefully tested for believability of the situation, during the pilot test process (n=82). On a seven point Likert scale (anchored 1=totally disagree, 7=totally agree) with the statement (*This video game scenario is realisable*), received ratings from 4.2 to 4.5 suggesting the scenarios were believable enough to proceed to the next stage. The co-creation level manipulation was also tested using Rajah et al. (2008) scale (on a 7-point Likert scale anchored 1=totally disagree, 7=totally agree) and received average mean ratings 3.1 for extension one; 3.8 for extension two; 4.3 for extension three.

Each subject was exposed to three potential extension video game scenarios of their favourite brand, but each scenario contained a different level of co-creation. Each scenario reflected one of the three experimental conditions. The order of presentation of the scenarios was randomised for each subject to overcome challenges arising from the carryover effect. The scenarios were crafted with one important consideration, the level of co-creation: in all parts of the video game i.e., the core game which is the characters and the plot; the covering of the game (i.e., graphics and music); the communities attached to it, and other websites with statistics related to the game. The three scenarios are in questionnaire Appendix D. After reading a scenario, each respondent answered the research questions, finishing with three questions concering their perceptions of the amount of co-creation in the scenario they had read (Rajah et al., 2008).

In more detail, customer participation in the co-creation process is defined as the degree to which the customer is involved in taking actions to co-create the product. Similar to the categorisation of customer participation developed by Meuter and Bitner (1998), co-creation efforts are classified into three types based on the degree of participation: high company–low consumer co-creation; joint co-creation between the company and the consumer; and high consumer-low company co-creation. Consistent with prior research, the scenarios described the following co-creation conditions (Bendapudi and Leone 2003):

High company-low consumer co-creation is when the product is delivered entirely or mostly by the company and its employees; customers may only use the product and at the very least provide input into the design of the product. In the present study consumers were presented with a product scenario where they only had a very limited input of customised ideas into the design of the product.

Joint co-creation is the situation in which both customers and employees participate in the process of co-creation. When customers participate in the co-creation, they serve as "partial employees", contributing effort, time, or other resources to undertake the co-creation functions (Claycomb et al., 2001; Schneider and Bowen 1995; Dong et al., 2008). Companies may adopt a variety of methods working with customers, such as instructing them step-by step through a call centre via Internet or onsite; offer customised choices that require small modifications by the customer. In the present study consumers were presented with a product scenario where they were offered the opportunity to jointly co-

create with the company in all three parts that comprise a video game (i.e., content; graphics, music and statistics related to the game).

High consumer-low company co-creation is when the co-creation actions are made entirely by customers with no or limited contribution from the company or its employees. This could occur when the customer keeps trying and eventually creates the product himself. The "performers" could be customer involved, other customers or a third party requested by the customer. As long as the company is not involved in the co-creation process (entirely or jointly), co-creation efforts directed by the customer are considered high customer co-creation (Dong et al., 2008). The key is that the customer creates the product independently of the company. In the present study consumers were presented with a product scenario where were ask to create their own product that would use to play with their friends, hence create their own community; while the company would only get involved into offering the tools to achieve this.

Background Information

Background information was collected in order to identify specific respondent characteristics that may have affected the results of the experiment. Other researchers have used similar characteristics (e.g., Leong et al. 1997). General information about the respondent was included, namely, occupation, sex, marital status, age, highest academic qualification, approximate off-road usage and hobbies and interests.

Form of Response

Once the content of each question is determined, the researcher has to determine the form of response for each question. There are two types of questions: open-ended and closed-ended. In open ended questions individuals are free to answer in their own words. There were no open-ended questions is the questionnaire. Closed-ended questions can be multichotomous, dichotomous or scalar. The respondent is asked to choose the alternative that best represents his/her views on the subject or signify the degree to which he agrees or disagrees with a statement.

Moreover, closed-ended questions have four main benefits to the researcher in this study (Hague 1994):
1. They save time as the respondents only need to tick the right box.

2. The respondent does not have to think a lot about the reply options

3. Data preparation is simpler as there is no need to code up a large number of open-ended questions

4. Respondents' answers are directly comparable which facilitates the use of further analytical methods.

On the other hand, open–ended questions can be time consuming, tiresome and cause categorisation problems when preparing for the analysis. In addition, respondents in self-administered questionnaires are found to be briefer in writing than in speaking, and therefore open-ended questions would not be appropriate (Malhotra 1999).

Wording

If questions are worded ambiguously, respondents may refuse to answer which can cause non-response bias or answer incorrectly which can produce a measurement error. Therefore, to avoid misunderstandings a number of rules were followed. The researcher tried to use simple words; to avoid ambiguous, double barrelled or leading questions; and to avoid implicit assumptions and generalisations. An effort was made for every question to be as specific as possible, while longer clauses where used wherever necessary to increase clarity. The pre-test was also there to check for difficult wording (Churchill and Iacobucci 2005).

Question Sequence

The order of the questions is crucial to the completion of the questionnaire by the respondents. Therefore, the guidelines offered by a number of researchers were followed (e.g., Churchill and Iacobucci 2005). In general, the questionnaire opened with a simple, interesting question to capture respondents' attention and increase their confidence in filling the questionnaire. Broad questions were asked first and then narrowed down. Every section of the questionnaire asked questions about a different aspect of the topic. Demographic questions were asked at the end.

Physical Characteristics

A respondent-friendly questionnaire design aims to decrease the occurrence of measurement and non-response error in a survey. To do this, a respondent-friendly questionnaire design must take into consideration the following: i) Some respondents may be unable to receive and respond to questionnaires with advanced technological features attached; ii) The structure of the questionnaire has to be understandable to the respondents; iii) Web questionnaires may be used in mixed mode survey situations and, therefore, questions should be posed in a manner in which other survey modes can be used. Overall, the current research incorporated the principles for designing web questionnaires developed by Dillman (2000) whose work is fundamental in conducting quantitative research in an online environment.

Questionnaire length is an important part of the physical characteristics of the questionnaire. For instance, the meta-analyses of Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000) and Sheehan (2001) on non-experimental studies found no significant link between questionnaire length and response rates in web surveys. Yet more recent research suggests that a variation in non-response rates and break offs can be found when there is a difference between the actual and the expected questionnaire length. Findings suggest that the length may have a significant effect on response rates, depending on how respondents learn about the length. When respondents were informed from the beginning regarding the length, they were more likely to participate, but of those who started, more respondents stayed until the end of the shorter assigned questionnaire, rather than the longer (Galesic and Bosnjak 2009).

Finally, the first page of a questionnaire is very important in order to secure an individual's co-operation to complete a questionnaire (Churchill 1999). The first page included the aim of the research, the length and administrative requirements. To enhance motivation a token of appreciation was given, a statement that there is no right or wrong answer, and that the respondents' contribution is valuable. To lend credibility to the study, the name of the university and university logo were presented on the cover page of the questionnaire.

In terms of layout, there are two main areas the researcher should take into consideration when designing a web survey: information organisation and navigational guides (Dillman 2000). For the former the researcher tried to keep the questionnaire clear, concise, easy to understand and easy to follow. The instructions for the questions were in bold letters in order to stand out. For the latter, individual questions were numbered in their relevant

sections in order to make the questionnaire easy to fill in, edit, code and tabulate (Malhotra 1999; Churchill and Iacobucci 2005). Similarly, a progress bar was available to keep the respondents informed regarding their progress and motivate them to finish the survey. Finally, graphical symbols guided respondents to next and previous page.

Re-examine and revise steps

Once the first draft was developed, the questionnaire was then re-examined to ensure there were no ambiguous, offensive or leading questions included. The researcher followed closely the guidelines explained in the previous section. The questionnaire was then ready for the pre-test. The questionnaire was re-examined once the first draft had been developed. Each question was reviewed to ensure it was not ambiguous, offensive, leading or bias inducing (Churchill 1999). The final version of the questionnaire was then ready for pretesting, by a group of academics (experts in the field) and a group of non-academics (consumers).

Questionnaire Pre-testing

A vital part of a questionnaire development process is pre-testing (Reynolds and Diamantopoulos 1998). Pre-testing in the current study was undertaken after the researcher had developed the initial questionnaire, but before the questionnaire was used in the main survey. Questionnaire pre-testing helps to determine the potential effectiveness of the questionnaire (Reynolds et al. 1993). It is considered vitally important to pre-test novel research projects (Peterson 1988). The present research attempts to fill the gap in the existing literature by empirically testing the effects of relational elements, co-creation of value, perceived fit and brand reputation upon extension evaluations; and therefore pre-testing the questionnaire was considered an essential part of the process. The pre-test was carried out with a small set of experts and non-experts aiming to identify potential measurement errors (Malhotra 1999). It is generally agreed that a questionnaire should not be used in a field survey without adequate pretesting of the instrument (Churchill 1999; Malhotra 1999; Reynolds and Diamantopoulos 1998).There are five basic questions the researcher should answer before proceeding with the pretesting (Hunt et al. 1982; Grime 2001):

1) Which specific items should be included in the pre-test if not the questionnaire as a whole?

In order to select the most relevant items for every construct, a number of scales were considered. Items in the questionnaire were pre-tested for their relevance, clarity and language. Also, the questionnaire as a whole was pre-tested for relevance, structure and layout.

2) Which method is most suitable to conduct the pre-test?

There are three common methods of pretesting administration, namely, personal interviews, telephone interviews and mail self-reports. E-mail self-reports were chosen as the easiest and quickest method.

3) Who will conduct the pretesting?

Questionnaires were sent to academics by e-mail (Malhotra 1999). Due to time and cost, the researcher was responsible for conducting the pre-test, including all communications.

4) What will be the profile of the pre-test subjects?

According to Churchill (1999) the pre-test respondents should be similar to the target population. Yet awareness of questionnaire design techniques is an important factor when detecting errors (Diamantopoulos et al. 1994). For these reasons, the questionnaire used in this research study was first pretested by 'experts' and then by 'non-experts' to enable a wider detection of errors. Diamantopoulos et al. (1994) suggest that expertise in this case is determined by knowledge of the questionnaire design process rather than the research area.

5) What should the sample size of the pre-test be?

The size of the pre-test sample should be considered in combination with the length and the complexity of the instrument and the target population (i.e., when the instrument is very long and complex a larger sample may be needed). Taking this rule of thumb into consideration, the researcher decided to pre-test the questionnaire on 6 'experts' and 7 'non-experts'. These relatively small numbers were considered acceptable, bearing in mind the scales in the questionnaires had been previously validated in other research settings, and to the fact that a pilot-test of the survey followed.

Expert pre-test

The final instrument was presented to twelve experts, six of whom agreed to pre-test the questionnaire. The majority of respondents were university lecturers, professors or researchers who had used questionnaires as part of their own previous research. The reason for choosing academic experts instead of industry experts is that they are assumed to have a more in-depth knowledge about questionnaire design, whilst also having knowledge on the subject area. The pre-tests were carried out between June and July 2010.

Non-expert pre-test

The recommended changes were implemented into the next questionnaire following the experts' pre-test. This revised questionnaire was then further pretested on a convenience sample of seven video gamers, all of whom completed the two questionnaires over a two week period in July 2010. The video game players were students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and were used to make comments on the wording, structure and layout of the questionnaire. The video game players were interviewed by the researcher, by using a mixture of protocol and debriefing procedures. The debriefing method is where the respondents are asked to fully complete the questionnaire, while the interviewer makes careful observations; and the protocol method is where the respondent is asked to think aloud whilst he/she is answering each question (Hunt et al 1982; Diamantopoulos et al. 1994; Malhotra 1999). Respondents were asked to think aloud only when a particular question was difficult to understand or unclear. However, when the respondents had finished the questionnaire they were debriefed. Debriefing included asking questions on the length, layout, terminology, and question structure of the new instrument. The results suggested that the questionnaire had been greatly improved in terms of layout and Flow.

Questionnaire Pilot Testing

After the pre-test of the questionnaire and the necessary changes were completed, the questionnaire was ready for pilot testing. Pilot testing of questionnaires (Aaker, Kumar and Day 1998; Malhotra 1999; Gill and Johnson 1991) has become a well-accepted methodological approach for correcting errors and biases in the questionnaire. It has been recommended that "measures developed for a particular subject population may have to be redesigned for other populations and investigated before administration" (Churchill and Peter 1984, p. 370). Furthermore, a pilot-study is often recommended either when

constructing a new scale or revising an existing one to confirm that a) the scale uses clear and appropriate language, b) has no obvious errors or omissions, and c) has at least adequate psychometric properties before it is used. The pilot study also assists in estimating approximate response rate and examines the achievability of the study (Johanson and Brooks 2009).

Social science literature has surprisingly few sample size suggestions for pilot studies; however, some researchers give some relevant suggestions. For example, Isaac and Michael (1995) and Hill (1998) suggested that samples with Ns between 10 and 30 have many practical advantages such as simplicity, easy calculation, and the ability to test hypotheses. Treece and Treece (1982), referring to piloting an instrument, noted that for a project with "100 people as the sample, a pilot study participation of 10 subjects should be a reasonable number" (p.176).

Taking a step forward, Hertzog (2008) suggested that the sample size depends on the purpose of the pilot study. For instrument development, Hertzog (2008) proposed a sample of 25 to 40; for intervention efficacy pilots 20-25, given reasonable effect size; and 30 to 40 per group for pilot studies comparing groups. For accurate and precise parameters in pilot studies, samples are required that are both representative of the population and sufficiently large, respectively. The implication is that we need to conduct pilot studies with a sufficient number of participants who serve as an accurate representation of our population of interest. The nature of the sample, rather than its size, has the largest impact on the accuracy of parameter estimates.

Light, Singer, and Willett (1990) stated the following:

"Be sure the sample that your pilot fully represents your chosen target population. You must evaluate your instruments in a context that makes the results of the pilot directly generalizable to your ultimate study. Reliability and validity coefficients must be portable between the pilot and future studies" (p.215-216).

Aaker et al. (1998), as well as others, recommended a reasonable sample size, representative of the main sample, to be used for an initial pilot of the questionnaire. In the present research, the pilot study was designed to establish that the survey instrument was working satisfactorily; that the data collection method and incentive approach were yielding sufficient response levels; and that the analysis techniques were the right ones for

this survey instrument. As such, the researcher utilised the questionnaire developed through the pre-tests and collected and analysed an initial 82 questionnaires from an online community with similar characteristics with the target population.

Pilot study sample size will depend on the particular purpose of the pilot study. Because the precision of our parameter estimates increases as sample size increases, all else being equal, larger samples are always better. The rate of increase in precision, however, is nonlinear. Therefore, the main criterion of maximum information with minimum cost remains.

The pilot test sample size of 82 is in accordance with authors' recommendations as discussed above, as well as with the purpose of the study which was to validate existing scales in the context of the research. To achieve this goal, preliminary item analyses, estimates of internal consistency, and proportions of persons responding to particular options were analysed. Many of the common validity issues were not addressed (such as dimensionality, group differences, and multi-trait, multi-method analyses), because appropriate analyses for validity studies would clearly require larger samples than commonly used in pilot studies for initial instrument development. In addition, the researcher used existing scales with high internal consistency. Finally, the questionnaire was amended and standardised for field work application.

5.4.4 Process of Sampling Decisions

Prior to conducting the survey, particular sampling issues had to be taken into account. This study follows the sampling design procedures proposed by Aaker, Kumar and Day (2007), Churchill (1999) and Malhotra (1996).

Process 1: Define the Target Population
An essential first step in conducting the survey research is to define the target population. The target population is "the collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made" (Malhotra 1996, p. 360). More specifically, the population comprises all the members of the group that the researcher is concerned with and about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions (Burgess, 2001). For the present study, the target population includes all the video game

players who were members of the European World of Warcraft online community who log into the game through a UK server.

Justification for the Choice of the Industry

The video game industry is not often used for studies in brand extension literature. However, currently it is important to shift our interest and undertake research in this sector as it has been achieving exceptional levels of growth since 2007 (Keynote 2011). Moreover, recent breakthroughs in technology and broadband infrastructure development have rendered interactive online games a major portion of the global entertainment industry (Gao 2005; Smed et al. 2002; Lin Chiu and Tsai 2008). Video game playing is a psychological and sociological phenomenon that is increasingly becoming the centre of attention of many social scientists (Wood, Griffiths and Eatough 2004).

The video gaming industry has grown significantly in recent years due to a number of technological advancements and changes in consumer trends. The adoption of high-speed internet has increased the accessibility of online gaming, such as massively multiplayer online gaming (MMOG). Online gaming, whether through consoles or PCs, requires a high speed connection, which was not widely available until recently. Furthermore, the customer base has matured. The average age of a gamer is 29 years old. This means that the average gamer has more income that historically when gamers used to be children.The video game industry can be seen as a prototype in provider-user interaction and a contemporary example of value creation with highly dedicated users and well established communities.

Extension Strategies in the Video Game Industry

As the video game has become a popular entertainment medium, companies are increasingly pursuing extension strategies (e.g., Lord of the Rings film series, Lord of the Rings massively multiplipers online role playing game series). A notable example of category- line extensions constitutes Star Wars brand which has extended from the film in (1977) to comic books, television series, and computer-video games and has launched more than 50 video games during the last twenty years. Similarly, Harry Potter brand started from the book industry in (1997) and has extended into the film and the video game industry. Other leading brands and their extensions within the video game insutry are:

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Nitendo Wii, Nitendo 3DS; Sony Playstation PS4, Sony Playstation PSVita, Sony Playstation PSN, Sony Playstasion PS2; Microsoft Xbox, Microsoft Xbox 360; Sega Mega Drive, Sega Saturn. However, literature on game design and branding is almost silent on video game extensions and challenges associated with it (Wuts, Person Hultink and Brands 2012). As video games moved into the mainstream, the way in which games are developed and sold changed dramatically. In the past, games were mainly produced from concept to completion by small studios of independent developers. However, due to the sophisticated technology of the current (seventh) generation of video-game consoles, such as the Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation 3, and Microsoft Xbox 360, the costs of video-game development have risen dramatically. In response to rising development costs and increasing competition, game development often harnesses existing brands from outside the video-game industry in order to provide a popular setting for game play. In doing so, a critical issue in creating a successful gaming experience lies in achieving a better understanding of extensions. In developing a video-game extension, a key goal for both brand owners and game developers is to extend the positive associations people have with a brand to the digital domain by incorporating the core brand experience into the game play and extending it. However, this is easier said than done (Wuts et al. 2012).

A case in point is the numerous attempts made to use Garfield, the gluttonous and lazy cartoon cat, as the main character for a video game. For the handheld Nintendo DS alone, three different video games featuring Garfield have been launched in recent years, but none of them was a success. While part of the problem may lie in poor marketing and/or distribution, a more likely reason is that the game has nothing in common with the original Garfield. So although video games are an appealing medium for brand extensions, entering this domain is a challenging design management task; in the process of switching modalities, developers must ensure their success in the marketplace. This study presents five areas of interest in designing an extension strategy in the video game industry (i.e., the perceptions of fit between the new product and the extension; the gamers' relationship with the brand; the gamers' relationships with other gamers' admirers of the same brand; and the gamers' intention to co-create value). The video game industry is particularly important when attempting to study the antecedents to extension success in an online environment. In particular, brands in this industry are continually seeking extension opportunities (e.g., The World of Warcraft – WoW - since its launch in 2004 has released 4 extensions). Future research should operationalise and empirically test the relationships between the perceptual antecedents and user trust in an online game (Gao 2005; Chen 2012). The amenity of business opportunities has driven investigation of reasons behind

the success of on-line games. However, empirical study of the factors governing user adoption of on-line games is still limited (Hsu and Lu 2004; Daria and Wiers 2012).

Co-Creation of Value in the Video Game Industry

The issue of customers entering the realm of the firm is not new, either to marketing theory or to practitioners. For many years established marketing thought holds that a customer may be seen as involved in the production process as a co-producer (e.g., Grönroos 1978; Häkansson 1982; Gummesson 1987); or may – from a service as a dominant logic perspective – be seen, more or less by default, as engaged in the value creation process as a co-creator and beneficiary of value (e.g., Vargo and Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2008). However, service research has not extensively considered or discussed the user as a possible value proposer (Flint and Mentzer, 2006; Ballantyne et al. 2011).

Since the mid-1990s, a fairly recent practice in the video game industry is the rise of game players as developers of game content. The rise of video game players as fourth-party developers of game content allows for more open source models of game design. Game players create user modifications (mods), which in some cases become just as popular, maybe even more popular, than the original game created. An example of this is the game Counter-strike, which began as a mod of the video game Half-Life and eventually became a very successful published game in its own right.

The community of modifiers is expected to grow too as the number of those involved will expand as more games offer modifying opportunities and as the international community of gamers rise. This will successfully add a new section to the game industry value chain, and as it continues to mature it will be integrated itself into the overall industry. Consequently, this contrasts Drucker's (1988, 2007) initial use of the orchestrating metaphor, where the manager was illustrated as a composer and orchestrator of a score that was used for conducting the orchestra: that is, for conducting the firm. Value creation, however, is an interactive endeavour involving actors outside the boundaries of the firm, and value-in-use (Vargo and Lusch 2004) emerges outside and possibly even distant from the providing firm's control. The *Counter-Strike* case provides an extreme example of this.

The foundation for value creation (Grönroos 2009) – that is, the game with its bundled toolkit (see, e.g., von Hippel 2001; Jeppesen 2005) – offered the means for modifying and

further developing the experienced value. Consequently, the initial value proposition provided the user with the possibility to create an entirely different experience, which eventually was presented as a novel value proposition beyond the control of the developing firm. This video game example thus illustrates a change in traditional buyer-seller interaction; the initial value proposer (the firm) became the value "proposee" when the initial beneficiary (the user) became the value proposer as the process of value creation proceeded.

Using examples from the video game industry, the purpose of this study is to present an empirically founded model that will examine consumers' actual intention to co-create value and level of preferable co-creation. Hence, the investigation strives to elaborate on the issue of value creation in business environments (e.g., Vargo and Lusch 2004; Sheth and Uslay 2007; Grönroos 2008; Vargo 2008; Grönroos and Ravald 2009) by analyzing examples from an industry in which the value proposing role is interchangeable. The rationale for this research is rooted in the notion of firms and users creating value through joint endeavours (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2008a), and the contradiction between the service logic perspective of value creation and the traditional view on firm boundaries (e.g. Coase 1937; Williamson 1979; Grant, 1996).

Apart from future research focusing on other industries or other interactive counterparts, an in-depth study of a single firm within the video game industry can possibly shed further light on the nature of value emergence. By applying a practice perspective to such an investigation (see e.g., Schau et al. 2009), empirical insights into the orchestrating firm, and the role of the conductor, might thereby be gained (Gidhagen, Ridell, Sorhammar 2011).

The importance of the video game industry in the global economy

The video game industry (formally referred to as interactive entertainment) is the economic sector involved with the development, marketing and sale of video and computer games to millions of people worldwide. There are over 11 countries with revenues of over $1 billion. In only a few decades, video games have become a major force in the entertainment industry, currently matching the music and movie industries. The world video gaming industry is predicted to record 9% yearly growth through 2013 (Business Insights). In

Europe it is the fastest-growing component of the international media sector. In the UK the video gaming industry surpassed the music industry in gross sales in 2008 (Euromonitor International 2009).

Gartner (the technology research company) announced that the video game industry is expected to continue growing rapidly, with game-related spending reaching a three digit billion $ number by 2015 (Bilton 2011). In addition and contrary to common speculation, the video game industry does better during recessions. As counterintuitive as it may sound, the increasing costs for entertainment have encouraged people to purchase games that may be more expensive than the average movie ticket, but last for longer. For instance, while an average movie may last for two to three hours, a new game can take 100 hours to finish.

Video games emerged as a form of niche entertainment for a predominantly male youth audience in the 1970s and 1980s. The video game industry of today looks nothing like it did 10 years ago. Gone are low-tech games and disconnected users. Today's video game players are of all ages, demographic and geographic backgrounds. Playing video games is not just for children anymore. The stereotypes of video games being the domain of teenage boys, as well as being ultra-violent, are changing. For instance, there have been some unsubstantiated allegations, albeit anecdotal, of a link between video games and a number of mass shootings in Norway (Andre Brevvik), Colorado (Aurora shooting) and Connecticut (Sandy Hook Elementary Massacre). Yet, in a research conducted in the United States, households rate playing video games as the most fun entertainment activity, over watching television, surfing the Internet, reading books, and going to or renting movies (Keynote 2011). Gamers are more likely to be in the older age range of young professionals who can afford to purchase games and consoles. The average gamer has been playing for roughly 12 years.

The market has matured and the average game player is 29 years old in the UK (Keynote 2011). The video game industry has become a mature industry, dominated by mainstream content (Binken and Stremersch 2009). The business of publishing video games is highly similar to that of other software markets, such as CDs, (e)books, DVDs, radio shows, videocassettes, and television shows (e.g., Greco 2000; Komiya and Litman 1990; Williams 2002; Binken and Stremersch 2009).

We have also witnessed how producers are seeking to further broaden the market appeal of video games by enhancing the experience with new interactive concepts, such as the Wii

balance board and the Xbox Kinect. Nowadays, gamer is a devoted player logging an average of 7 hours a week playing games. This indicates a dedicated player who will continue to buy games in the years to come. Online gaming and mobile gaming are likely to be the key drivers of the growth in this market, facilitated by the increasing internet penetration and internet speed. In addition, increasing time is expected to be being spent online by internet users; and Internet penetration worldwide is expected to be more than 30% in 2012.

MMOGs (Massively multiplayer online games) - Dominating the online games market

MMOG refers to a video game which can simultaneously be played by players across the globe. The MMOGs have gained significant popularity in the past few years due to factors such as the rise of social gaming and increasing broadband penetration. Western Europe has been one of the fastest growing video gaming markets over the past five years, expanding at a rate of approximately 22.6% per annum over the period 2003-2008, from $5.0bn to $13.9bn. Online gaming and mobile gaming are likely to be the key drivers of the growth in this market. The console gaming market, while still strong will slow and PC gaming is expected to decline rapidly (Keynote 2011).

Justification for the Choice of the Video Game

Table 5.1 Justification for the Choice of the Video Game

Criteria	Video Game Characteristics
Reputation	The World of Warcraft (WoW) by Blizzard Entertainment is the most popular massive multiplayer online role playing game with strategy elements.
Community Spirit	The game currently has one of the most participative virtual game communities where users create alliances to survive in the game; exchange art work and stories.
Accessibility	"WoW's most popular claim to fame is its accessibility (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell and

	Moore 2006).
Co-creation of value potential	WoW is the genre's first breakthrough hit. The game is designed in such a way that its client-side user interfaces are open to extension and modification by the user community (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell and Moore 2006).
Consumer-brand relationships	Although we were unable to find empirical research indicating a consumer to video game brand relationship, we found evidence of high interactivity with this product category which in turn may indicate a relationship with the brand in question. It is estimated that players, who on average are 26 years old, typically spend 22 hrs. per week in online role playing games (Yee 2006). Another study on the use of the internet showed that PC owners spent an average of 20 hrs. per week on the internet for personal use, 48% of which was to play online games (Choi and Kim 2004). However, a study on interpersonal relationships and social anxiety found many online game players spend inordinate amounts of time in their favourite virtual world (Lo et al. 2005; Daria and Wiers 2012).

Process 2: Determine the Sampling Frame

The sampling frame is a list of population elements utilised to acquire a sample (Aaker, Kumar and Day, 2007). It is a representation of the components of the target population (Malhotra, 1996). In other words, it is the real set of units from which a sample has been

drawn, and must be representative of the target population. For this study, the available sampling frame can be found from the company's data base, which, however, the researcher did not have access to.

Process 3: Selecting a Sampling Procedure

According to Collis and Hussey (2003, p.100), a sample is "made up of some of the members of the population". Owing to various restraints relating to time, money and other resources, it is not easy to examine all the members of the population (Burgess 2001). Broadly speaking, sampling techniques may be classified as probability and non-probability sampling (David and Sutton 2004; Hussey and Hussey 1997; Malhotra 1996; Moutinho, Good and Davies 1998).

Non-Probability Sampling versus Probability Sampling

When it is difficult to identify all probable cases in the population and where it is impossible to construct a sampling frame, then non-probability samples can be employed (Saunders, Lewis and Thronhill, 2003).

For the current study, owing to the absence of usable sampling frames, the European World of Warcraft community website was chosen as the location for data collection. One may argue that this is not probability sampling. Although the research could not apply probability sampling techniques, Malhotra (1996) pointed out that non-probability sampling can be applied if the study's interest depends on the proportion of the sample that can express various attitudes or provide diverse responses. Other studies on communities have also used a convenience sample (e.g., Seay, Jerome, Sang Lee, Kraut 2004).

Process 4: Determining the Sample Size

Determining sample size is a vital issue since samples that are too large may waste resources, time, and money, while samples that are too small may cause erroneous results. The sample size refers to the number of constituents to be comprised in the research (Malhotra 1996). The decision about sample size involves several concerns including cost, time, non-response rate, the number of variables, the nature of the research, heterogeneity of the population, and type of analysis (Bryman, 2004; Malhotra, 1996).

A general rule of thumb, in quantitative research, it is suggested that the larger the sample size, the smaller the sampling error, and the more precise the results of the survey (Lewis 1984). In other words, increasing the sample size can result in decreasing the sampling

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error. Researchers (e.g., Hinkin, Tracey and Enz, 1997; Tinsley and Tinsley 1987) have stated that a positive relationship exists between the number of items and the sample size, representing a ratio of at least 1:4 or 1:5. In this study, sample size was determined based on combinations of commonly used criteria, namely, estimate of variance, precision confidence levels, and acceptable margin of error (Glenn 2003). For populations that are large, Cochran (1977) developed an equation to yield a representative sample for proportions. Sample sizes were derived using the following equation:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \ (pq)}{e^2}$$

Where

n = the sample size

z = standard error associated with the selected level of confidence

p = estimate of variance

q = 1-p

e = acceptable margin of error

For the present study, a ±5% precision level, a 50% variance and a 95% confidence level, a sample of a least 384 questionnaires was required.

Given that in more practical terms, the researcher envisages that the population value is estimated to be found in 95 per cent of the repeated samplings (Burns and Bush 2000), the current research is only concerned about a 95 per cent level of confidence. As there is no source available to indicate the variability, this research assumes there is greatest variation (50%). The level of precision (accuracy) is also known as sample accuracy. It refers to how close the sample's statistic (for example, sample mean) is to the true population value it represents (Malhotra 1996). This research would like the result to be accurate at the ±5 per cent level. Five per cent is considered acceptable because: first of all, there is not much more accuracy possible (Burns and Bush 2000); secondly, to increase accuracy by one per cent demands a great amount of effort, time and will increase the cost noticeably. (Table 5.6) and (Figure 5.5) highlight the increase of sample size related to one per cent of increased accuracy. According to this table, 216 extra questionnaires would be required (around 56% of 384) in order to increase accuracy by one per cent. Clearly, the extra cost and effort involved in one per cent of accuracy outweighs the gain. Accordingly, the target sample size for the current research is 384.

Table 5.6 Sample Size and Level of Accuracy

Accuracy	6%	5%	3%	2%
Sample Size	267	384	600	1067
Increased Size	------------	117	216	467

Adopted from Burns and Bush (2000)

Figure 5.5 Sample Size and Level of Accuracy
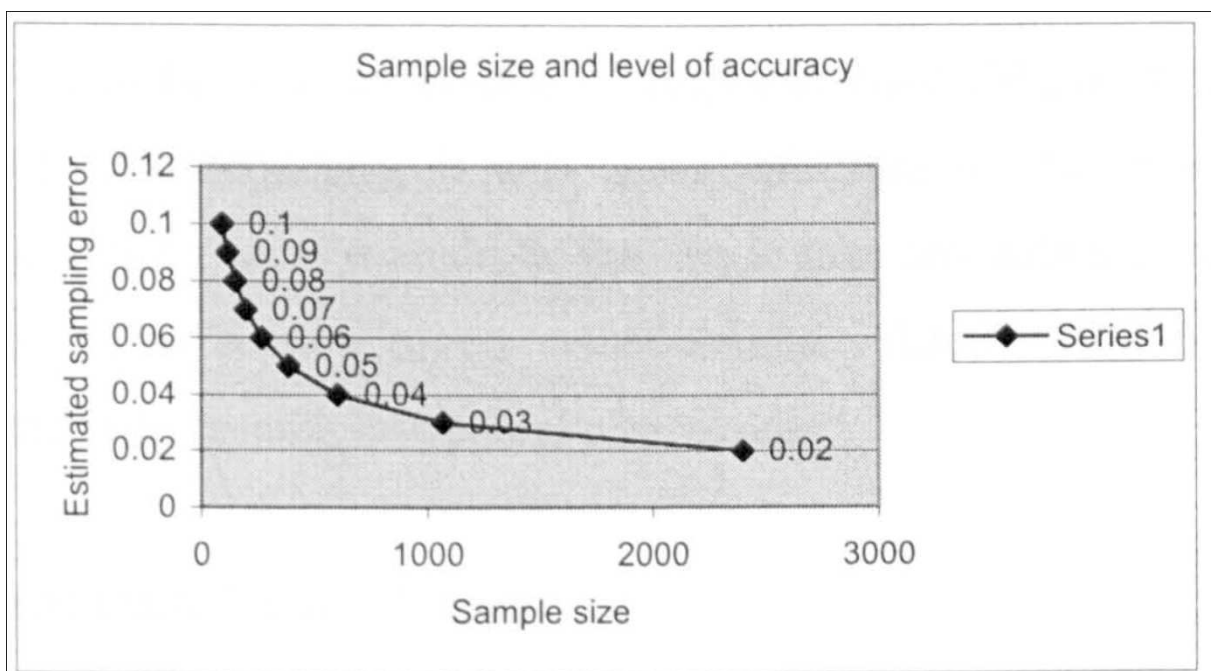
Adopted from Burns and Bush (2000)

Process 5 Determine the Sample Unit

The sampling unit is the basic unit of the population subjects to be sampled (Tull and Hawkins 1993). How the sampling unit is specified, and consequently the discussion of sample selection, is discussed in the sample design. As mentioned previously, the sampling unit for this study is every individual member of the European World of Warcraft community who logs onto the game from a UK server.

Process 6 Execution of the Sampling Process

Convenience sampling helped the researcher to gather useful data and information that would otherwise not have been possible using probability sampling techniques, which require more formal access to lists of populations. A common pitfall of the convenience sample is that it can lead to the under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample. For this reason the present study has conducted a statistical non-bias test (Chapter 6). In online research in particular, even if the sample frame is available it would be impossible to distinguish between "active" and "non-active" or "not so active members" at a particular period of time. Therefore, a convenience sample is the only realistic option.

The research also used a snowball sampling technique. This is often used in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access (Malhotra 1996). As sample members are not selected from a sampling frame, a variation of snowball sampling called respondent-driven sampling has been shown to allow researchers to make asymptotically unbiased estimates from snowball samples under certain conditions. Snowball sampling and respondent-driven sampling also allows researchers to make estimates about the social network connecting the hidden population. To be successful, it requires previous contacts within the target areas, and the ability to keep the information flow going throughout the target group. By targeting only a few select people, it is not always indicative of the actual trends within the result group. To help mitigate these risks, it is important not to rely on any one single method of sampling to gather data about a target sector (Malhotra 1996).

Recruitment of the respondents was conducted via posts on forums and web pages devoted to the massive multiplayer role-playing game community at large. A similar process for recruiting video gamers was followed by Seay et al. (2004). Overall, in the present study 12 online guilds (forums) volunteered to participate. The researcher first sent an e-mail letter to the guild leader to ask for permission (see Appendix D). The guild leaders that gave their permission were then asked to support the research by posting the questionnaire on the guilds' fora. The survey was published on the guilds' general conversation fora and members were invited to fill in the survey and give their comments. A number of steps were followed to ensure a high response rate, as described above. The researcher also tried to ensure a high response rate by immediately answering any questions from respondents,

welcoming comments and ideas, continually advertising the survey, and stressing the importance of the gamers' participation for the advancement of the game concept.

5.5 Selection of Appropriate Data Analysis Technique

In seeking to meet the statistical objectives of the research, two main statistical analysis techniques were considered; firstly, structural equation modeling, and, secondly, multiple regression analysis. Both these techniques will be briefly summarised below and then evaluated for their relevance to the data analysis of this research.

5.5.1 Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling is a collection of statistical techniques that allows a researcher to examine a set of relationships between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent variables. Essentially structural equation modeling is "a combination of exploratory factor analysis and multiple regression analysis" (Hair et al. 1998, p. 584 and Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001, p.653). Crucial to structural equation modeling is the development of path diagrams which allow the researcher to depict a set of hypothesised relationships between variables; hence to conduct structural equation modeling, researchers need to have some knowledge of the relationships between variables and a theory in order that a path model can be constructed (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001, p. 655-655).

Following Brannick's (1995) approach, many of his arguments highlight one major view which is that theory in organizational research is insufficiently developed to allow for the rigorous specification of structural equation models. Therefore, structural equation modeling techniques offer little hope for the advancement of knowledge. This argument stands in opposition to claims that structural equation modeling techniques represent a statistical revolution (Cliff 1983) with great promise to advance knowledge (Bentler 1980). Between these two extremes, the present study supports a more moderate position. Structural equation modeling is a statistical tool and its utility depends on the use to which it is put. Therefore, a critical evaluation of the use of structural equation modeling techniques, their applicability and usefulness is needed (Kelloway 1995).

The emphasis on the causal modeling association of structural equation modeling techniques has also been unfortunate in that it has emphasized such techniques as being different from, rather than similar to, familiar techniques such as regression analysis. Ordinary least squares regression has at least two principal forms of use, namely, prediction and explanation. Researchers use OLS to interpret regression results as indicating only an association, and imply causal assumptions that underlie their use (Kelloway 1995).

Two most possible results in testing structural equation models are that (a) a proposed model fits the data even though some parameters are non-significant and/or (b) a proposed model fits the data but some of the specified parameters are significant but opposite in direction to that predicted. In either case, the researcher's theory is disconfirmed even though the model may provide a good absolute fit to the data. Yet the fit of the model does not account for the validity of the individual predictions comprising the model. One must move beyond the assessment of global fit to truly evaluate the results of structural equation modeling (Joreskog 1993).

Moreover, Brannick (1995) has expressed the view that there is no need for 'complex' analyses such as structural equation modeling when 'simpler' analyses would answer the same question. Indeed, given the common use of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression in marketing, there is an argument for using the more common OLS approach. The single caveat that might be added to this statement is that the argument for 'simpler' analyses is that a preference for more familiar techniques is based on exposition not statistical concerns. Given the same variables measured on the same sample, it simply does not matter if one estimates a regression line using SPSS or Amos 19.

Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis aims to find the underlying structure of a set of measures, when the researcher has little or no a priori specification. By contrast, confirmatory factor analysis asks whether a specific hypothesized measurement structure, in terms of number of factors and the pattern of item-factor loadings, provides an adequate explanation of the covariance between observed variables. The researcher should choose between the techniques based on how much knowledge the researcher is willing to assume about the number of factors, and on which factors specific items should, and should not, load. The more constraints the researcher places in advance, the closer one comes to confirmatory analysis (Kelloway 1995).

The two techniques do not answer the same questions. The onus is on the researcher to choose the technique that would help in answering the research question. Knowledge advancement is achieved neither by adopting structural equation modeling nor by abandoning structural equation modeling techniques. For instance, the application of confirmatory factor analysis at an early stage of scale development can be a mistake. Even if the scale has been carefully developed and the researcher has a reasonably clear definition of the presumed factor structure, there is a strong argument for the initial use of exploratory rather than confirmatory analysis. Perhaps, most importantly, misspecification of the number of factors at an early stage of scale development will typically not be detected by confirmatory factor analysis (Kelloway 1995).

When considering the use of structural equation modeling in the context of this research, it became apparent that there was insufficient theory to develop a robust path diagram of the effect of all the constructs and sub-constructs on the dependent variable. In respect to this research the model was based upon variables suggested in several literatures that have an impact upon acceptance. However, as no previous research had included and combined all these variables in a single model of extension acceptance, there was no literature available which considered how these variables might behave or interact in a fully combined model of extension acceptance. This lack of literature meant that it was would have been difficult to build a comprehensive path diagram of all the variables identified in the chosen literatures to test through structural equation modeling. Consequently it would have been difficult to apply structural equation modeling to this research.

Finally, although structural equation modeling has become an established statistical technique over the last decade (Hair et al. 1998 and Tabachnick and Fidell 2001), very little recent research in the extensions literature has applied this technique. The lack of use of structural equation modeling by previous extension researchers would imply the limited applicability of this technique to extension research.

5.5.2 Consideration of OLS

This section provides the detailed justification of the choices of the statistical analysis techniques used for data analysis in this study. The considerations of ordinary least square (OLS), logistic regression, and log linear regression are reported in detail.

OLS regression is used to analyse part of the data. OLS requires that variables being modeled must be on a continuous scale or be recorded on at least an interval scale (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999). Though explanatory variables are also required to be continuous, multi-category ordered and unordered categorical data can legitimately be used in an OLS model subject to their being appropriately coded into a number of dichotomous `dummy' categories (Fox 1997). The explanatory variables and the response variables were measured using a multi-item five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree) in this study, with the exception of the demographic variable. OLS regression is a powerful technique for modeling continuous data, particularly when it is used in conjunction with dummy variable coding and data transformation; it can be used to both identify significant relationships (explanation) and predict values of the response variable (prediction) (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999).

Multiple regression analysis enables the examination of the nature of the relationship between a criterion (or dependent) variable and one or more explanatory (or independent) variables (Jain 1994, p. 162). More specifically it enables the prediction of the dependent variable on the basis of knowledge about independent variables (Girden 1996, p.91). Hence, multiple regressions would allow us to determine which independent variables are most important in predicting the dependent variables (extensions acceptance). It would thus enable us to illustrate the most salient model dimensions required for extension acceptance and hence fulfill the aims and objectives of the statistical analysis for this research. Further, Malhotra (1996 p.582) suggests various ways in which multiple regression analysis can be used, which are displayed in (Table 5.7) below, along with their relevance to this research.

Table 5.7 Uses of Multiple Regression and Relevance to this Research

Use of Multiple Regression	Relevance to this Research
To establish whether a connection exists between the independent and the dependent i.e., the independent variables explain a	To establish whether the independent variables arising from the brand extensions and relationship marketing and S-D logic

significant variation in the dependent variable.	literatures have any relationship with the dependent variable (i.e. consumer acceptance of the extension product).
To establish the strength of the relationship i.e., how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent.	To establish which independent variables are most relevant in the prediction of the dependent variable.
To establish the type or form of the relationship.	To test for direct relationships between the independent variables and the dependent; to predict brand (line) extension success.
To estimate the value of the dependent.	To establish for a given level of the independent variables, what the predicted value of the dependent variable will be; or how much each extension acceptance will be affected.
To control for the effect of other independent variables when evaluating the effect of a specific variable or a set of variables on the dependent.	To establish which of the independent variables will contribute to the prediction of the dependent variable. For instance, in the present study the *intention to co-create* independent variable was *not* found to contribute to the prediction of consumers' acceptance of the extension product in any of the three models.

Adapted from Malhotra (1996)

Hair et al. (1998, p. 141) also suggest that multiple regression analysis is "by far the most widely used and versatile dependence technique, applicable in every facet of business decision making. Its uses range from the most general problems to the most specific, in each instance relating a factor (or factors) to a specific outcome". Hence, multiple regression analysis is an established and recognised data analysis technique, which is clearly appropriate and useful to this research.

The majority of previous brand extension research has also utilised multiple regression analysis for data analysis. However, not only does the use of multiple regression analysis

by previous research suggest the suitability of its use in the context of extension research, but also the use of the same statistical technique in this research as has been used in previous studies enabled us to compare the formulation and results of two. The use of multiple regression analysis also allowed us to benchmark and improve our statistical methodology.

However, there are limitations of multiple regression as Malhotra (1996, p582) notes: "Although the independent variables may explain the variation in the dependent variable, this does necessarily imply causation. The use of the terms dependent or criterion variables and independent or predictor variables in the regression analysis arises from the mathematical relationship between the variables. These terms do not imply that the criterion variables are dependent on the independent variables in a causal sense". Hence, what Malhotra (1996) is highlighting is the fact that regression analysis is merely concerned with the nature and degree of association between the variables and does not imply or assume any casual relationship between the two.

5.5.3 Data Analysis Technique Conclusion

Having reviewed the appropriateness of the two data analysis techniques selected for this research, it is evident that there would be a number of pitfalls if structural equation modeling was applied as the data analysis technique of this research. As a consequence structural equation modeling was discounted. Following an examination of both techniques, multiple regression analysis appeared to be more appropriate to achieving the statistical objectives of the research, and hence was chosen. Once again, multiple regression analysis is used to regress the likelihood of certain variables affecting consumer acceptance of extension products. For economy's sake only the results obtained from the final stage of multiple regressions are reported here.

5.6 Conclusion

The chapter has presented the industry background and the underlying reasoning for its choice. The present study is realised in the context of the video game industry. Recent breakthroughs in technology (Web 2) and the broadband infrastructure have rendered

interactive online games a major contributor to the global entertainment industry. Video gaming in Europe is the fastest growing component of the international media sector, while the UK video gaming was the most profitable component of the entertainment industry, surpassing the music industry in gross sales in 2008 (Euromonitor International 2009). Although video gaming has become a popular entertainment mode and companies are increasingly pursuing extension strategies, literature on game design and branding is almost silent on video game extensions and challenges associated with it (Wuts et al. 2012). The present study hopes to contribute to filling this gap, by choosing to realise the present study on consumers' acceptance criteria over extension products in the context of the video game industry. Complementarily, the video game industry offers unique advantages to the realisation of this study owing to its accessibility; trend for co-creative activities; easily identifiable virtual brand tribal communities and strong consumer-brand relationships. This study leans towards the positivistic side of the spectrum.

However, the present study follows a more balanced approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data (Newman et al. 2003). The chapter has explained the methodological process (from exploratory to descriptive and experimental) employed by the researcher in the development and testing of models and hypotheses (see Figure 5.2). At the inductive stage of the research, the researcher undertook an extensive literature review and conducted qualitative focus groups to: i) understand the proposed constructs; and ii) develop the research idea and assist model building and questionnaire development (see 5.5.3). Having gained insights from the literature and the focus groups the researcher finalised the working model and the set the hypotheses. Subsequently testing of these hypotheses a quantitative focus was necessary to provide the primary data with which to test the hypotheses (Malhotra 1999). A deductive approach involves predicting that certain things will follow if the theory is true (de Vaus 2002). At the deductive stage of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire and pre-tested it with academics and consumers.

The questionnaire was then refined and pilot-tested with a small sample of consumers. The next chapter (Chapter 6) will present the results of the pilot test of the study and the refinement of the model and the questionnaire. The following chapter after that (Chapter 7) will present the results of the main data collection and their interpretation.

CHAPTER SIX

PREPARATION OF DATA FOR ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the data and the procedures followed to prepare the data for the analysis (Chapter 7). The chapter starts by looking at the usable response rate that the study achieved. Next, a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the samples is presented to justify the representative nature of the data generated. The third section of this chapter focuses on the preliminary analysis, with the reliability and validity of measures used in this study being evaluated at this point. Lastly, new variables are computed whenever necessary, the objective of which is to convert the original data into a more manageable form and to prepare for the multiple regression analysis. This chapter finishes with a summary of the tasks conducted at this stage of the research.

6.2 Usable Response Rate and Preparing the Data for Analysis

Out of the total number of questionnaires collected, 331 were considered to be usable after careful questionnaire checking, editing and data cleaning, resulting in a 77% percent usable questionnaire rate. Following Malhotra's (1996) suggestions, the questionnaire checking mainly detects incomplete questionnaires, respondents' misunderstandings, little variance of responses, and missing sections; editing focuses on identifying incomplete, inconsistent, or ambiguous responses; data cleaning mainly addresses missing responses. Despite the time demanded for the completion of these tasks, the questionnaire checking, editing and data cleaning were conducted by the researcher in order to ensure consistency of treatment. In the case of inconsistent or ambiguous responses, missing values or missing pages, the researcher did not contact the respondent again as this was not possible. In addition, the researcher was concerned that the data obtained the second time might be different from those obtained during the original survey. According to Malhotra (1996), these differences may be attributed to changes over time or differences in the mode of questionnaire administration. For instance, respondents may have given different answers if their e-mail address had been used and a personal e-mail forwarded to them from the researcher, as

opposed to their answers to a web survey link posted in their forum. In addition, the "community environment" is dynamic (Hauser and Wernerfelt 1990; Punj and Srinivasan 1989; Ratneshwar and Shocker 1991; Nedungadi 1990), which suggests that respondents' answers might change with time and consumption situation.

The questionnaires showing little variance of response were considered as invalid data and discarded, as it might be the case that the respondents were lacking in cooperation. Some of these respondents may have lost patience, while some of them simply did not have time to complete it. In all cases, it would have been impossible to track respondents back.

Moreover, the number of incomplete questionnaires, where the questions relating to one whole section are omitted, is relatively high. The explanation the researcher can offer (for one part of the survey) is that some respondents were not used to the idea of answering the same questions for different extension scenarios. Therefore, the respondents might have thought that there was a mistake in the questionnaire or they might have not agreed with the extensions stimulus. For another part of the survey, it is possible that the respondents were afraid to express their true feelings towards the brand in question to an external party (given that they were members of its community). Finally, the researcher believes that the large number of incomplete questionnaires is due to the length of the questionnaire. It is important to note here that the researcher included a progress bar at the top of the questionnaire to inform the respondents of their progress and to encourage them to finish answering the questions (see Chapter 5).

Some respondents bypassed one or two questions, but answered all the other questions. As long as this was not a consistent missing value throughout the questionnaire, these questionnaires were considered usable.

In total, 98 questionnaires were discarded: 58 for being incomplete, 12 because of little variance of responses and 28 because of missing sections. The missing section questionnaires were those in which all the questions were answered, except the ones referring to the gamers' feelings towards the brand. This might be because gamers may find it hard to understand the significance of these questions or express their feelings. The second most common missing section was respondents' demographics. This might be because these questions were at the end of the questionnaire and the respondent was tired; or because the respondent did not see the usefulness of answering this questions and their

relation to the rest of the questionnaire; or also because of fear his/her answers might be exposed and his/her true identity be revealed.

Incomplete questionnaires refer to the questionnaires that the respondents started filling in and stopped at the beginning of the second page, totaled 27; questionnaires with incomplete or inconsistent answers totaled 17. In addition, 14 of the respondents clicked on the link scroll through the questionnaire and then clicked on the finish button, but did not answer any questions. It is possible that this group comprised young people who did not understand the concept of the survey. It is important to note here that the theme of the research is rarely, if ever, associated with video games. Therefore, it is possible that the survey theme did not match gamers' expectations. As explained in Chapter 5, research on video games has mostly focused on the negative consequences of video games for players, while some research, mostly published by companies, refers to their achievements as opposed to those of competitors, its players' commitment to the game and plans for expansion. Only recently has research in the social sciences started to investigate the evolution of the concept of gaming (Wood et al. 2004; Cole and Griffiths 2007; Binken and Stremersch 2009; Gidhagen, Ridell and Sorhammar 2011)

As suggested by previous works (e.g., Aaker et al. 1997; Malhotra 1996), this research regarded the questionnaires containing little variance of responses (disagree or agree or neutral for all answers) as an indication of a lack of respondents' cooperation. However, the researcher believes that respondents, who answered in that way, did so in order to show that they were in control of the situation and there was no need for a survey.

The decision to discard the 98 questionnaires was based on the consideration that the sample size was sufficiently large. In addition, it was not feasible to return to the fieldwork as respondents could not be traced since they had not given a correspondence address or contact number, and because of the research budget constraint. Hence, the researcher has to accept the relatively high rate of unusable questionnaires 98/429. On careful examination, it is safe to say that more than half of the unusable questionnaires were due to the length of the questionnaire or to lack of cooperation on the part of the respondents, which the researcher could not possibly have done more to improve due to the nature of this research. Therefore, the relatively high unusable rate is considered acceptable. The researcher is aware that several disadvantages may be associated with this drawback. However, when compared with other online research, it is safe to say that is an acceptable response rate (owing to the motivated respondent population and the well-designed survey process). For

instance, in their research comparing response rate, speed and completeness between internet-based and mail surveys, Truell, Bratlett and Alexander (2002) reported a 51% response rate for internet based surveys. Similarly, in a comparison of web and mail survey response rates Kaplowitz, Hadlock, Levine (2004) found web surveys to achieve a less than 30% response rate. Finally, issues of potential disregarding of relevant information are taken into consideration in the limitations of the study.

The Researcher's Observation

In general, the researcher believes that the response rate would have been higher if the researcher had been a well-known member of the community. Although the researcher used the university logo and a university e-mail address on the questionnaire, it is possible that the gamers were reluctant to click on sites of unknown origin, or provide data over whose use they had no control. Finally, another issue is related to the themes of the research, as video game players are not used to answer questions regarding these themes. Most research in video gaming is focused on how video gaming affects behaviour; questions related to game development are usually only addressed by companies, and very little research is related to video games from a business point of view (see Chapter 5).

Response Rate

Given that no concrete information was available as to the number of consumers who were exposed to the survey, the calculation of a precise response rate is not feasible. From this total, 429 started the survey and 331 completed it in full. According to the dates, the response rate could be as high as 50 percent in high gaming periods, for example in the early afternoon or late evening, whereas the response rate could be as low as 5 percent in the morning. This is because a high percentage of people playing games during the afternoon might take a break and fill in the survey. Moreover, the response rate was higher at the weekend than on weekdays; this is possibly because people tend to be more relaxed at the weekends.

6.3 Descriptive Statistics

The purpose of descriptive analysis is to provide an initial examination of the data. Specifically, it aims to provide preliminary insights as to the nature of the responses obtained as reflected in the distribution of values of each variable of interest in this study.

The descriptive analysis covers central tendency (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation, range). The descriptive analysis results concerning demographic variables are covered in later analysis.

Regarding the main data set, all values range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), which correspond to the 7-point Likert scale adopted in this research. All measures present reasonable variance. Nevertheless, for some variables respondents expressed very strong opinions (either positive or negative), which are also reflected in the following tests. This could be a consequence of unsuccessful wording or of the questions' theme and the feelings it evokes.

Missing Data

When researchers have to deal with data that includes missing values, they need to be careful as inappropriate treatment of missing data may cause errors in the analysis of the results. Missing data can be classified in three main categories (1) missing completely at random; (2) missing at random; and (3) missing not at random (Rubin 1976; De Leeuw, 2001). Although most literature in marketing does not explain how missing values are dealt with, there are several statistical approaches, with imputation being the most popular (Beynon, Moutinho and Veloutsou 2010). However, imputation can influence the results by leading to biased and false conclusions, especially in cases where data are not missing at random (Acock 2005); but are due to differences between respondents and non-respondents (Huisman 2000) or to the inapplicability of the survey question to some respondents (Kroh 2006). For very small samples with a lot of missing values that would have otherwise been practically been unusable, Beynon (2005a; 2005b; 2008) proposed the CaRBS technique for object classification which allows the retention of missing values without the use of imputation.

In this project, missing data for scale-related items was not regarded a critical issue given their low percentage; thus any given question or item had fewer than 10% missing values (Roth and Switzer 1995). The first step in dealing with missing data is to understand whether data are randomly missing. Deletion of case is then reasonable, provided that only a few cases have missing data and those missing data concern different variables (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001). Therefore, as related research suggests (Shen and Lai 2001), and with respect to time and cost efficiency, complete case analysis excluding incompletely responded observations was performed.

Characteristics of the Sample

Before going any further in analysing the data provided by the samples, it is important to analyse the demographic characteristics of the samples obtained from the survey. This assists in justifying the degree of representativeness of the samples to the target population. To obtain a representative sample is crucial, as it ensures that the findings of the research can be applied to the target population. The analysis looks at the distribution of the samples according to age and gender. The demographic profiles of this survey sample are compared to the demographic profiles of the Daedalus MMORPG Project (www.nickyee.com/ daedalus.) which was measuring the psychology of massively multiplayer online gamers during 2002-2009. The comparison of the gender profile of the respondents with the gender profile of Daedalus project is presented in (Table 6.1). The chi-square test is used to measure the percentage of gender population difference between samples:

H_0 Gender distribution does not differ significantly between the two samples.

H_1 Gender distribution differs significantly between the two samples.

Table 6.1 Gender Group Analysis

| | | | Gender | | Total |
			Male	Female	
Research	Respondents' Gender	Count	242	40	282
		Expected Count	243.9	38.1	282
		% within Res	85.80%	14.20%	10.00%
		% of Total	7.00%	1.20%	8.10%
	Daedalus MMORG Project	Count	2766	430	3196
		Expected Count	2764.1	431.9	3196
		% within Res	86.50%	13.50%	10.00%
		% of Total	79.50%	12.40%	91.90%
Total		Count	3008	470	3478
		Expected Count	3008	470	3478
		% within Res	86.50%	13.50%	10.00%
		% of Total	86.50%	13.50%	10.00%
Chi-Square:	.118[a]				
Df:	1				
Asympt Sig:	.731				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 33.04.

According to the results, gender distribution does not differ significantly between the samples (% within Res 85.8 and 86.5 for males; 14.20 and 13.5 for females). The significance level is well above the accepted .05 (.731>.05), so the null hypothesis that

gender distribution does not differ significantly between samples can not be rejected. Therefore, gender is well represented by the present survey sample.

Age Group Analysis

The comparison of the age group of the survey respondents with that of the Daedalus project respondents is presented in (Table 6.2) The population covered in this study is placed into three groups: people aged under 18 years old; between 19 and 36 years old; and people over the age of 37.

H_0 Age distribution does not differ significantly between the two samples.
H_1 Age distribution differs significantly between the two samples.

According to the results, age distribution does not differ significantly between the samples (% within Res 12.9 and 11.70 under the age of 18; 71.70 and 71.90 for the 19-36 years old group; and 15.40 and 16.30 over the age of 37). The significance level is well above the accepted .05 (.811>.05), so the null hypothesis that age distribution does not differ significantly between samples can not be rejected. Therefore, different age groups are well represented by the present survey sample.

Table 6.2 Age Group Analysis

						Age			Total
						<18	19-36	37+	
Research			Respondents Age	Count	36	200	43	279	
				Expected	33	20.6	45.3	279	
% within	12.90	71.70%		15.40%	10.00				
% of Total	1.00%	5.80%		1.20%	8.10				
Daedalus MMORPG	Count	373	2284	518	3175				
		Expected	376	2283.4	515.7	3175			
		% within	11.70	71.90%	16.30%	10.00			
		% of Total	1.80%	66.10%	15.00%	91.90			
Total				Count	409	2484	561	3454	
				Expected	409	2484	561	3454	
				% within	11.80%	71.90	16.20	10.00	
				% of Total	11.80%	71.90	16.20	10.00	
Chi	.420[a]								
Df:	2								
Asymp.	.811								

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 33.04.

6.4 Reliability and Validity

Before starting the data analysis, the researcher had to ensure that the measurement devices used in the research were robust, reliable and valid (Oppenheim 2000). The value a research obtains using certain measurements cannot be the true value of the characteristic in question, but rather an observation of it (Malhotra 1996). The difference between the two values, the *true value* and the *observed value* is caused by measurement error. A number of factors can cause measurement error; and Malhora (1996) presents a true measurement model which provides a framework for understanding the reliability and validity of measurement.

$$xo = xT + Xs + xR$$

where:

xo = the observed score or measurement

XT = the true score of the characteristic

Xs = systematic error

XR, = random error

Random error is not constant, but rather is a source of inconsistency and has a direct effect on reliability. Systematic error affects the measurement in a constant way. Hence, the systematic error does not affect reliability adversely. However, reliability is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for validity (Churchill 1999). Yet to achieve perfect validity there has to be neither systematic nor random error (Malhotra 1996). The following section will test the reliability and validity of the measurements used in this research.

Validity

A measuring instrument is valid if it can measure the true differences between the objects that it is trying to measure (Churchill 1999); in other words, if it measures what it is thought to measure (Aaker et al. 1997). The types of validity that this research will examine are content validity, construct validity and criteria validity (Lehmann et al. 1998).

Content validity or face validity is a subjective but systematic evaluation of the content of a scale and its ability to represent the characteristic that it is supposed to measure (Malhotra 1996). The important point is that the scale items adequately cover the entire domain of the construct being measured (Aaker et al. 1997).

Criterion validity examines whether a scale performs as expected in relation to other constructs selected as meaningful benchmarks (Malhotra 1996); it is based on empirical evidence that the attitude measure correlates with other "criterion" variables (Aaker et al. 1997). Criterion validity can take two forms, concurrent validity and predictive validity, based on the time period involved. If the two variables are measured at the same time, concurrent validity should be examined; while if the two variables are measured at different periods, then the predictive validity can be examined.

For construct validity to be achieved a sound theory of the nature of the construct being measured and how it relates to other constructs needs to be established. Construct validity includes convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (Churchill 1999; Malhotra 1996). Convergent validity means that a measure correlates highly with other measures which are used to measure the same construct (Churchill 1999). Discriminant validity examines the extent to which a measure does not correlate with other constructs from which it is supposed to differ. The investigation of discriminant validity implies that one should also search for low levels of correspondence between a measure and other measures of other concepts (Bryman and Cramer 1999; Malhotra 1996; Aaker et al. 1997). Nomological validity is the extent to which the scale correlates in theoretically predicted ways with measures of different but related constructs (Malhotra 1996). In fact little nomological construct validation is attempted in marketing, as there is a lack of well-established measures that can be used in a variety of circumstances (Aaker et al. 1997).

Reliability

Reliability measures consistency of the scale. It refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are taken (William et al. 1989). A reliable measure is required to produce the same finding on repeated occasions if the phenomenon has not changed (Burns and Harrison 1979). Moreover, there are two types of reliability that need to be achieved, external and internal reliability (Bryman and Cramer 1999).

External reliability examines whether a measure is consistent over time. The test-retest reliability is one of the main approaches to checking external reliability. The problems with test-retest reliability are that intervening events between the tests may lead to a discrepancy between the two sets of results; or if the tests are too close in time, participants may provide earlier answers in order to create an artificial consistency between the two tests. Other researchers have suggested the use of an alternative-form of reliability test (e.g., Andrews 1984; Jaffe and Nebenzahl 1984) which means the construction of two equivalent forms of the scale. The same respondents are measured at two different times. The scores from the administration of the alternative scale forms are correlated to assess reliability. Similar to the test and pre-test reliability, this method is time-consuming, more costly, and it is difficult to construct two equivalent forms of a scale (Malhotra 1996). In this research, external reliability is not tested, as the time constraint did not allow this to be done.

Internal consistency is needed to examine the reliability of a summated scale where several items are summed to form a total score (Malhotra 1996). It answers the question of whether each scale measures solely one characteristic, and hence whether the items which make up the scale are internally consistent (Bryman and Cramer 1999). The two most commonly-used procedures for estimating internal reliability are the split-half reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (Bryman and Cramer 1999; Aaker et al. 1997).

The problem with the split-half reliability arises from the fact that it depends on how the scale items are split (Malhotra 1996). Cronbach's Alpha can be used to overcome this problem, as it essentially calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients and is currently widely-used (Bryman and Cramer 1999; Aaker et al. 1997). Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha is used to examine the internal consistency of all the multi-item scales used in the study. The rule of thumb is that the correlation coefficient should be .8 or above (Bryman and Cramer 1999); an acceptable level of at least .70 should be achieved (Hinkin 1995). In cases of the correlation coefficient being lower than .8, items that reduce the reliability can be deleted from the scale (Kaplan and Saccuzzo 1997). Dropping this item is used to improve scale reliability. The same rule is adopted when the Cronbach Alpha falls below .7. Item-total correlations or the inter-correlations (Pearson's correlation) of the items are also reported. Items can be deleted if the item-total correlation is below .50 according to the recommendation of Bearden and Netemeyer (1999).

6.4.1 Applied Techniques to Validate Scales Validity and Reliability

This study uses Factor Analysis, Pearson Correlation Analysis, Item-Total Correlation and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to validate adopted scales. Before these techniques are applied, a detailed assessment of the suitability of the data for factor analysis, as well as the objectives expected to be achieved are reported, followed by reports of validity and reliability of the brand image construct. This section ends with evaluation of scales for reliability and validity.

Factor Analysis

Assessment of the Suitability of the Data for Factor Analysis

A large discourse has been going on regarding sample size for factor analysis. Despite Hulin et al. (2001) calling for 15:1 ratio of respondents to number of items, some researchers recommend a much lower ratio and a more specific sample size - 300 samples. For example, Kass and Tinsley (1979) suggest having between 5 and 10 subjects per variable up to a total of 300 (beyond which test parameters tend to be stable regardless of the subject to variable ratio). This claim is further supported by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) and Comrey and Lee (1992), who agree that 5 cases for each item is adequate in most cases; 300 is a good sample size, 100 is poor and 1000 is excellent. Arrindell and van der Ende (1985) show that changes in the ratio of respondents to items made little difference to the stability of factor solutions. Some empirical research findings (e.g., Guadagnoli and Velicer 1988; MacCallum et al. 1999) back up the 300 rule. Accordingly, the sample size of this research (331) is sufficient to perform factor analysis.

In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (Kaiser 1970) measure of sampling adequacy was applied. The KMO test uses an index to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis. High values (between .5 and 1.0) indicate that factor analysis is appropriate. The KMO values in this study are reported in (Table 6.3) With the exception of that of commitment .67, all KMO values are greater than 7, which are classed as "good" by Kaiser (1974). The KMO value of .67 for commitment is higher than the recommended .5 for satisfactory factor analysis. The high KMO values indicate that the items will form specific factors (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999) and the data sets are appropriate for the application of factor analysis.

Table 6.3 KMO Test

Constructs	KMO
Perceived Quality of the Brand	.87
Perceived Fit For Extension One	.89
Perceived Fit For Extension Two	.87
Perceived Fit For Extension Three	.84
Co-Creation of Value	
Intentions to Co-Create Value	.71
Level One of Co-Creation of Value	.79
Level Two of Co-Creation of Value	.75
Level Three of Co-Creation of Value	.76
Consumer-brand relationship	
Love	.74
Commitment	.67
Two Way Communication	.76
Intimacy	.75
Interdependence	.71
Virtual Brand Tribal Community	
Tribalism	.85
Identification	.86
Engagement	.78
Normative Community Pressure	.82
Extension Acceptance One	.83
Extension Acceptance Two	.85
Extension Acceptance Three	.85

Objectives for Using Factor Analysis

The use of factor analysis attempts to achieve two objectives. Firstly, to condense the information obtained in relation to virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship into a small set of composite dimensions to make the data more easily manageable. Secondly, to check whether the measures used to measure the constructs across the three extensions fall into the same factor(s). If scale items load on the same factor(s), and they have similar factor loading (s), then content validity can be assumed (Bryman and Cramer 1999). This method has been widely used in earlier cross-cultural research to test if groups of items comprising a dimension in one culture also load in similar fashion on the same construct in another (e.g., Veloutsou et al. 2005; Poortinga 1989; Singh 1995).

Principal Components Analysis and Principal Factor Analysis

To achieve the first objective, the study uses principal components analysis (PCA). This method is often the preferred method for data reduction over PFA (Preacher and MacCallum 2003). Despite the fact that there are no strong grounds to believe that the underlying factors should be unrelated (Field 2005), the factor solution in this research was rotated using the Varimax method, as the orthogonal rotation algorithm Varimax is the one most frequently reported in the management literature for scale construction (Hinkin 1995). Moreover, due to the objective of this part of the analysis being to use the factor results in regression models, the orthogonal rotation procedure is appropriate (Hair et al. 1998). Moreover, principal factor analysis (PFA) is used to achieve the second objective. PFA is appropriate here because this research is interested in identifying factors that account for correlations among the multiple items used to measure the constructs of the conceptual model (Preacher and MacCallum 2003). In addition, PCA is often preferred as a method for data reduction, and when the goal of the analysis is to detect structure (Caruso and Cliff 1998). Varimax rotation is used and reported if more than one factor is extracted.

Factor Extraction and Loadings

Following Kaiser's (1960) suggestion, all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 need to be reported. The eigenvalues represent the amount of variation explained by each factor. Although Kaiser's (1960) criterion is the most commonly met one, there is also some criticism of it. In particular Jolliffe (1973, 1986) suggests that Kaiser's criterion is too strict and proposes retaining all factors with eigenvalues of more than .7. Other related research suggests the use of a screen plot provided the sample size is greater than 200 (Stevens 1992). Preacher and MacCallum (2003) proposed the use of the Kaiser criterion in conjunction with other means. Accordingly, both screen plot and eigenvalues are considered in this research, but with only the eigenvalues reported. In addition, the reasons for doing factor analysis are also taken into account. For example, in order to overcome multicollinearity problems in regression, it is often suggested to retain as many factors as possible. In contrast, in relation to scale validity testing, there is no need to keep as many factors as possible, and therefore Kaiser's (1960) criterion is principally considered. Items which belonged to one factor by at least 40%, and which are not split loaded on another factor above 40% were perceived as components of the same factor. This is in line with Stevens' (1992) suggestion to consider only factor loadings with an absolute value greater

than .4. Items split loaded on two factors with more than one factor loading being above .40 were dropped by the researcher.

Virtual Brand Tribal Community

Virtual Brand Tribal Community has been conceptualised with 4 dimensions (Tribalism; Identification; Engagement; Normative Community Pressure). After conducting the factor analysis, it seems that there are five distinct factors. Yet factor 5 is not theoretically distinct and, therefore, no further emphasis is given to this factor. This phenomenon is inevitable as exploratory factor analysis is used in this research in order to distinguish structure between the theoretically perceived dimensions of the construct and to validate their measurement.

Table 6.4 Virtual Brand Tribal Community-Factor Analysis

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Identification	Engagement	Tribalism	Normative	n/a
I belong to WoW video game players	.826				
The players of WoW are my close friends	.71				
I play WoW everyday because other players expect me to do so	.472			.647	
I spend much time online socialising with other WoW players	.761				
I feel that I am a member of WoW video game players	.727				
I feel I control the group of people I play with		.688			
I am addicted to WoW players		.778			
I achieve a sense of belonging by acting the same as other WoW players				.508	
Replies to my posting appear frequently		.794			
My actions are often influenced by how other WoW players expect me to behave				.8	
I have missed classes or work because of activities I was undertaking with other WoW players			.725		
I would buy a new computer game if my friends from WoW did so				.398	
I am very loyal to WoW because the friends that I have made through this game are very loyal too					
I play games because most of the people I grew up with play games and its a way to spend time together			.747		
Most of the time the reason I play online games is to get in touch with people					.903
Sometimes its more about the forums and the clans attached to it, rather than the actual game					
My friends go online and thats a good reason to go online and play the game			.823		
I play games because its a good way to spend time with the people I know			.434		
Variance%		17.621	15.217	1.753	7.56
Eigenvalue	3.66	3.524	3.043	2.151	1.512
Cumulative Variance %					69.453

Considering the Cronbach Alpha and Item total Correlation for Identification, the construct is well represented by these 4 items. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the scale are all over .08 and item total correlation is above .05 (Table 6.5). Similarly, *Engagement* is well represented by 3 items and *Tribalism* by 4 items and both constructs fulfil the requirements for construct internal validity (see Table 6.4.4 and Table 6.4.5 respectively). *Normative Community Pressure* is represented by 4 items; but the fourth item correlates weakly with the rest of the items (lower than .05). Therefore, this item was deleted by the researcher and the remaining scale fulfils the requirements for internal validity (see Table 6.8)

Table 6.5 Identification-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.853		
I belong to WoW video game players		.82	.689
The players of WoW are my close friends		.816	.691
I spend much time online socialising with other WoW players		.79	.751
I feel that I am a member of WoW video game players			.679

Table 6.6 Engagement-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.838		
I feel I control the group of people I play with		.771	.708
I am addicted to WoW players		.803	.671
Replies to my postings appear frequently		.751	.732

Table 6.7 Tribalism-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.802		
I play games because it's a good way to spend time with the people I know		.749	.653
My friends go online and that's a good reason to go online		.702	.719
I play games because most of the people I grew up with play		.74	.641
I have missed classes or work because of activities I was undertaking with other WoW players		.816	.507

Table 6.8 Norms Community Pressure-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.725		
I play WoW every day because other players expect me to do		.586	.642
I achieve a sense of belonging by acting the same as other WoW players		.687	.472
My actions are often influenced by how other WoW players expect me to behave		.629	.575
I would buy a new computer game if my friends from WoW did		.744	.394
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.742		
I play WoW everyday because other players expect me to do so		.686	.544
I achieve a sense of belonging by acting the same as other WoW players		.695	.534
My actions are often influenced by how other WoW players expect me to behave		.585	.628

Consumer-brand relationship

Consumer-brand relationship has been conceptualised as a five dimensional concept (i.e., intimacy; two way communication; love; inter-dependency and commitment). Yet after conducting the factor analysis it is evident that there are 6 distinct factors. This phenomenon is inevitable as exploratory factor analysis is used in this research in order to distinguish structure between the theoretically perceived dimensions of the construct and to validate measurement for the construct. Therefore, factor 5 and factor 6 will not be used in the analysis as they do not appear to have a solid theoretical background. Specifically, the dimension of commitment items seems to spread between factor 5 and 6. One item from the construct of interdependence also loads highly on factor 6. A possible explanation is that the concept of commitment was not well understood by the consumers, or that it is highly related to one aspect of inter-dependency. Since no theoretically solid explanation can be found for these factors, the researcher prefers to drop these factors from the analysis.

Table 6.9 Consumer-Brand Relationship Factors

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Two way Communication	Intimacy	Love	Inter-	(n/a)	(n/a)
I would be very upset if I couldnt buy WoW products when I wanted			.89			
I have feelings for WoW that I don't have for other video games			.805			
No other video game in the category can take its place			.834			
I am willing to give feedback to the company	.771					
I more willing to learn news about the WoW than about other video games	.793					
I will be informed about WoW in the future	.786					
It's really nice to see what the company is engaged in doing	.786					
It's really an indirect relationship between the gamer and WoW	.44			.867		
I am important to WoW				.775		
I depend on WoW				.786		
WoW depends on me					.954	
WoW is important to me					.878	
I am willing to make small sacrifices in order to keep playing WoW						.803
I feel something is missing when I haven't bought anything from WoW for a while						
I know a lot about the company that makes WoW		.888				
I feel I have know WoW forever		.773				
I feel WoW really understands me		.787				
I understand WoW		.716				
WoW is like a person to whom I am close to		.44				
Variance %	14.205	13.876	11.460	1.654	8.438	5.514
Eigenvalue	2.699	2.637	2.177	2.024	1.603	1.048
Cumulative Variance %	64.148					

Looking at the Cronbach Alpha and Item total Correlation, *Intimacy* is represented by five items, yet one item correlates very weakly with the rest of the items in the scale .204. In addition, Items 2, 3 and 4 correlate very weakly, less than .5. In addition, Cronbach Alpha is well below .08 (see Table 6.10). However, looking at the third column of this table, if the last item is deleted the scale fulfils the requirements of internal validity. The same process was followed for *Interdependence* and *Love* which do not seem to encounter any problems (see Tables 6.11; 6.12 and 6.13 respectively) On the other hand, for *Two Way Communication*, the researcher had to delete one item to ensure that the scale is in line with the rules of internal consistency (see Table 6.12)

Table 6.10 Intimacy-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.54		
I know a lot about the company that makes WoW		.27	.653
I feel I have know WoW forever		.378	.49
I feel WoW really understands me		.399	.443
I understand WoW		.378	.491
WoW is like a person to whom I am close to		.81	.204
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.81		
I know a lot about the company that makes WoW		.684	.781
I feel I have known WoW forever		.771	.607
I feel WoW really understands me		.777	.595
I understand WoW		.803	.536

Table 6.11 Interdependence-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.743		
I am important to WoW		.548	.663
I depend on WoW		.714	.52
WoW depends on me		.705	.532

Table 6.12 Two Way Communication-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.752		
I am willing to give feedback to the company		.694	.558
I more willing to learn news about the WoW than about other video games		.671	.614
I will be informed about WoW in the future		.676	.608
It's really nice to see what the company is engaged in doing		.688	.598
It's really an indirect relationship between the gamer and WoW		.804	.302
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.804		
I am willing to give feedback to the company		.755	.619
I more willing to learn news about the WoW than about other video games		.755	.622
I will be informed about WoW in the future		.751	.626

Table 6.13 Love-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.803		
I would be very upset if I couldnt buy WoW products when I wanted		.633	.739
I have feelings for WoW that I don't have for other video games		.794	.587
No other video game in the category can take its place		.754	.625

Co-creation

The construct of *Co-creation of Value* is conceptualised from theory with 2 dimensions. After conducting some exploratory factor analysis this assumption is validated (Table 6.14; 6.15; 6.16).

In greater detail, the dimension of *Intentions to Co-Create* is measured with 4 items in theory, and all 4 items are found to load into the same factor (Table 6.14; 6.15; 6.16).

The dimension of *Level of Co-creation* is measured from theory with 3 items, and after the factor analysis all 3 seem to load onto the same factor. In this way we check the validity of

the scale for the Level of Co-creation that was used to measure this construct across three versions of the same game(Table 6.14; 6.15; 6.16).

Table 6.14 Intentions to Co-Create Value and Level One of Co-Creation-Factor Analysis

	Component	
	1	2
I enjoy creating online content about WoW	.045	.688
If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game	.013	.506
I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company	-.075	.639
I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game	-.076	.65
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer	.74	-.024
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation	.751	-.005
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game	.747	-.045
Variance	3.876	28.415
Eigenvalue	2.161	1.989
Cumulative Variance %	59.291	

Table 6.15 Intentions to Co-Create Value and Level Two of Co-Creation-Factor Analysis

	Component	
	1	2
I enjoy creating online content about WoW	.008	.685
If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game	.006	.504
I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company	-.1	.639
I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game	.033	.656
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer	.959	-.026
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation	.959	-.002
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game	.996	-.018
Variance%	4.617	28.419
Eigenvalue	2.843	1.989
Cumulative Variance %	69.036	

Table 6.16 Intentions to Co-Create Value and Level Three of Co-Creation-Factor Analysis

	Component	
	1	2
I enjoy creating online content about WoW	.086	.678
If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game	-.002	.509
I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company	-.014	.647
I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game	.072	.648
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer	.85	.038
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation	.858	.04
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game	.896	.043
Variance	3.519	28.4
Eigenvalue	2.464	1.988
Cumulative Variance %	63.597	

Table 6.17 Intention to Co-create Value-Reliability Table

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.654		
I enjoy creating online content about WoW		.537	.503
If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game		.686	.281
I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company		.549	.487
I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game		.557	.479
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.685		
I enjoy creating online content about WoW		.502	.566
I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company		.667	.441
I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game		.597	.496

Table 6.18 Level One of Co-Creation-Reliability Test

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.87		
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer		.874	.71
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation		.877	.705
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game		.815	.791

Table 6.19 Level Two of Co-Creation-Reliability Test

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.808		
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer		.74	.652
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation		.731	.662
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game		.739	.654

Table 6.20 Level Three of Co-Creation-Reliability Test

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.883		
The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer		.92	.676
This game offers a very high level of game co-creation		.915	.684
I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game		.745	.802

Reviewing the Cronbach Alpha and Item Total Correlation for *Intention to Co-Create* (Table 6.17) and for *Level of Co-Creation* (Table 6.18; 6.19; 6.20), it can be seen that one item is removed from the Intentions to Co- Create scale, as it correlates very loosely with the rest of the items (Table 6.17). In addition, the Cronbach Alpha of the scale increases. Moreover, it is possible that this item "If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game" correlates very loosely with other items as it is highly content specific. For level three of Co-Creation the total correlation of the last item is slightly over the limits .802. However, in this case the researcher has decided to keep the item in the scale as it is believed to offer important information, and also the reliability of the scale will decrease to .745 (Table 6.20). It is also important to note that if this item is deleted from the scale, important information will be lost, as this scale is used to measure the *Level of Co-Creation* in all the extensions in the study.

Perceptions of Fit

The construct of *Perceptions of Fit* is conceptualised in theory as a one-dimensional construct with 4 items and after the factor analysis, *Perceptions of Fit* seems to be a one-dimensional construct (Table 6.21; 6.22; 6.23).

Table 6.21 Perceptions of Fit Extension One-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies	.783
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions	.805
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations	.893
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game	.879
Variance%	75.667
Eigenvalue	3.027

Table 6.22 Perceptions of Fit Extension Two-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies	.925
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions	.952
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations	.925
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game	.933
Variance%	83.041
Eigenvalue	3.722

Table 6.23 Perceptions of Fit Extension Three-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies	.716
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions	.666
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations	.672
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game	.758
Variance%	65.05
Eigenvalue	2.202

Table 6.24 Perceptions of Fit Extension One-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.888		
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies		.869	.722
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions		.863	.737
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage		.846	.802
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game		.847	.786

Table 6.25 Perceptions of Fit Extension Two-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.875		
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies		.861	.759
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions		.859	.765
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage		.873	.713
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game		.874	.71

Table 6.26 Perceptions of Fit Extension Three-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.756		
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies		.723	.722
The new game is similar to the original in terms of the game functions		.731	.723
The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage		.705	.783
The concept of the new game is similar to the original game		.706	.615

Looking at the Cronbach Alpha and Item total Correlation for *Perceptions of Fit*, we see that one item in table correlates slightly over 80% (Table 6.24). The researcher has decided to keep the item as if it is deleted important information will be lost from the use of the same scale to evaluate the perceptions of fit of the other two extensions.

Brand Perceived Quality

*Brand Perceived Qualit*y is conceptualised in theory as a one-dimensional construct represented by 3 items and after the factor analysis this assumption is validated (Table 6.27).

Table 6.27 Perceived Quality-Factor Analysis

Factor Loading	
	1
Reputable	.867
Trustworthy	.871
Superior Quality	.838
%of Variance Explained	62.867
Eigenvalue	3.772

Table 6.28 Perceived Quality-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.866		
Reputable		.83	.794
Trustworthy		.825	.759
Superior Quality		.828	.75

Considering the Cronbach Alpha and Item total Correlation for *Perceived Quality of the Brand* (Table 6.28), it is evident that all the rules that the research has set for internal reliability are well respected.

Extension Acceptance

The construct was measured with 5 items (comprising attitude towards the extension and purchase intentions). All items seem to load into one factor across all three extensions (Table 6.29; 6.30; 6.31).

Table 6.29 Extension Acceptance One-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
I find this game suitable for myself	.774
I like this game idea	.906
I would consider buying this game	.878
This is an interesting game idea	.902
I would recommend this game to others	.902
Variance%	77.688
Eigenvalue	4.661

Table 6.30 Extension Acceptance Two-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
I like this game idea	.873
I find this game suitable for myself	.894
I would recommend this game to others	.835
This is an interesting game idea	.88
I would consider buying this game	.931
Variance%	79.832
Eigenvalue	4.790

Table 6.31 Extension Acceptance Three-Factor Analysis

	Component
	1
This is an interesting game idea	.8
I would recommend this game to others	.938
I like this game idea	.956
I would consider buying this game	.94
I find this game suitable for myself	.937
Variance%	85.441
Eigenvalue	5.126

Reviewing the Reliability Tests for Extension Acceptance (Table 6.32; 6.33; 6.34), we see that the scales used across the three extensions have strong internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha all above .9 and Item total correlation above .5). Yet it is obvious from the tables that there is high collinearity between some items. This could be one explanation for the high Cronbach Alpha. To ensure that the scale reliability is not over estimated and that the research will not face further multicollinearity problems, the researcher decided to remove those items where item total correlation is over .8. If items correlate higher than 80%, it is likely that they do not offer unique measurable information. Therefore, looking at the tables below, the researcher has decided to remover the item "I like this game idea". In the scales below the items was found to correlate very highly with the item "This is an interesting game idea". The researcher had decided to use a multi-item scale to measure attitude towards the extension, in order to avoid common problems of single item scales (e.g., misunderstanding of the item or the item being overseen) which would have made it impossible to continue with the analysis.

Table 6.32 Extension One Acceptance-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.942		
I find this game suitable for myself		.946	.693
I like this game idea		.927	.861
I would consider buying this game		.932	.821
This is an interesting game idea		.928	.833
I would recommend this game to others		.915	.815
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.9		
I find this game suitable for myself		.916	.641
I would consider buying this game		.872	.773
This is an interesting game idea		.836	.805
I would recommend this game to others		.85	.731

Table 6.33 Extension Two Acceptance-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.922		
I like this game idea		.943	.914
I find this game suitable for myself		.939	.744
I would recommend this game to others		.948	.768
This is an interesting game idea		.941	.827
I would consider buying this game		.933	.796
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if Item deleted	Item total Correlation
	.949		
I find this game suitable for myself		.939	.733
I would consider buying this game		.948	.768
This is an interesting game idea		.941	.789
I would recommend this game to others		.933	.789

Table 6.34 Extension Three Acceptance-Reliability Tests

	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.944		
I find this game suitable for myself		.972	.727
I would recommend this game to others		.934	.808
I like this game idea		.952	.932
I would consider buying this game		.915	.669
This is an interesting game idea		.933	.809
	Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha if item deleted	Item total correlation
	.964		
I find this game suitable for myself		.972	.727
I would consider buying this game		.956	.801
This is an interesting game idea		.944	.787
I would recommend this game to others		.955	.785

Key Findings

The brand tribalism items were generated from a variety of sources (literature and focus groups) and further tested using pre-tests and pilot tests (see Chapter 5), in order to minimize the number of items included in the questionnaire and ensure their relevancy. It appeared that these previous effort worked out extremely well. Tribalism does indeed constitute a factor in the virtual brand tribal community concept. Similarly, the process seemed to work well for the dimensions of the consumer brand relationship concept. This result further cross-validated the scales adopted in this research.

For the *Virtual Brand Tribal Community* concept and the *Consumer-brand relationship* concept the extracted factors are considered to be reliable and adequately capture a single construct, since they all have a Cronbach Alpha above .7. The item total correlation for all items is very close or higher than the suggested .50 benchmark (Bearden and Netemeyer 1999). Therefore, the results suggest that the scales adopted are both valid and reliable. Similar conditions apply to the *Co-Creation of Value* concept. The concept is found to have two dimensions across the three extensions. The cumulative variances suggest it explains a greater percent of variance for Extension Two. This happens possibly because Extension Two is perceived to be the one that offers more opportunities for joint co-creation.

6.4.2 Evaluation Results Using Factor Analysis

The factor analysis solutions of *Perceived Quality*; *Perceptions of Fit*; and *Extension Acceptance* are reported in the Tables above. The results show that a one-factor solution is appropriate based on a minimum Eigenvalue of 1 (Kaiser Criterion), for both *Extension Acceptance* and *Perceptions of Fit* across the three extensions. *Perceptions of Fit* and *Extension Acceptance* explained more variance for Extension One than for Extension Two or Three. This might be explained by the higher level of consumer eagerness for one product rather than the other. Moreover, items comprising the acceptance scale converge into one dimension. This applies to all three extensions. Therefore, the above scales are mono-dimensional which provides some evidence of construct validity. This is based on the claim of Kaplan and Saccuzo (1997) that evidence of construct validity shows that measures of the same construct 'converge' on the same construct which is intended to be measured. Finally, further evidence of discriminant validity is presented in (Table 6.35; 6.36; 6.37).

Table 6.35 Inter-item correlations for Model Extension One

		Love	Two Way Communication	Interdependence	Intimacy	Intention to Co-create	Parent Brand Quality	Tribalism	Identification	Engagement	Norms	Fit1	Level of Co-creation1
Love	Pearson	1	-.069	.040	.032	-.060	-.066	.045	.047	-.037	.062	.099	-.002
	Sig. (2-		.029	.047	.035	.273	.230	.417	.399	.505	.268	.071	.972
Two Way	Pearson	-.069	1	.091	-.032	.383	.381	.153	.265	.147	.077	.194	-.002
	Sig. (2-	.029		.009	.036	.000	.000	.005	.000	.008	.169	.000	.968
Interdependence	Pearson	.040	.091	1	.032	.067	-.043	.048	-.086	-.006	-.002	.091	.065
	Sig. (2-	.047	.009		.035	.221	.440	.383	.118	.917	.966	.097	.239
Intimacy	Pearson	.032	-.032	.032	1	.020	.056	.035	.012	.011	.040	-.069	-.003
	Sig. (2-	.035	.036	.035		.723	.310	.524	.823	.846	.480	.211	.960
Intention To Co-create	Pearson	-.060	.383	.067	.020	1	.110	.068	.286	.192	.234	.076	-.043
	Sig. (2-	.273	.000	.221	.723		.045	.220	.000	.000	.000	.168	.434
Parent Brand Quality	Pearson	-.066	.381	-.043	.056	.110	1	-.008	.263	.072	.034	.158	-.027
	Sig. (2-	.230	.000	.440	.310	.045		.884	.000	.192	.539	.004	.625
Tribalism	Pearson	.045	.153	.048	.035	.068	-.008	1	.349	.379	.446	-.150	.000
	Sig. (2-	.417	.005	.383	.524	.220	.884		.000	.000	.000	.006	.993
Identification	Pearson	.047	.265	-.086	.012	.286	.263	.349	1	.493	.516	-.050	-.078
	Sig. (2-	.399	.000	.118	.823	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.362	.159
Engagement	Pearson	-.037	.147	-.006	.011	.192	.072	.379	.493	1	.624	-.342	-.123
	Sig. (2-	.505	.008	.917	.846	.000	.192	.000	.000		.000	.000	.026
Norms	Pearson	.062	.077	-.002	.040	.234	.034	.446	.516	.624	1	.112	-.069
	Sig. (2-	.268	.169	.966	.480	.000	.539	.000	.000	.000		.045	.215
Fit1	Pearson	.099	.194	.091	-.069	.076	.158	-.150	-.050	-.342	.112	1	.029
	Sig. (2-	.071	.000	.097	.211	.168	.004	.006	.362	.000	.045		.605
Level of Co-creation	Pearson	-.002	-.002	.065	-.003	-.043	-.027	.000	-.078	-.123	-.069	.029	1
	Sig. (2-	.972	.968	.239	.960	.434	.625	.993	.159	.026	.215	.605	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01and at 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

Table 6.36 Inter-item correlations for Model Extension Two

		Love	Two Way Communication	Interdependence	Intimacy	Intention to Co-create	Parent Brand Quality	Tribalism	Identification	Engagement	Norms	Fit2	Level of Co-Creation2
Love	Pearson	1	-.069	.040	.032	-.060	-.066	.045	.047	-.037	.062	.033	-.055
	Sig. (2-		.029	.047	.035	.273	.230	.417	.399	.505	.268	.554	.317
Two way Communication	Pearson	-.069	1	.091	-.032	.383	.381	.153	.265	.147	.077	.006	.066
	Sig. (2-	.029		.009	.036	.000	.000	.005	.000	.008	.169	.907	.231
Interdependence	Pearson	.040	.091	1	.032	.067	-.043	.048	-.086	-.006	-.002	.045	-.002
	Sig. (2-	.047	.009		.035	.221	.440	.383	.118	.917	.966	.418	.968
Intimacy	Pearson	.032	-.032	.032	1	.020	.056	.035	.012	.011	.040	.001	-.056
	Sig. (2-	.035	.036	.035		.723	.310	.524	.823	.846	.480	.988	.306
Intention to Co-create	Pearson	-.060	.383	.067	.020	1	.110	.068	.286	.192	.234	-.090	-.025
	Sig. (2-	.273	.000	.221	.723		.045	.220	.000	.000	.000	.102	.655
Parent Brand Quality	Pearson	-.066	.381	-.043	.056	.110	1	-.008	.263	.072	.034	.108	-.002
	Sig. (2-	.230	.000	.440	.310	.045		.884	.000	.192	.539	.050	.969
Tribalism	Pearson	.045	.153	.048	.035	.068	-.008	1	.349	.379	.446	-.104	.074
	Sig. (2-	.417	.005	.383	.524	.220	.884		.000	.000	.000	.058	.178
Identification	Pearson	.047	.265	-.086	.012	.286	.263	.349	1	.493	.516	.034	-.017
	Sig. (2-	.399	.000	.118	.823	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.540	.758
Engagement	Pearson	-.037	.147	-.006	.011	.192	.072	.379	.493	1	.624	.022	.030
	Sig. (2-	.505	.008	.917	.846	.000	.192	.000	.000		.000	.697	.584
Norms	Pearson	.062	.077	-.002	.040	.234	.034	.446	.516	.624	1	.123	.044
	Sig. (2-	.268	.169	.966	.480	.000	.539	.000	.000	.000		.028	.428
Fit2	Pearson	.033	.006	.045	.001	-.090	.108	-.104	.034	.022	.123	1	.034
	Sig. (2-	.554	.907	.418	.988	.102	.050	.058	.540	.697	.028		.543
Level of Co-creation 2	Pearson	-.055	.066	-.002	-.056	-.025	-.002	.074	-.017	.030	.044	.034	1
	Sig. (2-	.317	.231	.968	.306	.655	.969	.178	.758	.584	.428	.543	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 and at 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

Table 6.37 Inter-item correlations for Model Extension Three

		Love	Two Way Communication	Interdependence	Intimacy	Intention to Co-create	Parent Brand Quality	Tribalism	Identification	Engagement	Norms	Fit3	Level of Co-creation3
Love	Pearson	1	-.069	.040	.032	-.060	-.066	.045	.047	-.037	.062	.065	-.056
	Sig. (2-		.029	.047	.035	.273	.230	.417	.399	.505	.268	.240	.310
Two Way	Pearson	-.069	1	.091	-.032	.383	.381	.153	.265	.147	.077	-.022	.047
	Sig. (2-	.029		.009	.036	.000	.000	.005	.000	.008	.169	.685	.393
Interdependence	Pearson	.040	.091	1	.032	.067	-.043	.048	-.086	-.006	-.002	.029	-.019
	Sig. (2-	.047	.009		.035	.221	.440	.383	.118	.917	.966	.594	.724
Intimacy	Pearson	.032	-.032	.032	1	.020	.056	.035	.012	.011	.040	-.070	.023
	Sig. (2-	.035	.036	.035		.723	.310	.524	.823	.846	.480	.205	.671
Intention To Co-create	Pearson	-.060	.383	.067	.020	1	.110	.068	.286	.192	.234	-.136	.050
	Sig. (2-	.273	.000	.221	.723		.045	.220	.000	.000	.000	.013	.368
Parent Brand Quality	Pearson	-.066	.381	-.043	.056	.110	1	-.008	.263	.072	.034	-.020	.011
	Sig. (2-	.230	.000	.440	.310	.045		.884	.000	.192	.539	.717	.836
Tribalism	Pearson	.045	.153	.048	.035	.068	-.008	1	.349	.379	.446	-.075	-.057
	Sig. (2-	.417	.005	.383	.524	.220	.884		.000	.000	.000	.171	.301
Identification	Pearson	.047	.265	-.086	.012	.286	.263	.349	1	.493	.516	-.099	.019
	Sig. (2-	.399	.000	.118	.823	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.073	.736
Engagement	Pearson	-.037	.147	-.006	.011	.192	.072	.379	.493	1	.624	-.106	-.009
	Sig. (2-	.505	.008	.917	.846	.000	.192	.000	.000		.000	.055	.865
Norms	Pearson	.062	.077	-.002	.040	.234	.034	.446	.516	.624	1	-.046	-.023
	Sig. (2-	.268	.169	.966	.480	.000	.539	.000	.000	.000		.409	.684
Fit3	Pearson	.065	-.022	.029	-.070	-.136	-.020	-.075	-.099	-.106	-.046	1	-.024
	Sig. (2-	.240	.685	.594	.205	.013	.717	.171	.073	.055	.409		.668
Level of Co-creation3	Pearson	-.056	.047	-.019	.023	.050	.011	-.057	.019	-.009	-.023	-.024	1
	Sig. (2-	.310	.393	.724	.671	.368	.836	.301	.736	.865	.684	.668	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01and at 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

When more than two items loaded on one factor, the internal consistency of these items was tested using Cronbach Alpha and correlation coefficients. Pessmeier and Bruno (1971) noted that if a set of items is really measuring some underlying trait or attitude, then the underlying trait causes the co-variation among the items. That is, the higher the correlation, the better the items are for measuring the same underlying construct. Churchill (1999) claimed that internal consistency of the items is also the essence of content validity. Although internal consistency is not a sufficient condition for construct validity and content validity, it is a necessary condition (Churchill 1999). Based on this, high internal consistency of items used to measure a construct might be an indication of possibility of construct validity and content validity. This is the notion for assessing correlation among the items of the measures adopted in this research to analyse the construct validity and the content validity of the scales. All in all, the overall satisfactory output of Cronbach Alpha coefficients, correlation coefficients and factor analysis results demonstrate that the scales adopted in this research have a high level of validity and reliability.

6.4.3. Final Stage of Data Preparation

After a thorough examination of the scales validity and reliability, the research focuses on computing new variables for use at the modeling stage. The first part of the analysis tests the uni-dimensionality of the constructs perceived fit, perceived quality and acceptance of the video game. In addition, it tests for the uni-dimensionality of each specific dimension of the constructs of brand community; brand relationship and co-creation of value. The dimensions of these latter constructs were factor analysed together using PFA and PCA to check that the dimensions were indeed separate and construct validity is achieved. Finally, the average of all the items in each scale was computed for each individual dimension.

The assumption of no multicollinearity is assessed with VIF and Tolerance Statistics. VIF is a technique for measuring multicollinearity between the independent variables. It is referred to as a variance-inflation factor (VIF). It can be calculated by using the Equation VIF = 1/1-R2. This is the multiple correlation coefficient that regresses the independent variable, x, on the remaining independent variables (Field 2000). In respect to the formula, VIF is higher when the independent variable has a strong relation with the other independent variables. The denominator of equation, 1-R2 is defined as the tolerance of the variable. There is no clear cut

rule about what value of the VIF and tolerance value should be. Myers (1990) suggests that a value of 10 is a good value at which to be concerned. Bowerman and O'Connell (1990) suggest that if the average VIF is substantially greater than 1, then multicollinearity may be biasing the regression model. Therefore, tolerance values below 0.1 indicate serious problems, although Menard (1995) suggests that values below 0.2 are also worthy of concern. This research regards a VIF value above 5 and tolerance value below 0.2 as problems. These rules are widely accepted by researchers (e.g., Field 2000, Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999, Bryman and Cramer 1999). The VIF and tolerance levels are reported in (Table 6.38; 6.39; 6.40). The tolerance values (ranging between .376 and .987) are all higher than .20, the benchmark level (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999); and VIF values (range between 1.013 and 2.657) are all lower than 5. Thus, the levels of multicollinearity between the extracted factors are all within acceptable limits.

Table 6.38 Test for Multicollinearity of Acceptance Model Extension One

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
LOVE	.959	1.042
Two way Communication	.656	1.523
Interdependence	.941	1.063
Intimacy	.975	1.026
Intention to Co-create	.775	1.29
Parent Brand Quality	.775	1.29
Identification	.555	1.803
Tribalism	.707	1.415
Engagement	.377	2.649
Norms	.376	2.657
LEVELOFCO1	.982	1.018
FIT1	.575	1.739

Table 6.39 Test for Multicollinearity of Acceptance Model Extension Two

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
LOVE	.966	1.036
Two way Communication	.695	1.438
Interdependence	.947	1.056
Intimacy	.98	1.021
Intention to Co-create	.753	1.328
Parent Brand Quality	.784	1.276
Identification	.551	1.816
Tribalism	.698	1.434
Engagement	.547	1.827
Norms	.483	2.068
LEVELOFCO2	.974	1.027
FIT2	.896	1.116

Table 6.40 Test for Multicollinearity of Acceptance Model Extension Three

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
LOVE	.964	1.037
Two way Communication	.698	1.434
Interdependence	.955	1.048
Intimacy	.98	1.021
Intention to Co-create	.762	1.312
Parent Brand Quality	.789	1.268
Identification	.554	1.804
Tribalism	.733	1.364
Engagement	.543	1.843
Norms	.5	2
LEVELOFCO3	.987	1.013
FIT3	.949	1.054

6.5. Summary

Before the hypotheses testing starts, it is important that the responses are subjected to an extensive series of checks to identify possible biases, which could be controlled for during the analysis stage (for details, see Punj and Staelin 1983). The checks conducted in this research involve examination of the raw data, the distribution of values of each variable, the data

representativeness, adopted scales of reliability and validity and the possibility of multicollinearity problems.

In total, 429 questionnaires were collected, with 331 of them being usable after careful checking, editing and data cleaning, which resulted in a 77 percent usable rate. Detailed analysis of the unusable questionnaires is provided. It is revealed that some respondents' lack of cooperation was possibly due to their unfamiliarity with the research theme; lack of trust and the lengthy nature of the research instrument were believed to be the main reasons for the high rate of unusable questionnaires. The length of the questionnaire was determined by the complex nature of this research. A great deal of effort was put into improving respondents' level of cooperation (see Chapter 5). As a result, there was very little the researcher could have improved on in terms of methodology.

The response rate was examined against the response rates of previous survey research which was conducted in an online community. The examination revealed that there was no fixed definition of the response rate concept. Different researchers appeared to have different understandings. Consequently, in most cases the reported response rates in different research are not comparable, unless the researchers demonstrated how their response rates were calculated. It was concluded that the reported response rate can be considered reasonable based on the evidence we have from related research.

Descriptive statistics were used to investigate the distribution of values of each variable. It is reported that all measures represent reasonable variance. Following this, the characteristics of the samples were examined against larger research projects in the same industry. In general, it appears that the samples represent the target population well in terms of age and gender. Therefore, it supports the generalisability of the research findings based on the current sample.

This research provides extensive discussion and investigation of measurement reliability and validity. Given time constraints, the research only focuses on the examination of measurements of internal consistency. The techniques used to conduct evaluations of reliability and validity include Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson's Correlation Analysis, item-total correlation and factor analysis. The research results demonstrate that all the scales adopted in this research achieved a high level of reliability and validity across brands and different

versions of a brand. Multiple item scales were transformed into one new variable and the variable value was computed using a summing up method. The VIF, tolerance level and bivariate correlations between the extracted factors and other variables, which were not included when the factor analysis was conducted, were investigated. The results show that the VIF and tolerance levels are all within the acceptable level. Although some significant relationships appeared between variables, considering they are distinctive concepts theoretically, as well as having reasonable VIF and tolerance levels, it is believed that there was little chance that they would cause a multicollinearity problem. Therefore, the data preparation for the main modelling stage is complete.

A final point worth mentioning is that this research has discovered that tribalism can be regarded as a sub-dimension of the virtual brand tribal community concept. This finding adds to the existing literature about brands, tribes and communities (see Chapter 3). As there is little empirical work in the literature studying detailed brand tribe and brand community dimensions, this research has opened a door to future research. Furthermore, the consumer-brand relationship concept was found to have five dimensions in this context, with two-way communication representing a distinct dimension. Nevertheless, the construct of commitment was not found to constitute a distinct dimension of the consumer-brand relationship concept. This is theoretically interesting, as one would assume that commitment was an important factor in the consumer-brand relationship. One possible explanation is that consumers in this context tend to be consumers of many brands of the same product category. From the focus groups, it was obvious that the consumers declared their interest in the game as well as the brand. In other words, the consumers in question (gamers) presented a multi-player personality and therefore feelings of commitment might have not been so prominent. Another reason may have been the way the concept of commitment was understood. It could be that the construct of commitment is strongly related to some of the constructs in this study. However, it will not be considered as a core sub-dimension of the consumer-brand relationship concept in the present research.

 The concept of co-creation of value is found to have two dimensions, as predicted from the literature review. However, it is important to note that one of the dimensions, namely, that of Intentions to Co-Create Value, explains a greater percent of variance of the concept

irrespective of the level of co-creation the extension offers. It is believed that this is an important discovery worthy of further investigation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA ANALYSIS AND MODEL TESTING

7.1 Introduction

Building on the literature review, the theoretical framework chapter postulated a theoretical model on the antecedents to brand extension acceptance comprising five factors: three factors arising from the relationship marketing and S-D logic, i.e., virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship, and co-creation of value; and two factors arising from the brand extension literature, i.e., perceived fit and parent brand quality. The chapter also hypothesised the positive influence of the selected factors on brand extension acceptance. The methodology chapter then outlined the research design for the collection of quantitative data to test the hypotheses. The subsequent preliminary data analysis chapter illustrated the techniques used by the researcher in order to clean the data of inconsistencies, and test for internal reliability and the external validity of the scales used. This present chapter analyses the data collected, enabling this thesis to more towards answering the research questions, which will be reviewed in Chapter 8.

The aim of this chapter is to present the data analysis processes and results. The chapter starts with information about the analysed variables. Next, the chapter discusses the choice of the statistical techniques to provide a sustainable argument for the choice of the software and the analytical methods. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has considered two popular statistical techniques within the marketing literature, i.e., structural equation modelling (SEM) and ordinary least squares regression (OLS). Despite the popularity of SEM, the researcher decided that OLS methods are more suitable to help meet the statistical objectives of this research. The chapter explains a number of diagnostic tests to help determine the choice of the statistical technique and presents the results. Following the diagnostic tests, the main analysis was extended with the use of a multivariate tests, independent regressions and confidence intervals. The chapter presents the results at each stage of the process. A detailed discussion of the results and the answers to the hypotheses will be in the next chapter. The chapter closes with a brief summary of the results.

7.2 Information about all analysed variables

This section provides detailed information about all examined variables. The discussion focuses on how they are measured, the nature of the variables. There are three response variables in the measurement model (Figure 7.9) i.e., brand extension acceptance (low company-high consumer co-creation; joint co-creation; high consumer-low company creation). As reported in Chapter 6, these variables are all measured using multi-item seven-point Likert scales. However, they can all be regarded as continuous variables.

7.2.1 Interaction between Brand Quality and Perceived Fit

A review of perceived quality and fit literature shows that a number of researchers have suggested that perceived quality and fit interact. Following previous research, the higher the perceived quality of the brand, the better the fit the consumer will find with the new product (Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001). Since previous research has suggested so, it is necessary to check for interactions between these two constructs and include in the model those that are significant. Significant interactions affect the parameters which are calculated for the other terms in the model (Hutchson and Sofroniou 1999). To check for potential interactions, we have created an inter-correlations matrix. Looking at this inter-correlation matrix, it is evident that there is a weak inter-relationship between the variables (Parent Brand Quality and Perceptions of Fit for extensions 1 and extension 2), less than 30%, suggesting a weak relationship in this case, that requires no further investigation (Field 2000). An insignificant correlation appears between parent brand quality and perceived fit for extension 3. A possible explanation for this lies in the type of extensions; the perceived fit scale used in this study; consumer's perceptions of parent brand quality, and fit in the industry under investigation.

Table 7.1 Correlations between Parent Brand Quality and Perceived Fit

		Parent Brand Quality	FIT1	FIT2	FIT3
Parent Brand Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.158**	.108*	-.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.050	.717
FIT1	Pearson Correlation	.158**	1	.284**	.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000	.000
FIT2	Pearson Correlation	.108*	.284**	1	.202**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.000		.000
FIT3	Pearson Correlation	-.020	.225**	.202**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.717	.000	.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

7.3 Assumption of Normality

In this research, the OLS regression explanatory function is explored. The OLS regression assumes that: each variable and all linear combinations of the variables are normally distributed; the variance of one variable is about the same at each level of a second variable; the relationship between the response variable and the exploratory variable(s) appears linear; and the observations are not linked or dependent (Field 2005; Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999). To meet the assumption of normality is important, since statistical inference or exploratory power is weakened when departures occur from normality (Cohen et al. 2003; Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999). There are a number of means one can use to examine normality, for example, skewness and kurtosis, histogram, and quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plots. Most of these approaches can only be used to examine normality of an individual variable. In contrast, the residual test can identify departures which are the result of combinations of explanatory variables (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999). In this study, frequency histograms for the response variables and histograms of the residuals are used to examine the normality of the response variables. The choice for using the graphic method over statistical tests such as skewness and kurtosis is because the graphic method is visible and might also indicate how one might transform the variable to become normal. Figure 7.1 demonstrates histogram graphs of the residuals in this research. The histograms show no evidence of the violation of normality.

Figure 7.1 Histogram of the Dependent Variable:
Acceptance of Video Game Extension (1)
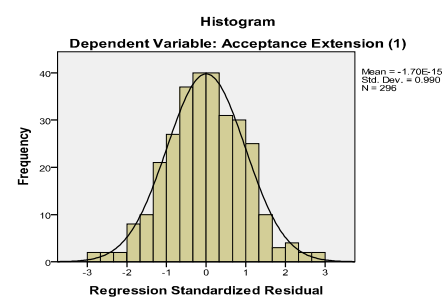
Figure 7.2 Histogram of the Dependent Variable:
Acceptance of Video Game Extension (2)
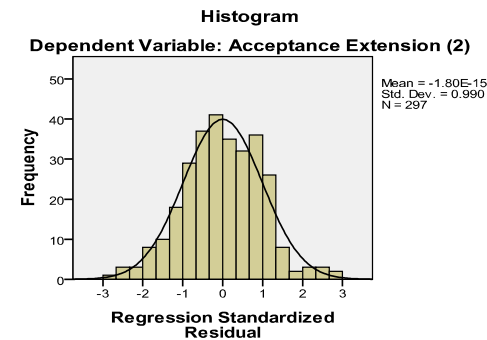
Figure 7.3 Histogram of the Dependent Variable:
 Acceptance of Video Game Extension (3)
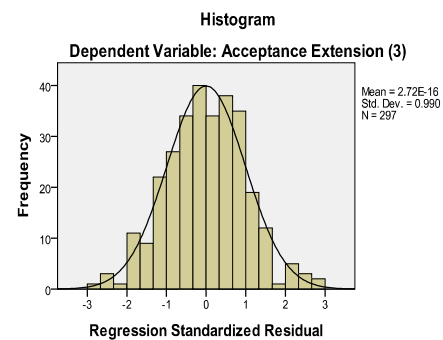
The following section focuses on assessing the assumption of constant variance and identify outliers; present results from multicollinearity tests and homoscedasticity tests. As the study

includes three related dependent variables, the study tests for homogeneity of variances of the three dependent variances and homogeneity of covariances. The study presents the confidence intervals for the b values of every coefficient in order to compare the effect of coefficients between the three models.

7.4 Casewise Diagnostics

As noted earlier, outliers are detected by looking for extreme standardized residuals. In an average, normally distributed sample, the standardised residual should have certain characteristics. For instance, 95% of the standard residuals of all cases should be within ±2.0 (Field 2000). So we would expect only 5% of cases to lie outside of these limits. For cases that lie outside the 5% range, the standardised residual should not be greater than ±3. Cases with a standardised residual greater than 3 should be further examined against the average leverage value. Steven (1992) recommends using three times the average (3k/n) as a cut-off point for identifying cases having undue influence.

For Extension1, 94.3% of cases lie within ±2.0; for the remaining 5.7% there is no case lying outside ±3 (min Std. Residual -2.950 max 2.493). Therefore, there is no reason for further investigation of the leverage value. Similarly, for Extension 2, 93.3% of cases lie within ±2.0; for the remaining 6.7% there is no case lying outside ±3 (min Std. Residual -2.859 max 2.922). Therefore, there is no reason for further investigation of the leverage value. Similarly, for Extension 3 (min Std. Residual -2.910 max Std. Residual 2.965), there is no reason for further investigation of the leverage value.

Table 7.3 Percent of Outliers of Acceptance Extension One

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	279	84.3	94.3	94.3
	1.00	17	5.1	5.7	100.0
	Total	296	89.4	100.0	
Missing	System	35	10.6		
	Total	331	100.0		

Table 7.4 Percent of Outliers of Acceptance Extension Two

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	277	83.7	93.3	93.3
	1.00	20	6.0	6.7	100.0
	Total	297	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	34	10.3		
	Total	331	100.0		

Table 7.5 Percent of Outliers of Acceptance Extension Three

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	277	83.7	93.3	93.3
	1.00	20	6.0	6.7	100.0
	Total	297	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	34	10.3		
Total		331	100.0		

7.5 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the correlation between the two or more independent variables (Hair et al. 1998). There is difficulty in separating the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable when multicollinearity is present. The problems of multicollinearity may be solved by combining the variables into a single index or to simply drop variables from the analysis (Cohen and Cohen 1983). However, one has to be careful in doing this. In factor analysis some degree of multicollinearity is desired as the object is to identify inter-related sets of variables (Hair et al 1998). For this reason, multicollinearity was not regarded as a particular problem when using factor analysis. However, in multiple regression analysis multicollinearity can be a major problem for researchers using these types of techniques (Malhotra 1999). This research regards a VIF value above 5 and tolerance value below 0.2 as problems. These rules are widely accepted by researchers (e. g. Field 2000, Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999, Bryman and Cramer 1999). The VIF and tolerance levels are reported in (Table 7.6; 7.7; 7.8).The tolerance values (ranging between .719 and .998) are all higher than 0.20, the benchmark level (Hutcheson and Sofroniou 1999), and VIF values (range between 1.007 and 1.245) are all lower than 5. Thus the levels of multicollinearity between the extracted factors are all within acceptable limits.

Table 7.6 Model of Acceptance of Extension One

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Tribalism	.837	1.194
FIT1	.804	1.243
Parent Brand Quality	.845	1.184
LEVELOFCO1	.986	1.014
Engagement	.719	1.391
Two way Communication	.803	1.245

Table 7.7Model of Acceptance of Extension 2

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Tribalism	.82	1.22
LEVELOFCO2	.988	1.012
Two way Communication	.835	1.197
FIT2	.968	1.033
Engagement	.834	1.199
Parent Brand Quality	.844	1.185

Table 7.8 Model of Acceptance of Extension Three

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
LEVELOFCO3	.993	1.007
Tribalism	.837	1.195
Two way Communication	.837	1.194
Engagement	.827	1.209
FIT3	.978	1.022
Parent Brand Quality	.853	1.173

7.6 Homoscedasticity

In multiple regression, homoscedasticity is present when the variance of the residuals is the same for all predicted scores (i.e., where the dependent variable exhibits equal levels of a variance across a range of predictor variables) (Coakes and Steed 1997). The examination of the residual scatter plots showed the variance of the residuals to be constant.

Figure 7.4 Scatter Plot of the Dependent Variable:

 Acceptance of Extension (1)

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Acceptance Extension (1)
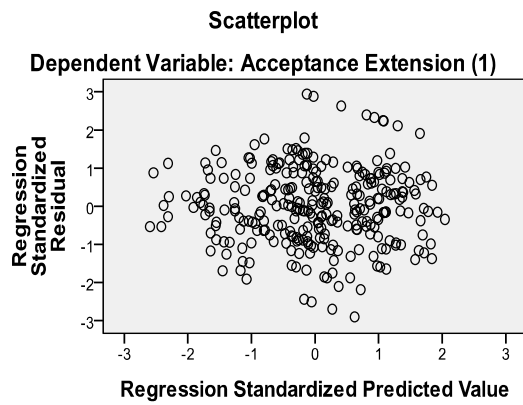
Figure 7.5 Scatter Plot of the Dependent Variable:
Acceptance of Extension (2)

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Acceptance Extension (2)
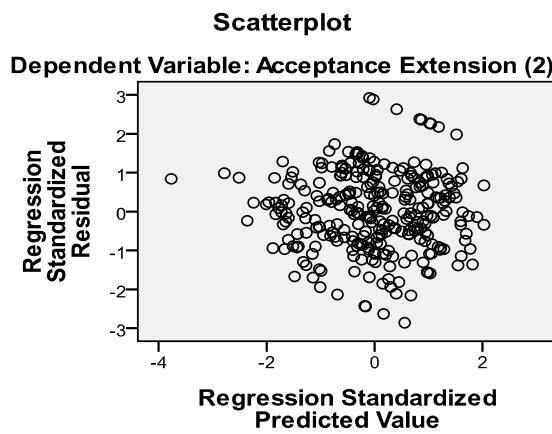
Figure 7.6 Scatter Plot of the Dependent Variable:

 Acceptance of Extension (3)

Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: Acceptance Extension (3)
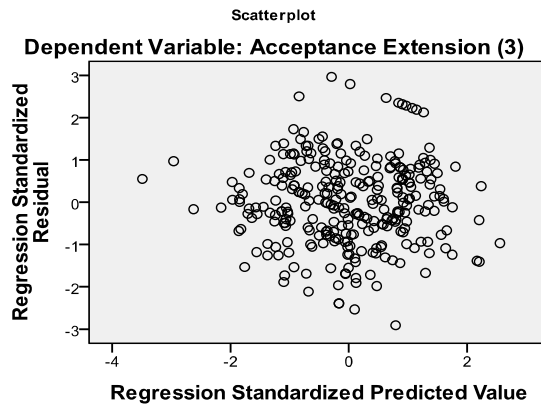
7.7 Homogeneity of Variance

One way to test for homogeneity of variance for t-tests and ANOVA is to use the Levene test. When the observed significance for this test is high then there is equal variance present (Norusis 1997). The Levene test was carried out on the different groups of the specific variables of interest. If the Levene Test is significant $p< .05$, then the three variances are significantly different. If the Levene Test is not significant $p>.05$ then the three variances are not significantly different. In the present study, the three variances are approximately equal, $p=.104>.05$.

The ANOVA test gives us an F value of 32.765 and significance of .000. This significance is .000<.05 and therefore, there is a significant difference between the three groups. Therefore, we can say there is a significant difference between the three extensions1, 2 and 3 on their level of acceptance. The results of the Post-Hoc Comparisons show significant differences between the three extensions with significance levels of .000<.05. Hence, we can proceed to identify the factors that affect the acceptance levels of these three extensions.

Table 7.9 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Acceptance			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.265	2	980	.104

ANOVA					
acceptance					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	134.520	2	67.260	32.765	.000
Within Groups	2011.752	980	2.053		
Total	2146.271	982			

Multiple Comparisons						
acceptance LSD						
		Mean			95% Confidence Interval	
(I) game	(J) game	Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
videogame1	videogame2	-.91432*	.11201	.000	-1.1341	-.6945
	videogame3	-.49029*	.11234	.000	-.7107	-.2698
videogame2	videogame1	.91432*	.11201	.000	.6945	1.1341
	videogame3	.42403*	.11131	.000	.2056	.6425
videogame3	videogame1	.49029*	.11234	.000	.2698	.7107
	videogame2	-.42403*	.11131	.000	-.6425	-.2056
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

Figure 7.7 Graphical Comparison of Acceptance Levels Mean Values
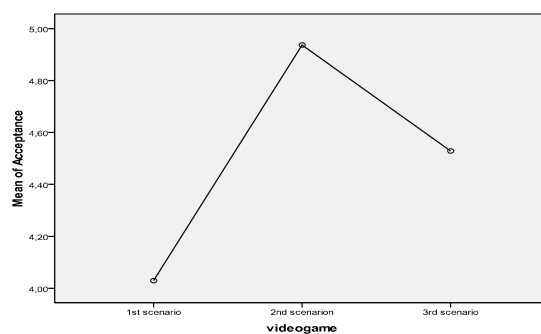
The graphical comparison above depicts the difference in the level of acceptance between the three extensions. The second video game extension has the greatest acceptance level, followed by the third.

7.8 Model Diagnostics

Overall the various model diagnostics results show that there is no multicollinearity problem, and non-constant error variance problems are not a concern either. There are some outliers but their number is very limited (less than 5 percent). Discarding the outliers does not cause significant changes to the models, nor to the regression coefficients. Thus Field's (2000) claim that cases with large leverage values may not necessarily have a strong influence on the regression coefficients, because they are measured on the outcome variables rather than the predictor, is supported. All this provides evidence that our models are fairly accurate. Therefore, it is decided that there is no necessity to report the regression results without the outliers.

7.9 Multivariate Tests

Multivariate tests examine whether the population means on the multiple dependent variables are equal across groups. What we are most interested in are the statistical values for Wilk's Lambda and F value. Lambda is a measure of the percent of variance in the DVs that is not explained by differences in the level of independent. Wilk's Lambda varies between 1 and 0, with a desirable result near 0. For the following factors we can assume homogeneity of covariances.

Two way communication Wilki's Lambda is .692 and has an associated F of 44.735 which is significant at p .000<.000. Parent Brand Quality Wilki's Lambda is .921 and has an associated F of 8.648 which is significant at p .000<.000. Tribalism Wilki's Lambda is .392 and has an associated F of 156.250 which is significant at p .000<.000. Engagement Wilki's Lambda is .904 and has an associated F 10.736 of which is significant at p .000<.000. Level of Co-creation 1 Wilki's Lambda is .919 and has an associated F of 8.922 which is significant at p .000<.000. Level of Co-Creation 2 Wilki's Lambda is .539 and has an associated F86.097 of which is significant at p .000<.000. Level of Co-Creation 3 Wilki's Lambda is .361 and has an associated F 178.476 of which is significant at p .000<.000. Perceived Fit 1 Wilki's Lambda is .785 and has an associated F 27.648 of which is significant at p .000<.000. Perceived Fit 2 Wilki's Lambda is .761 and has an associated F 31.636 of which is significant at p

.000<.000.Perceived Fit 3 Wilki's Lambda is .948 and has an associated F 5.533of which is significant at p .001<.000.

From the multivariate test between subjects, we see that the factors of *love, identification, norms, interdependence, intimacy* and *intentions to co-create* do not affect any extension significantly ($p>.05$). Possible explanations for the lack of emotional support could the nature of the study and the video gamers' lack of ability to transfer their feeling to this type of product. Fournier (1998) reported that the type of relationship they create depends on the personality of the person. It is possible that gamers use more of communication type of relationship rather than an emotional one. Another possible explanation is that their effect was overridden by the rest of the factors. For the virtual brand tribal community dimensions, norms and identification are not likely to have any effect in respect of tribalism and engagement. This result is in line with the incremental importance of tribalism in the literature of brand communities with a tribal character, where their members are more focused on the activity rather than the commercial value. Also norms or normative community pressure was not found to have a significant effect on the adoption of new products in related studies (Thompson and Sinha 2008). The construct was used here for the sake of completeness as a dimension of community.

The intentions to co-create construct was also not found to significantly affect any of the extensions. A possible explanation would be that since all the extensions included a level of co-creation, the effects of intentions were in a way taken for granted, and the effects of this factor were overridden by the effects of the level of co-creation. Given that the objective of this chapter is to present the results only a brief reasoning is provided here; more detailed explanations will follow in Chapter 8.

7.10 Stepwise OLS Regression Results

Stepwise regression has been criticised for taking many methodological decisions out of the hands of the researcher (Field 2000); yet the researcher has used stepwise regression, as it was considered appropriate for exploratory model building (Wright 1997). Individual stepwise regression will help us to select the best statistical model as there are a large number of potential exploratory variables and no underlying theory on which to base the model selection.

Table 7.10 Summary of Regressions

Explanatory Variable	Estimated Coefficients		
	Extension 1	Extension 2	Extension 3
Constant	2.0** (.000) [1.276, 2.723]	2.028** (.000) [1.358, 2.697]	3.451** (.000) [2.747, 4.155]
Perceived Fit	.503** (.000) [.420, .587]	.319** (.000) [.256, .381]	.309** (.000) [.162, .456]
Parent Brand Quality	.122** (.003) [.044, .200]	.127** (.000) [.058, .197]	.113** (.003) [.041, .186]
Level of Co-creation	.130** (.000) [.076, .185]	.467** (.000) [.411, .523]	.682** (.000) [.625, .740]
Tribalism	.414** (.000) [.340, .487]	.664** (.000) [.598, .730]	.409** (.000) [.340, .478]
Two Way Communication	0.134* (.039) [.018, .249]	0.456** (.000) [.335, .557]	0.497** (.000) [.391, .603]
Engagement	.151** (.000) [.077, .224]	.198** (.000) [.058, .197]	.243 (.000) [.179, .308]

*Video Game 1 Adjusted R square=.535, F=62.303**, df (reg)=6, df(res)=314*

*Video Game 2 Adjusted R square=.798, F=211.65**, df (reg)=6, df(res)=314*

*Video Game 3 Adjusted R square=.76, F=171.919**, df(reg)=6, df(res)=314*

Note 1: Estimates with * represent statistically significant impact in 5% level and estimates with ** represent statistically significant impact in 10% level.

Note 2: Numbers in parenthesis represent the p-value of significance tests

Note 3: Numbers in the brackets represent the confidence intervals for the b values

The Adjusted R squares of all three models suggest that the variation of the independent variables explain 53% (for Model 1) and 79% (for Model 2) and 76% (for Model 3) of the variation of the dependent variable, respectively. From the significance level we can safely reject the null hypotheses for all three models.

Extension1 (video game 1) is affected positively and significantly by perceptions of fit (b=.503, p=.000< .05); perceived brand quality (b=.122, p=.003<.05); level of co-creation

(b=.130, p=.000<.05); tribalism (b=.414, p=.000<.05); two-way communication (b=.134, p=.039<.05); and engagement (b=.151, p=.000<.05). The perceived fit variable is found to have the most impact on the subject's acceptance of an extension product with high company-low consumer co-creation level, judging by its b value in comparison with other variables. The greater the fit between the extension and the brand, the more likely the subjects are to accept a low consumer-high company co-creation product. Wuts et al. (2012) conceptualised five dimensions of fit (i.e., label fit; entity fit; playstoric fit; symbolic fit; and emotional fit) in the video games industry upon which managers can base their extension design and academics can develop measurable scales. For extension 1, tribalism is the second most influential factor. The tendency to purchase a low consumer-high company product increases with the increase in the level of tribalism, and is the second most influential factor. The tendency to purchase a low consumer high-company product increases with the increase in the level of tribalism consumers have. The more the subjects believe they belong in a tribe, the more likely they are to like, buy or recommend the product. As expected, engagement, the second dimension of the virtual brand tribal community concept, has the next strongest effect on extension acceptance after tribalism. Virtual brand tribal community is the second most influential factor on extension acceptance after perceived fit, followed by consumer-brand relationship, level of co-creation and perceived quality of the brand. The level of co-creation this extension entails is relatively low; therefore, this factor logically holds fifth position.

Extension 2 (video game 2) is affected positively and significantly by perceptions of fit (b=.329, p=.000<.05); perceived brand quality (b=.127, p=.000<.05); level of co-creation (b=.467, p=.000<.05); tribalism (b=.664, p=.000<.05); two-way communication (b=.456, p=.000<.05); and engagement (b=0.189, p=.000<.05). Extension 2 model of acceptance, tribalism, is the most powerful explanatory variable in the model. This indicates that subjects who find interesting or who would like to buy a joint co-creation product are more likely to believe that they belong to a community with a tribal character and that this product will help them maintain their bonds with the tribe. The subjects' intention to buy or recommend such a product increases along with their feeling of belonging to a tribe. In contrast to the extension 1 acceptance model, perceived fit is not the most influential factor; its position is replaced by tribalism, followed by level of co-creation and two-way communication, suggesting that the relationship marketing dimensions have the leading role.

Extension 3 (video game 3) is affected positively and significantly by perceptions of fit (b=.309, p.000<.05); perceived brand quality (b=.113, p=.003<.05); level of co-creation (b=.682, p=.000<.05); tribalism (b=.409, p=.000<.05); two=way communication (b=.497, p=.000<.05); and engagement (b=.243, p=.000<.05). For the Extension 3 acceptance model, the relationship marketing dimensions leave perceptions of fit in third position, similar to the extension 2 acceptance model. Therefore, the results suggest that the stronger the relational element between the consumer and the brand, the more likely are the consumers to prefer joint and high consumer co-creation products. However, the level of co-creation is the key factor for consumers who choose influencing high co-creation products, suggesting that managers who are planning to launch such products should pay particular attention to the level of co-creation they introduce. Academics, on the other hand, should develop knowledge around the co-creation element.

Confidence intervals are used to indicate the reliability of an estimate and in this case of the b value. Confidence intervals give an estimate range of values which is likely to include the beta value. When the confidence intervals are compared, if they contain common values then there is no significant difference at 5% level (Field 2000). Confidence intervals are reported in brackets in Table.7.10 Results from confidence interval comparisons are presented in Table.7.11.

Table 7.11 Results from Confidence Intervals Comparisons between Extension Products

Constant	1=2, 1,2<3
Parent Brand Quality	1=2=3
Fit	1>2, 1=3, 2=3
Level of Co-Creation	1<2, 1<3, 2<3
Tribalism	1<2, 1=3, 2>3
Two way communication	1<2, 1<3, 2=3
Engagement	1=2=3

7.11 Overall Results of the Statistical Analysis

The results suggest that dimensions from the relationship marketing and S-D logic literatures, as well as from the brand extension literature, can positively and simultaneously affect extension acceptance.

All three extensions are affected positively by consumers' perceptions of fit between the extension product and the parent brand as well as the parent brand's quality. Yet as the level of co-creation increases, so does the effect of dimensions taken from the relationship marketing literature; conversely, the effect of dimensions taken from the traditional marketing literature decreases. Moreover, the extension with a joint level of co-creation is the one which is preferred, as can be seen from Figure 7.7). Virtual brand tribal dimensions (tribalism and engagement) taken from the relationship marketing literature affect all extensions significantly positively, but make the most impact on the second (see Table 7.10; 7.11). This is logical, as joint co-creation extension requires high levels of communication and high levels of frequency. Complementary to the effects of virtual brand tribal community, consumer-to-brand-relationship two-way communication constructs strengthen the effect of relationship marketing theory on the acceptance of extension products with joint and high co-creation conditions. The consumer-to-brand and relationship dimension (two way communication) affects all extensions positively and affects the second and the third extensions most. Confidence intervals for the constants of extension 1 and extension 2 show that there is 95% confidence that the values of the two constants are not different; while extension 3 tends to have higher acceptance by 3.5 values, provided that all other factors remain stable.

More specifically, for extension 1 (company high creation-consumer low creation) perceptions of fit is the most influential factor, followed by tribalism, engagement, two-way communication, level of co-creation and perceived quality of the brand. For extension 2 (joint co-creation between the company and the consumer) tribalism seems to be the most influential factor followed by the level of co-creation, two-way communication, perceptions of fit, engagement and perceived quality of the brand. For extension 3 (high creation for the consumer, low for the company), the level of co-creation is the most influential factor, followed by two way communication, tribalism, perceptions of fit, community engagement and perceived quality of the brand.

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From the analysis above, perceptions of fit has the strongest effect on acceptance of extension 1. The confidence interval values suggest that its effect is statistically different from perceptions of fit in extension 2. For extension 2 and 3, the perceived fit effect compared to the rest of the factors considered is less than for extension 1. For extension 1, perceptions of fit is the most significant factor, while for extensions 2 and 3 it is the fourth most significant. This result verifies the popularity of the factor of perceived fit in the brand extension literature in explaining consumer acceptance of brand extension products. Therefore, the results are in line with past research.

Perceived Brand Quality seems to affect all three extensions positively and significantly. In addition, looking at the confidence intervals, this factor seems to affect all three extensions with the same magnitude. In comparison with the other factors considered, perceived brand quality is the least influential factor on extension acceptance for all three extensions. This can be explained as the extension introduced as brand (line) extension or extension products belong in the same product category with the original brand. It would not have been logical for the effect of parent brand quality to vary significantly on products which are very similar to the original.

The level of co-creation seems to affect all three extensions positively and significantly. The confidence interval values show its effect to be significantly different for all three extensions. For extension 1 (company based high-consumer low), the level of co-creation is the fifth most influential factor. For extension 2 (joint co-creation), the level of co-creation is the second most influential factor and for extension 3 (high consumer-low company), it is the most influential factor.

Tribalism is the second most influential factor for extension 1 (company based high-consumer low). For extension 2 (joint co-creation), tribalism is the most influential factor from the factors considered. From the confidence intervals values, it seems that tribalism affects extension 2 significantly differently from extension 1. For extension 3 (high consumer-low company), tribalism is the third most influential factor, while from the confidence intervals values it is evident that the strength of the effect of this factor is not significantly different between extension 1 and 3. Hence, tribalism is found to have a statistically significantly

different effect only on extensions with joint co-creation. During the past decade, consumers in the form of communities have been undertaking work to co-create products with the company. A number of scholars have documented the advantages of this approach from both the consumers' and the company's perspectives. It is possible that tribalism, and consumers' intentions to consume with other consumers of the same kind support the type of products that are jointly co-created.

Two-way communication is the fourth most influential factor for extension 1 (company based high-consumer low). For extension 2 (joint co-creation) and 3 (high consumer-low company), it is the third most influential factor. Confidence interval values suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between the effect of two-way communication on extension 2 and 3, while the effect of this factor is significantly less for extension 1. This finding is in line with the incremental effect of relationship marketing theory on extension acceptance of products that require joint or high co-creation levels.

Virtual brand tribal community engagement is the third most influential factor for extension 1, and the fifth for extension 2 and extension 3, while from the confidence interval values it seems that there is no statistically significant difference in the effect of this factor on the three extensions. The value of virtual brand tribal community engagement may increase as the level of co-creation increases; however, in comparison with the other factors, engagement with the virtual brand tribal community will not have a statistically significantly different effect depending on their level of co-creation. This result is useful to managers who often may trigger greater participation in the brand community, thinking that this may create a greater effect on consumer behaviour of extension products. In a related study, Thompson and Sinha (2008) found that greater levels of participation over longer periods of time affect adoption behaviour; however the latter did not find incremental effects for the influence of engagement on a variety of products with different levels of co-creation, while the present research did not consider the effect of time. Future research could shed more light on these results.

Overall, the factors considered in the study explain more variance for the second extension (joint co-creation) as the level of co-creation, tribalism and two-way communication factors affect this extension significantly more than for extension 1. This result is in line with the reasoning for the use of the S-D logic and relationship marketing to interpret consumers'

choice criteria of acceptance on extension products with different levels of co-creation. The factors considered in the study explain slightly less variance for the acceptance of extension 3, as the factor of two-way communication does not affect extension 3 statistically differently from extension 2; tribalism affects extension 3 less than extension 2; perceived fit, quality and engagement do not have a statistically significant different effect on it, while only the level of co-creation has a statistically significant incremental effect on the acceptance of extension 3 in comparison to extension 1 and 2. The latter suggests that extension 3 is likely to be preferred mainly on the basis of the level of co-creation it introduces.

From the analysis above, it is clear that the determinants of extending successfully into product categories with joint and high co-creation from the side of the consumer are: i) the level of co-creation that the extension incorporates; and ii) consumers' feeling of belonging to a tribe of people who share the same passion for their interest and ability to communicate with the brand in a two-way manner. It is possible that the selected factors explain more variance for the extension 2 acceptance compared to that of extension 3, as the conditions have not matured enough for extension 3 acceptance to be equally explained. Moreover, the factors considered in this study explain less variance in the acceptance of extension 1 compared to the extension 2. It is possible that future researchers investigating the antecedents of extensions with high company-low consumer co-creation would have to consider factors arising from other literatures in order to increase their level of understanding of consumer adoption of such products.

From the analysis of means (Figure 7.7) it is apparent that extension 2 (joint co-creation) will have the highest preference, followed by extension 3 (high consumer-low company) and extension 1 (high company low consumer). The factors considered also explain more variance for the acceptance of extensions 2 and 3. This can be an important finding for both academic research and practice.

The theoretical model presented below (Figure 7.8) illustrates the main concepts discussed in this study, the literatures from which they originate and their hypothesised effect on consumers' evaluations of an extension product. The measurement model presented in (Figure 7.9) illustrates how the constructs were measured in the present study to explore their effect on

different types of extensions. The results model in (Figure 7.10) depicts the effects of the main theoretical constructs on the three extensions.

This chapter also uses illustrations to facilitate understanding of the process.

Figure 7.8 Theoretical Model
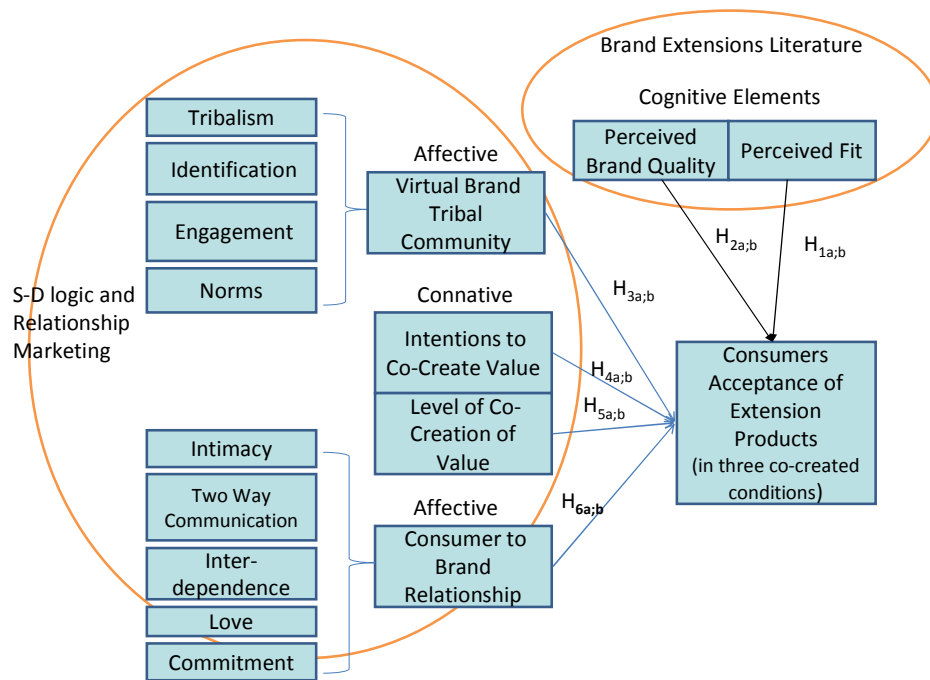
Figure 7.9 Measurement Model
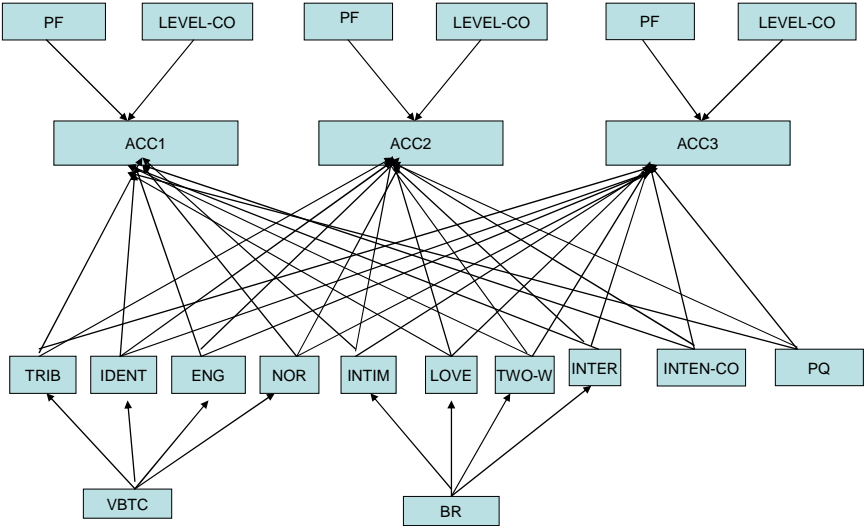
Figure 7.10 Result Model
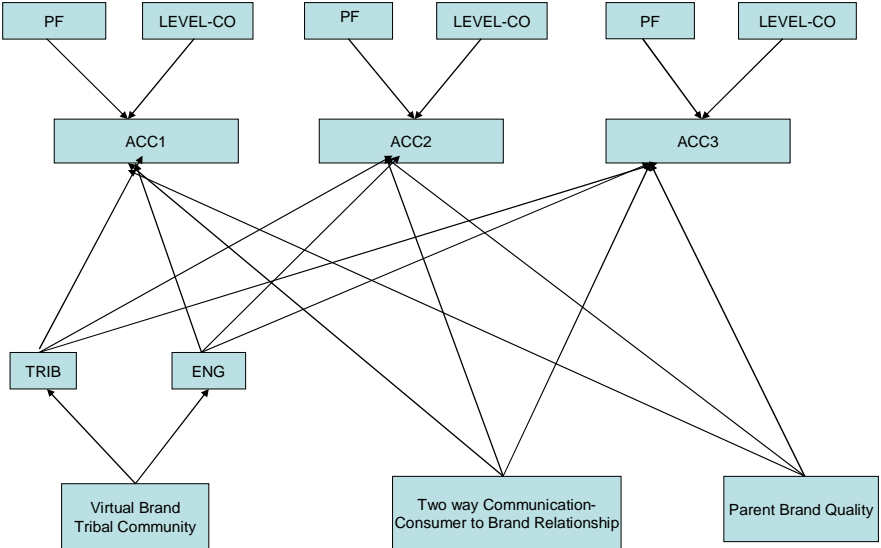
7.12 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of results. Regression techniques are adopted for data analysis in the current research. A decision is made on the choice of the OLS based on the research objectives and a scrupulous examination of the collected data. Various model diagnostics are conducted. There did not appear to be any violation of the assumptions considered, which enables the chosen statistical techniques to be carried out. The research results show that a) all three dimensions of relationship marketing theory (i.e., virtual brand tribal communities, consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value) affect extension acceptance; b) the effect of these dimensions varies depending on the type of extension (in terms of level of co-creation); c) the level of co-creation of value seems to affect all three extensions (games) positively and significantly; d) The preferred extension (game) is the second, which has the highest level of co-creation between the company and the consumer (gamer); the second preference is for the third extension (game) introduced with the consumer being in charge of the co-creation process. All in all, the results suggest that the level of co-creation offered by the extended product or service may be the key to its acceptance. This result makes a unique contribution to the brand extension literature.

Brief explanations are provided in this chapter alongside the research results. Given that the main objective of this chapter is to present the method of analysis, detailed interpretations of the results are not reported here. The following chapter (Chapter 8) discusses in detail the key findings in relation to the hypotheses and interprets them in the context of existing literature.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The main objectives of this final, closing chapter of the thesis are to provide a summary analysis and synthesis of the project by underscoring the main conclusions reached from the study and the main contributions of the research. Detailed discussions about each individual model were provided directly after the research results presented in (Chapter 7). This chapter starts with an overview of the thesis to help the reader create an overall picture of the research, and proceeds to the discussion of the main results.

The analysis revealed that virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship and level of co-creation of value positively and significantly affect extension acceptance. However, when taking a piecemeal rather than a holistic approach, it was found that the virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship multi-dimensional concepts are not well balanced concepts. As a result, not all the dimensions of these concepts affect extension acceptance. The results also revealed differences in the strength of the relationship between some dimensions and different types of extensions in terms of level of co-creation. This chapter will provide a rationalisation for individual significant findings and explain how they contribute to the literature on the antecedents of brand extension acceptance.

Overall, the study has contributed to creating the first conceptual framework that merges the theories of relationship marketing, S-D logic and categorisation and reflects a multi-level perspective - cognitive, affective (relational), and connative (co-creative) - on the adoption of extension products. In addition, the chapter discusses in detail the main theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions of the study. Following the implications section, the research limitations are discussed as well as possible avenues for further research related to the findings of this study. This chapter ends with a concluding note and a table that summarises the main contributions of the study (Table 8.3).

8.2 Thesis Review

At this stage in the thesis it is helpful to revisit the previous chapters in terms of content and rationale. The objective is to consolidate and unify this research before implications, limitations and avenues for future research are considered.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) provided the foundations for this research. This was achieved by outlining the research context and identifying a notable gap in the extension literature (see Chapter 2). Guided by these issues, four research questions were formulated which have underpinned this research:

What are the main antecedents to brand extension acceptance?
What are the effects of virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship on brand extension acceptance?
What is the effect of co-creation of value on brand extension acceptance?
What are the effects of virtual brand tribal community, consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value on acceptance of brand extensions, with different levels of co-creation?

With the context of the research considered and research questions developed, the next chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) reviewed the relevant literature. This helped clarify this thesis' interpretation of key elements.

The theoretical framework of this study supports the existing underlying theoretical rationale behind the extensions investigation, based on the theory of categorisation. It is therefore, the perceptions of fit concept that it is at the heart of most proposed conceptual frameworks (Aaker and Keller 1990; Völckner and Sattler 2006; Buil, de Chernatony and Hem 2009; Milberg et al. 2010). The present study extends this understanding, by emphasising the importance of the factors of 'relationships' and 'co-creation of value'. The importance of the latter factors has grown together with the rising paradigm of the S-D logic. In this way the study has bridged the gap between the extensions, relationship marking and co-creation of value literatures, and therefore contributes substantially to existing understanding regarding consumers' evaluations of extensions products. Viewing consumer evaluations of extensions products through the lens of S-D logic is a unique contribution to existing knowledge (according to the researcher's understanding) and fundamental to the field, as a number of

studies have been recently applying this logic to interpret post-modern consumption phenomena (Karpen, Bove and Lukas 2012; Lusch and Vargo 2011; Merz, Yi and Vargo 2009). In particular, Chapter 4 explains in detail the model and hypotheses development.

In order to test the theoretical framework, the methodology chapter (Chapter 4) outlined how the research instrument was developed and used to gather primary data. This process was carried out primarily by an extensive literature review and the results from the qualitative stage of the data collection. The research then continued with a thorough survey design process (Dillman, 2000). The result of this process was an online survey. With data collection complete, data analysis could proceed. The analysis chapter outlined how a range of statistical techniques was employed to analyse the data (Chapter 7).

This final chapter discusses the findings of qualitative and quantitative research (where appropriate) in the context of the literature (Chapter 2 and 3), with the latter being informed by the research questions (Chapter 1). More specifically, having revisited the overall structure of the thesis, this chapter presents an overview of the brand extension literature and the conceptual background of the study (Section 8.3). It continues by discussing the findings of the present research, beginning with the results related to existing brand extension research, i.e., the effects of perceived fit and perceived brand quality (Section 8.3.1 and Section 8.3.2 respectively). Then the chapter highlights the relevance of newly introduced factors in predicting consumer to brand extension acceptance, i.e., virtual brand tribal community; intentions to co-create value; level of co-creation; consumer-brand relationship (Section 8.4; Section 8.5.1 and Section 8.5.2; Section 8.6, respectively). The chapter summarises key findings in Section 8.7. Having presented the research findings, the chapter discusses the theoretical, methodological and managerial implications of this research. Finally, as with every study, there are limitations and opportunities for future research, and these are also presented in this final chapter.

8.3 Brand Extension Literature

During the last two decades an increasing number of companies have been observed to treat their brands as assets and try to leverage the equity of the brand by introducing new products

under established names. Prior research has revealed that consumers' evaluations of these brand extensions depend mainly on two factors: the perceived parent brand quality and perceived fit between the parent brand and the extension. While additional studies have shown that the importance of these two factors may vary depending on an array of consumer, brand extension and communication strategy characteristics, the current research examines the strength of the effect of these two main factors in addition to the three newly introduced factors which have emerged from the distinctiveness of post-modern consumption patterns (relational) as opposed to modern consumption patterns (transactional) (see Chapter 3). This conceptualisation contributes to knowledge on the antecedents on extension acceptance.

The results of the study are linked to the hypotheses and presented in simplified format in (Table 8.1). The paragraphs following (Table 8.1) provide a detailed factor by factor commentary of the results.

Table 8.1 Hypotheses and Results

Factor	Hypotheses	Result	Details
Perceived Fit	**H1a** Perceptions of Fit will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Supported	
	H1b The effect of Perceptions of Fit will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Supported Partially	FIT 1>2,1=3,2=3
Parent Brand Quality	**H2a** Parent Brand Quality will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Supported	
	H2b The effect of Parent Brand Quality will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Not Supported	
Virtual Brand Tribal Community	**H3a** Virtual Brand Tribal Community will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Supported	

	H3b The effect of Virtual Brand Tribal Community will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Supported Supported Partially	Tribalism 1<2,1=3,2>3 Engagement 1=2=3
Consumer Intentions to Co-Create Value	**H4a** Consumer Intentions to Co-Create Value will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Not Supported	
	H4b The effect of Consumer Intentions to Co-Create Value will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Not Supported	
Level of Co-Creation of Value	**H5a** Level of Co-Creation of Value will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Supported	
	H5b The effect of Level of Co-Creation of Value will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Supported	
Consumer-brand relationship	**H6a** Consumer-brand relationship will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively.	Supported	
	H6b The effect of Consumer-brand relationship will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Supported Partially	Two Way Communicati on 1<2,1<3, 2=3

8.3.1 Perceived Fit

Perceived fit in the present study, is defined as consumers' overall understanding of an extension product as part of the parent brand. The brand extension literature largely depends on categorisation theory to rationalise consumer judgments of the extension products. In the early studies, perceived fit was addressed as a measure of similarity (Fry 1967; Neuhaus and Taylor 1972). Tauber (1988) was the first to conceptualise perceived fit as a perceptual fit. Aaker and Keller (1990) identified three dimensions of fit (physical similarity, relatedness and transfer). In 2003, Edelman conducted a PhD study to identify which facets of fit are most influential in brand extension retail stretches. Although relatedness seems to be the most

conceptually vague dimension, high levels of multicollinearity between the three dimensions do no permit clear distinctions regarding the effects of each dimension individually. With the exception of the studies of Aaker and Keller (1990), Smith and Park (1992) and Hem and Iversen (2009) which have addressed the effect of different dimensions of fit, but do not apply to our context, almost all studies in brand extension literature have considered perceived fit as an unidimensional construct. The present study has followed this approach.

Perceptions of fit constitute the principal antecedent of extension success in most brand extension research until today (Aaker and Keller 1990; Keller and Aaker 1992; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Boush 1993; Boush and Loken 1991; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Dacin and Smith 1994; DelVecchio 2000; Loken and Roedder 1993; Park et al. 1991; Sheinin 1998; Sunde and Brodie 1993; Hem, de Chernatony and Iversen 2003; Nijssen and Hartman 1994; Nijssen, 1999; Reddy et al. 1994; Sullivan, 1990; Smith and Park 1992; Tauber 1988; Hem and Iversen 2009; Völckner and Sattler 2006; Pina et al. 2006; He and Li 2010; Song et al. 2010 van Riel et al. 2010; Batra, Lenk and Wedel 2010; Mao and Krishnan 2006; Milberg et al. 2010; van Riel and Ouwersloot 2005; Grime et al. 2002; Tang, Liou and Peng 2008; Burnaz and Bilgin 2011; Wuts et al. 2012). In particular, Grime et al. (2002) claim that it is not the category of the extension brand (category) or (line) extension that will determine acceptance of the extension, but the level of fit between the parent brand and the extension.

The results of the present research are in agreement with previous findings as perceptions of fit have a significant and positive effect on all three extensions. Therefore, *H$_{1a}$ Perceptions of Fit will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively is supported.* However, the present study moves one step forward to measure the difference of the effect on the three extensions. The present study has found that the effect of fit on the extension products with different levels of co-creation is only significantly different between low and medium (joint) co-creation products. Hence *H$_{1b}$ The effect of Perceptions of Fit will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation* is partially supported. One explanation for this is that all the extensions belong in the same product category and therefore perceptions of fit are likely to be strong between products of the same category.

In support of this result, researchers have provided evidence on the asymmetric effects of perceived fit when extending vertically or horizontally within the same product category. Thus Loken and John (1993) found that lower quality extensions reduce brand evaluation regardless of fit. In contrast Romeo (1991) reports that lower quality extensions did not alter brand evaluations in high fit and even improved brand evaluations in low fit cases, and Zimmer and Bhat (2004) report neutral to positive effects across brand extensions of varying quality levels of fit. Recent research finds inconsistent results for the strength of the effects of fit on brand (category) and (line) extensions (Heath et al. 2011). Moreover, previous work has examined the effects of fit mainly on extensions perceived as similar, moderately similar or dissimilar to the original, within the same product category or in another product category. Some researchers have also manipulated the extension product in terms of physical similarity; typicality (Boush and Loken 1991; Batra et al. 2010); and brand attachment (Fedorikhin et al. 2008). Based on this finding it is very logical to presume that the perceptions of fit can vary significantly to a certain extent even within the same product category or in another product category.

Overall, this finding is noteworthy as most of the previous research on brand extensions has reported the significant effect of perceptions of fit on extension acceptance, comparing and contrasting the effect between similar and dissimilar extensions, but neglecting to measure and report whether the effect is actually statistically significantly different. Therefore, the current study contributes to existing research, by estimating and reporting the statistical difference of perceptions of fit between products of different levels of co-creation.

In addition, the current study has found that the influences of perceived fit are relevant to the effects of other factors considered when extending to joint or high co-creation product categories. For instance, perceived fit has the (second) strongest effect on extensions acceptance with joint or high co-creation; conversely, it is the most significant factor for the acceptance of extensions with low co-creation.

8.3.2 Perceived Brand Quality

A core idea behind the practice of brand extension is to take advantage of a brand's equity in order to facilitate the acceptance of a new product. It is therefore logical to expect that the perceived quality of the brand would be associated with consumers' attitudes toward the extension. The perceived quality and the perceived superiority or excellence of a brand compared to its competitors should have an impact if a brand has been extended to a new or within an existing product category. Aaker and Keller (1990) first tested the effects of perceived quality on consumer evaluations of brand extensions. They demonstrate that the relationship between perceived quality and positive attitude towards the extension is only shown in the case of high similarity (fit) between the original product and the extended product. On the other hand, subsequent studies - Keller and Aaker (1992); Sunde and Brodie 1993; Nijssen and Hartman 1994; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; van Riel et al. 2001; Bottomley and Holden (2001); Tang et al. 2008; and Burnaz and Bilgin 2011 - which replicated the Aaker and Keller (1990) framework, established that perceived quality can exercise a direct and positive effect on the evaluation of the brand extensions, regardless of the fit (Martinez and Pina 2003). A paradox arises though as Völckner and Sattler's (2006) study on brand extension success drivers found no support for the effect of perceived brand quality on acceptance of the extension product.

Thus results from recent studies have created inconsistencies in the literature regarding the relationship between perceived brand quality and extension acceptance. The current research contributes to this discourse by supporting the results that perceived brand quality affects extensions with different levels of co-creation, although in the same product category with the same magnitude. Thus H_{2a}, *Parent Brand Quality will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively* is supported. Since some of the variables of the present model are different from the variables of the original and replication studies, due to the addition of relational and co-creative elements, a formal comparison is not possible. The comparative findings are, nevertheless, interesting on an intuitive level.

Interestingly, Wuts et al. (2012) noted that 100 video game titles were listed in 2009, under brand names from outside the gaming industry. This can be a logical explanation for the low effect of perceived brand quality on extension acceptance that was found in this study (see Chapter 7; Table 7.10; 7.11). The results from this study suggest that perceived brand quality

positively and significantly affects extension acceptance with different levels of co-creation. However, it does not affect acceptance significantly statistically differently. Therefore, H_{2b} *The effect of Parent Brand Quality will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation* is not supported.

In addition, perceived brand quality is the sixth most significant factor in all three models. Therefore, its value compared to other factors is relatively low. The latter result suggests that an extension product may benefit from a strong brand name (Hem et al. 2003); yet a strong brand name is not necessarily a differential advantage when extending within the same product category to products with different levels of co-creation, as it does not affect extensions of a certain type with greater magnitude than others (see Chapter 7, Table 7.10).

In support of these findings, Christodoulides et al.'s (2012) study on how user generated content affects brands, found no significant impact of consumer empowerment on involvement in user generated content. According to these authors, consumers who engage in user generated content, by definition are empowered to create their own content regardless of inclusion of a brand. In other words, it may be that what empowers consumers to engage with brand-related user generated content is the context of Web 2.0 technologies rather than the brand itself. In these respects, it seems reasonable that the concept of perceived quality of the brand affects all extensions with different levels of co-creation with the same magnitude (without a statistically significant difference).

8.4 Conceptualising Virtual Brand Tribal Community

A number of studies over the past decade have focused on the emerging phenomenon of brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Algesheimer et al. 2005; McAlexander et al. 2002; Muniz and Schau 2005; Kozinets 1997; Dholakia and Vianello 2011; Noble et al. 2012; Cova and White 2010). More recent studies (Fournier and Lee 2009) have recognised the strategic importance of this form of exposure and have concentrated on identifying the dimensions and antecedents and marketing outcomes of this strategy, such as increased levels of customer satisfaction, loyalty to the brand, purchase behaviour and positive word-of-mouth (Adjei 2012; Lee et al. 2011; Gummerus et al. 2012; Casalo et al. 2010; Stokburger-Sauer 2010). A number of scholars have also focused on the applicability of this strategy in the online environment

(Kozinets 2002; Andersen 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Koh and Kim 2004; Casalo et al. 2007; Royo-Vela and Casamassima 2011; Adjei et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2011).

Similarly, studies have concentrated on communal approaches to consumption, such as subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995); and other tribal marketing approaches which are not centred on a cult brand (Cova and Cova 2002), but around other focal objects, such as music (Artur 2006); passive sport consumption (Holt 1995), active sport consumption (Arnould and Price 1993), sexual orientation (Kates 2004), user innovation communities (Lerner and Tirole 2002, 2004; von Hippel 2001), open source communities (Krishnamurthy 2009; Krishnamurthy and Tripahi 2009) or e-tribes (Kozinets 1999). More intense discourse has been underway around the notion of brand community. For example, Carlson, Suter and Brown (2008) were the first to distinguish between two types of brand communities - the social and the psychological. Drengners et al (2012) have challenged the notion of psychological brand community presented by Carlson et al. (2008) and in their own research have reconceptualised the notion of psychological community. In a similar vein, Acosta and Rajdevasagaym (2010) have extended the notion of brand community to brand cult.

Overall, empirical research conducted on these phenomena offers useful insights into their organisational structure, purpose and dimensionality. However, a common denominator of the existing research is the lack of conceptual and therefore empirical distinction between these phenomena. In order to offer accurate and applicable knowledge, it is important to identify criteria that would allow us to better understand and discriminate between the different communal forms. In their paper on brand communities, subcultures of consumption and tribes, Canniford and Shankar (in Shau and Price 2011) made an attempt to classify the characteristics of each concept and identify similarities between the concepts. To extend existing knowledge over the concepts the researchers called for more work on the phenomenon of tribal communities.

Specifically, this study has looked at the effects of the concept of virtual brand tribal community, together with the effects of the consumer-brand relationship concept and other cognitive and connative elements. To date studies have not looked at the effects of this combination of factors. From a relationship marketing perspective, studies in the brand

extension literature have focused on the effects of emotional bonding with the brand as a relational dimension (Yeung and Wyer 2005; Fedorikhin et al. 2008). The present study has added the concept of virtual brand tribal community as a relational dimension and examined its effects on acceptance and in relation to the traditional brand extension factors. The study found that the concept of virtual brand tribal community can have a positive and significant effect on acceptance. Therefore, *H_{3a}Virtual Brand Tribal Community will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively* is supported. As diffusion theory suggests, social systems and communication channels such as brand communities have the potential to influence members' adoption behaviour (Mahajan et al. 1995; Rogers 2003).

H_{3b}The effect of Virtual Brand Tribal Community will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation is partially supported. The study has found that the dimension of virtual brand tribal community – tribalism - will affect all extension products with different levels of co-creation. Specifically, the construct of tribalism will affect products with joint levels of co-creation more than products with high consumer-low company level of co-creation; and products with high consumer-low company co-creation. In addition, its effect will vary in comparison to the other factors from the brand extension and relationship marketing literature, depending on the level of co-creation the extension offers (see Chapter 7, Table 7.10;7.11). In support of these findings, Cova and White (2010) have found that groupings of consumers are capable of developing competitive to the brand's products with little or no assistance from the company (e.g., consumer high-company low co-creation products). Alternatively, the dimension of virtual brand tribal community-tribalism possibly affects positively offerings with different levels of co-creation.

Moreover, virtual brand tribal community-engagement-affects all types of extensions with the same magnitude. This finding is also supported by the findings of Thompson and Sinha (2008) who examined the effect of brand community on consumers' adoption of products related to the brand rather than competing brands. These authors collected data from two dominant brands in two product categories (x86microprocessors and 3Dvideo game cards), and found that long term membership in the forum increases the likelihood of adopting products from the brand. However, the latter did not report significant differences on the effect of long term membership on adoption. Owing to the close nature of the concept of long term membership with the concept of engagement, it can be claimed that engagement will not have statistically

significantly affects on the adoption behaviour of brand (line) extension products with different levels of co-creation. Overall, the findings of this thesis are somewhat unique in their nature, and valuable to the development of the virtual brand tribal community concept and the brand extension literature.

Finally, this study differentiates itself from similar studies in the field (e.g., Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Thompson and Sinha 2008) in other ways. Specifically, past studies did not investigate the effect of the community phenomenon in the context of brand extensions. The effects of brand community were also not considered in relation to products with different levels of co-creation. It is important to note here that previous research conducted on the area of brand communities and adoption behaviour considered complementary products to the parent brand. By comparison, one may say that the extension products introduced in the current study could be viewed by the consumers as substitutes since they belong in the same product line. These findings should open a window for future research on the effect of community on different types of products (complements; substitutes, supplements).

The present study has taken both a holistic and a piecemeal perspective. In order to draw a full picture, the study's conceptual framework presented the effects of cognitive, relational and connative elements on brand extension acceptance. However, it also examined the individual effects of each concept on the adoption of extension products with different levels of co-creation, and also its relative power compared to other cognitive, relational and co-creative elements.

8.5.1 Intentions to Co-Create Value

Co-creation occurs when a consumer cooperates with a marketer to create a consumption experience. The idea of co-creation has been presented before by Sheth et al. (2000) and is rooted in the S-D logic. Co-creation has come to the forefront of much contemporary discussion in marketing as the discipline evolves and develops marketing approaches that are customer centric (Parasuraman and Grewal 2000). Co-creation is a conceptual approach consistent with a customer centric focus. Co-creation can occur when a customer is actively involved in the design, delivery and creation of the customer experience (Sheth, Sisodia and

Sharma 2000). Co-creation creates a unique value for the customer, elevating a transaction to a relation-building experience. The outcome for a company adopting a co-creative approach is a unique, differential advantage which can be hard to imitate. A considerable amount of research focuses on the motivation to participate, while only a limited amount of literature investigates the relationship between intentions to co-create and adoption behaviour.

The current research did not account for specific motivations of consumer participation in the co-creation process. However, the present research has included the concept of intention to co-create as an overall construct as conceptualised by Christodoulides et al. (2010). The present study has contributed to this lack of research by quantitatively examining the effects of this factor in relation to the adoption of extension products with different levels of co-creation. The latter authors have conceptualised the concept and measured its effect on brand equity (Christodoulides et al. 2012). To expand existing understanding, the present study has adopted their conceptualisation and attempted to measure the effects of intentions to co-create together with other factors arising from the brand extension literature and the relationship marketing and S-D logic.

In the present framework, this factor was not found to have any significant impact on extension acceptance (H_{4a} *and* H_{4b} are not supported). It is therefore suggested that other researchers could examine its effects in combination with other factors or individually on extension acceptance.

8.5.2 Level of Co-creation of Value

Value in the co-creation view, is a collaborative effort of all actors in the process. All actors in the value creation network act as facilitators in creating value. In the context of co-created value, it is not only the product or service the customer purchases but the also the customer experience gained because of the dialogue and interactions in the network of customer experiences. This is acknowledged as the "value in use" perspective (Raminez 1999; Vargo and Lusch 2004). In other words, co-created value is a sum of the derivation of the dialogue, interactions, personalised treatment and level of customisation co-created in the experience network.

Raj et al. (2008) were the first to provide empirical support for the concept of co-creation of value. Similar to the Raj et al. (2008) study, the research instrument in the current study first exposes respondents to scenarios that differ in the extent of co-creation present, then measures: consumers' perceptions of the level of co-creation the extension incorporates; their perceptions of fit with the original product; and whether they were willing to accept it. The statistical techniques used provide support that the co-creation level entailed in the consumption process does indeed affect extension acceptance.

The present study examines the level of co-creation as an independent and as a dependent variable (extensions considered in the study are designed to reflect different levels of co-creation). The purpose of this was threefold: a) to explore the effect of level of co-creation on extension acceptance and whether this factor could be a valuable addition to the brand extension literature; b) to examine the strength of its effect in relation to that of the other brand and relational factors; c) to examine whether the effect of each factor is statistically significantly different between the extension with different levels of co-creation.

Level of Co-creation affects positively all extensions, and so H_{5a} *Level of Co-Creation of Value will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively* is supported. Theory suggests that joint co-creation of a product is an important predictor. Previous studies are mainly conceptual (Payne et al. 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004) and provide solid suport for the empirical result that consumers prefer products that can be jointly-co-created at the value in use stage. Moreover, the study also moves a step forward to suggest that there is a significant difference in the effect between the three extensions. So H_{6b} is supported. This finding constitutes a valuable addition to the ongoing research on value creation and its implications for other literatures. A similar research design was followed by Boush and Loken (1991) whose pioneering article examined the effects of brand typicality on extension acceptance (with different levels of typicality). It is obvious that in both cases the level of co-creation and the level of typicality an extension entails depend on the brand in question.

Co-creation of value as an independent variable was found to affect all extensions positively and significantly different. Thus H_{5b} *The effect of Level of Co-Creation of Value will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation* is

supported. All the brand extension products considered in the study entailed a level of co-creation. However, the effect was found to be stronger for the second extension (joint co-creation between the consumer and the company). Bendapudi and Leone (2003) and Dong et al. (2008) also found that customer satisfaction with a product depends on the level of customer participation in the co-creation process. Studies in consumer behaviour have found that the object-person relationship will affect person's perceptions of that object. This can be a result of mere exposure effects (Zajonc 1986); experience with the product (Muthukrishnan (1995); ownership of the product (Beggan 1992) or even implicit self-evaluations which may transfer to the chosen object (Gawronski et al. 2007). Objects that are outputs of the prosumption process are not just objects that are owned, but products in which the consumer has undergone a series of choices as to how to proceed; and therefore it is logical to include a biased self perspective of their value. It was also found that as the level of co-creation of the extension product increases, the influence of the level of co-creation as a determinant for the product's success increases compared to the rest of the determinants considered. Finally, the brand extension which entailed a joint co-creation level was the most preferred followed by the high consumer-low company brand extension (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.7). According to Wind and Ragaswamy (2001), consumers are likely to enjoy more rather than less participation in the value co-creation process; but most consumers do not like to experiment and prefer to remain passive (Arakji and Lang 2007). Hence, it seems logical to anticipate that the brand extensions that offer joint levels of co-creation will be preferred. The hierarchy may change, however, as more and more consumers become aware of the benefits of this relatively new trend and acquire the skills and confidence to co-create. Dong et al. (2008) found that as the level of customer participation in the service recovery increases, the customer will have greater perceived value with regard to co-creation in the future.

There is a paucity of research in the area of co-creation which does not allow direct comparison of results. In addition, this is the first study within the brand extension literature that has considered extensions with different levels of co-creation. As such, this study has made a valuable contribution. It should be noted, nevertheless, that researchers should replicate this result with caution: it is possible that the study has overestimated the effect of co-creation, as consumer involvement in the product category of video games is generally high.

8.6 Re-conceptualising Consumer-brand relationship

Research on brand relationships suggests that brands affect consumers as a consequence of the knowledge that consumers possess around the brand; the psycho-social cultural (Fournier 1998; Aggrawal 2004; Albert et al. 2008) context; and the personality of the brand (Aaker et al. 2004; Hayes et al. 2006; Smit et al. 2006). The assumption here is that consumers engage in a certain type of relationships with brands similar to the one they engage with other people (brand as a person). Research on brand relationships has used mainly interpretive methodologies to explore the concept (Fournier 1998; Ji 2002; Robinson and Kates 2005) There is also some quantitative research, however, in the consumer-brand relationship literature, although clearly operationalised constructs are not found as in other literatures, mainly due to the lack of consensus regarding the dimensions of the concepts. As a result, the implications of these constructs are not always explicit (Huang 2008)

Very little research exists in the brand extension literature as to the effect of relationships on extension evaluation, while the measures used are characterised as crude (Park and Kim 2001, p.184) and the relationships between the constructs "speculative" (Park, Kim and Kim 2002, p.197) in nature. A possible explanation is that the construct itself lacks a clear definition. Therefore, before the impact of relationships on extensions can be understood, it is first necessary to understand the different constructs that compose it. The consumer-brand relationship in the study has been conceptualised to include the components of interdependence, intimacy, love, commitment and two-way communication. Given the fact that previous research has suffered problems of including some problematic terminology, the present research has followed a scrupulous procedure to test the relevance of certain items in the context of this study. Thus, small differences in the definitions of the components, and of the items that represent them, resulted in different finding in the exploratory factor analysis.

In more detail, the concepts of love, interdependence, intimacy and two-way communication, as defined in Chapter 3, were all found to constitute discrete factors. Only the concept of commitment was not found to constitute a separate dimension. It was obvious from the literature that there was uncertainty around the role of commitment as a dimension of a

relationship. The no support for these dimensions could be found because of its closeness with the concept of interdependence. Future studies should explore this uncertainty in greater detail.

The results of the present study agree with previous research in that there is a direct relationship between consumer brand relationship and brand extension acceptance (Park et al. 2002). Hence H_{6a}*Consumer-brand relationship will affect consumers' acceptance of the extension product positively* is supported. The present study also contributes to the advancement of existing knowledge in identifying the effect of consumer-brand relationship components on extensions with different levels of co-creation. Fedorikhin et al. (2008) tested the effects of brand attachment (a relationship-based construct) on consumer evaluations of extension products. The effect of brand attachment on consumer evaluations was only evident at high and moderately similar brand extensions, but not at low level similarity. The present research found significant support for the effect of two way communication (a relationship based construct) on extensions with different levels of co-creation. But the effect was stronger for joint and high consumer co-creation rather than low consumer co-creation extensions. Therefore H_{6b}*The effect of Consumer-brand relationship will be statistically significantly different, between extensions with different levels of co-creation* is supported partially.

The present study differs from Park and Kim (2001) as the latter only examined the effects of consumer-brand relationship in combination with fit and perceived brand quality on acceptance, without considering other relationship marketing dimensions. In addition, the study did not consider extension products with different levels of co-creation. The present study also differs from the studies of Park et al. (2002) and Fedorikhin et al. (2008) and Yeung and Wyer (2005) in terms of design (the latter have used a between subject design); product category and type of extension. All studies based their experiments on a well known brand, a similar methodology to that in the present study. However, Yeung and Wyer (2005) examined the effect of brand likeness as a dimension of consumer-brand relationship; Fedorikhin et al.(2008) examined the effect of brand attachment and Park et al. (2002) based their conceptualisation on Fournier's (1998) brand relationship concept. Therefore, the studies are by no means directly comparable.

This study re-conceptualised the consumer-brand relationship and re-positioned the concept to reflect the core elements of a relationship (i.e., intimacy, love, interdependence and two way

communication), rather than the quality and strength of the relationship in as previous research (Fournier 1998; Park et al. 2002). On this basis, the present study has found the consumer-brand relationship to be a strong predictor of acceptance. The thorough methodological process followed to design the measurement instrument, as well as the theoretical support offered by the inter-personal theories, seem to have worked well to help this research overcome the uncertain implications of past studies regarding the effect of the concept on extension acceptance.

More specifically, the consumer-brand relationship concept as represented in the framework affects extension acceptance through two way communications. This research found no significant effects for the concepts of intimacy, interdependence and love on extension acceptance. Yet it is possible that their effect was overridden by other variables. This does not mean that developing a brand to which consumers can attach to and exchange emotions with does not affect the acceptance of extensions products; but rather that in the framework of factors considered in this research, the importance of consumer-brand relationship did not have a significant impact. The effect of emotional dimensions (love, interdependence, intimacy) could be examined individually, or in combination with another set of factors.

The way the company communicates with the consumer can be one of the criteria consumers choose in order to accept an extension product. Although communication is an essential part of any relationship, in marketing the consumer-brand relationship literature has largely overlooked the concept of two way communication as a dimension of a relationship. Veloutosu (2007) was the first to point out two-way communication as a significant and distinct dimension of the relationship concept. More recent studies also validate the significant effect of this consumer-brand relationship dimension (Veloutsou and Moutinho 2009; Veloutsou and McAlonan 2012; Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou 2013).

Nevertheless, another possible explanation is that the product category (video games) used in the study requires high levels of involvement and frequency of use; and that the relationship effect differs depending on the product category (Veloutsou 2009). Therefore, the possibility of over-claiming the positive results of this scale cannot be ruled out.

Overall, this study makes a significant contribution to the extension literature, as previous research does not distinguish between the effects of different sub-constructs on extension acceptance. Furthermore, this is the first research on extensions that examines the effect of different dimensions of the consumer-brand relationship construct on a brand that is so strongly associated with its product. For instance, Park, Kim and Kim (2002) found that consumer-brand relationship had a significant and positive impact on the extent to which consumers accepted the proposed extension. However, they examined the effects of consumer-brand relationship on a brand which was distinct from its product in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, and also on products that could not have been seen as supplements.

8.7 Key Findings

The main findings of the previous chapters were discussed and theoretical explanation offered, with most hypotheses most supported wholly or partially (Table 8.1) The relationship marketing and S-D logic paradigm have successfully linked extension acceptance with antecedents arising from new forms of consumer empowerment that have at their core the consumer as the main determinant of his/her consumption choices.

This study adopts a consumer-based approach to extension acceptance, to prove that acceptance in post-modernism is driven essentially by relatively new forms of consumer empowerment. These new forms of consumer empowerment include the concepts of relationships and co-creation of value. In general, consumers are observed to create two forms of relationships with their favourite brands, i.e., relationships in the form of a community and/or one to one relationship. More specifically, the concepts of virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship and co-creation of value are multidimensional concepts whose dimensions do not affect equally and significantly the different types of extensions. Finally, the results imply that other factors apart from the ones examined by this study can affect extension acceptance and therefore research on the success determinants of extension acceptance should continue.

This chapter discussed the extension acceptance as a result of combined effects of traditional and new factors. The results explained here draw evidence from the quantitative data analysis.

What emerged from the discussion around the results are theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions as well as directions for future research. These will be discussed in the following sections.

8.8 Theoretical Contributions

The question regarding under which conditions extensions are expected to be successful is still highly relevant and is being investigated extensively (Miberg et al. 2010; Song et al. 2010; Song, Zhang and Zhang 2013; Dall'Olmo, Pina and Bravo 2013; Carter and Curry 2013; Sood and Keller 2012; Meyvis et al. 2012; Singh et al. 2012; Estes et al. 2012; Heath et al. 2011; Magnoni and Roux 2012). Therefore, the theoretical and methodological contribution of this research lies in (a) the replication of previous work that focused on the impact of brand perceived quality and perceived fit on the evaluation of extensions; (b) extending existing work by linking together the three research streams of relationship marketing, value creation and extensions; (c) conceptualising and measuring: virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship; and co-creation of value; and (d) extending research around products of the entertainment industry.

The first contribution of the thesis lies in successfully replicating existing work in the literature of extensions. The results of the present study are in agreement with existing research and indicate that perceived fit is still one of the most influential factors in consumers' acceptance of extension products. While perceived brand quality is a significant factor, it may have a negative effect when the brand is highly reputable and the co-creation level of the extension product is medium and high. As this is the first time, to the researcher's knowledge, that extension products with different co-creation levels have been considered, this finding constitutes an advancement to existing research. However, future researchers should be cautious when replicating the results beyond the entertainment sector to sectors that have not yet been introduced to the concept of co-creation.

At the conceptual level, the present study re-conceptualised the concepts of virtual brand community and consumer-brand relationship. As the previous chapters have already demonstrated, the existing conceptualisation of these concepts is ambiguous (Chapter 3).

Hence this study also contributes to the relationship marketing literature, by offering a re-conceptualisation of the two main concepts that represent this literature from a consumer point of view, i.e., virtual brand tribal communities and consumer-brand relationship

More specifically, this research defines a virtual brand tribal community as a group of people with a common interest in being with other people of the same kind, and sharing a common interest in their favourite brand, who interact mainly through a specific site in cyberspace. Brand communities have been of particular interest to researchers during the last 10 years starting with the core article of Muniz and O'Guinn (2001). The concept of community in general originates in the domain of sociology. This phenomenon has emerged strongly within the circles of marketing theory as a consequence of a marketing paradigm shift from transactional to relational (see Chapter 3). Communities exist in different forms and the term is often used to refer to different phenomena (Chalmers et al. 2011; 2013).

To enhance understanding in the current era, the present study has conducted a comprehensive literature review; identified its principal components and used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies at different stages in the research process to enhance the robustness of the results. It is important to note that much of the literature is still qualitative (Noble et al. 2012; Drengner et al. 2012; Cova and White 2010; Fournier and Lee 2009) and there is no consensus in the literature regarding either the multi-dimensionality of the concept or its exact dimensions. The present research takes the first step to overcoming some of these problems by providing a conceptualisation for the concept of a tribal community (see Chapter 3). The research also provides evidence to support the multidimensionality of the concept, and highlights the piecemeal effects that each of its components can have on the acceptance of an extension product.

The second contribution comes from re-conceptualising the concept of consumer-brand relationship. Although past research has implied a relationship between consumer-brand relationship and extension acceptance, little quantitative evidence has been properly presented. This is due to the fact that the concept lacked a sound theoretical background leading to confusion over its components and weak and uncertain implications. More specifically, in his PhD thesis, Huang (2008) found a positive but weak association between consumer brand congruence and brand relationship, and warns researchers to be cautious when applying the

scale and also encourages re-examination of the scale. In support of this a number of other researchers encourage re-conceptualisation and development of better measures too (Park et al. 2002).

This study found evidence to support the multi-dimensionality of the concept as well as the relationship between each dimension and extension acceptance: i) by redefining the consumer-brand relationship and by repositioning it to mirror the core elements in a relationship; ii) by studying inter-personal theories of relationship; and iii) by using various analytical methods (qualitative and quantitative). Future studies may need to take into consideration the effect of every feeling separately, as well as identifying what triggers these feelings.

Overall, the positive relationship between consumer-brand relationship and brand extension acceptance affirmed that respondents were generally able to use the brand relationship metaphor. Other concerns that some consumers are unable to use the interpersonal relationship metaphor on brands (Bengtsson 2003; O'Malley and Tynan 1999) have been rejected as the concept overall has been supported by qualitative and quantitative data analysis from this study; and also by past research (Fournier 1998; Fournier and Yao 1997; Ji 2002; Park et al. 2002; Fedorikhin et al. 2008; Yeung and Wyer 2005; Magnoni and Roux 2012). Even so, it is important to remember that the relationship may vary in its intensity based on the brand's personality (Aaker et al. 2004; Hayes et al. 2006); the consumer's personal way of creating relationships (Fournier 1998; Kelly et al. 1983; Karney et al. 2001; Swaminathan et al. 2007), the involvement level of the product category (Veloutsou 2009) and cultural background (Albert et al. 2008).

In general, in the context of extensions, every dimension of the construct was not found to make a positive, significant and relatively equal contribution to the virtual brand tribal community or consumer-brand relationship notions. This most likely implies that virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship are not balanced constructs, where each dimension should receive equal attention and resource. Consequently, more informed brand managers will adopt an atomistic as well as a holistic approach towards virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship due to the non-synergistic and unbalanced properties of the constructs. This calls for managers to plan both in parts and overall after identifying which element is most important in each case. This represents a paradigmatic shift

from a mere holistic conceptualisation of the concepts, to a piecemeal and holistic approach. It suggests that it is not enough to look at the concept as a whole, as some of its sub-dimensions may be more influential than others in the consumer's decision making process. For instance, brand strategists should seek to mobilise the community via the sub-dimensions of the concept that are more influential, but also maintain it as a complete entity.

The third contribution of this research concerns its implications for the service dominant logic, through the key characteristic of the co-creation of value, with the consumer being at the focus of the co-creation process. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first time the brand extension literature has been considered in the context of this growing paradigm. Additionally, the study contributes to the under-developed co-creation of value literature by testing the concept of co-creation in the context of the extension literature.

Overall, it can be claimed that the theories using categorisation and relationship marketing in addition to the S-D logic predicted the results well. In other words, with the change in the consumption paradigm from transactional to relational (see Chapter 3), consumer extension products acceptance criteria have changed. Although perceptions of fit (categorisation theory) are still important, other factors also affect consumers acceptance of an extension product/service, namely: i) consumers' intentions to co-create value; ii) the level of the value of co-creation at a value in use stage that the extension product/service offers; iii) consumers' one-to-one relationship with the brand and one-to-many-to-one relationship (i.e., consumer-brand relationship and virtual brand tribal community, linked to relationship marketing theory).

Finally, the paucity of research around the products of the entertainment industry which has been noted in the literature (Chapter 2) can be regarded as making a novel theoretical contribution to this field. The research combines the characteristics of the online environment, the entertainment industry and the brand extension framework.

8.9 Methodological Contributions

The research has used a mixed method approach in order to develop a reliable and valid measurement instrument and subsequent statistical methodology to test the effect of the newly introduced construct in the brand extension literature. The methodology and statistical analysis of this research built on the weaknesses of previous research in that (i) the customer sample utilised in this research was representative of the consumers likely to purchase the extensions in the research, not merely a general consumer sample or student sample as a lot of existing research has used (see Appendix A, Table A-1); (ii) the extensions in the research were based on realistic scenarios not on hypothetical brand extensions as in existing research; (iii) the research was conducted in the brand's official community, where consumers would make actual extension decisions in real life not in a classroom or other artificial setting; hence overcoming one of the main disadvantages of experimental design.

Moreover, the research profits from the inclusion of a qualitative stage: focus groups with actual consumers of the brand helped the researcher to better understand the constructs in question; their measurement; and the context and the design of the extension stimulus. Despite the popularity of qualitative research in other research areas of marketing and its vital role in revealing new aspects, this methodology is rarely used in the literature of brand extensions (see Appendix A, Table A-1). In addition, the study profited from a questionnaire pilot-test by a community of experts and a statistical pre-test with actual consumers which helped to improve previously inadequate measurement of the constructs.

The study also benefits from the product category chosen and the online context in which the study was conducted. Very little research exists on products deriving from the entertainment industry, despite the contribution of this industry to the global economy and the recent concern regarding a brand's ability to extend in this market (Wuts et al. 2012). Song et al. (2010) note that very little research has been directed towards understanding brand extensions in the online context. Since Klick and Smith's (2001) study on high tech products, there have been calls for more studies on background factors and observations on online brand extension. Although the principles of marketing do not change online, the enactment of the brand can differ in the online environment compared to the traditional environment (de Chernatony and Christodoulides 2004). This can be a result of the unique characteristics of the internet as a marketing channel, such as rapid information transmission, accessibility, connectivity, and

interactivity. The latter characteristics can have implications for managing online brands (Song et al. 2010; Song et al. 2013; Christodoulides et al. 2006; Hoffman and Novak 1996). Therefore, replicating traditional marketing efforts online can be insufficient.

Finally, the statistical techniques used by the current study provide accurate results for comparing the results of this study with past research (see Table 8.2); and for exploring the effects of *virtual brand tribal community; consumer-brand relationship;* and *co-creation* factors on different types of extensions (in terms of level of co-creation).

Table 8.2 Comparison of Adjusted R square of the original and replications studies with the current study

Original and Replication Studies	Adjusted R square
Aaker and Keller (1990)	.26
Sunde and Brodie (1993)	.43
Nijssen and Hartman (1994)	.49
Bottomley and Doyle (1996)	.48
Van Riel et al. (2001)	.54
Tang et al. (2008)	.63
Burnaz and Bilgin (2011)	.56
Present Study	.53
Present Study	.76
Present Study	.79

8.10 Managerial Implications

The findings of this research will be of relevance to managers who, whilst increasingly following extension strategies, have little research evidence to assess the impact of different factors on consumers' evaluations of the extension.

The importance of the level of co-creation as a determinant of extension acceptance enhances past conceptualisations in brand extension research (see Chapter 2). The positive influence of this determinant at all levels suggests that products/services which require even a low level of

co-creation of value can be accepted. However, the product/service that offers the greater amount of joint co-creation will be preferred. Therefore, managers should encourage consumers' engagement in a joint co-creation process. Marketers need to assemble their forces to generate products that require more joint co-creation or consumer based co-creation; and, overall, create as many possibilities for co-creation as possible and to as many users as possible.

High in consumer preferences are also the extension products where co-creation activity is regulated by consumers and the company has a secondary role. Conversely, last in consumer preferences come the extensions where the company regulates and the consumer has a secondary role. This result indicates an opportunity for managers to open up the company and support mini inventions of consumers; even if a lot of ideas are copied, it is likely that the approach will be successful. In support of these thoughts, a recent exploratory study by Harwood and Garry (2012) found support for the importance of co-creation of value between the firm and the consumer and of consumers' participation in the 'post product' manipulations of the outputs. Ongoing acceptance and further manipulations of the outputs optimise experience. Hence, it is suggested to managers to involve consumers in the 'post product' in order to retain and generate interest. By involving the consumer in the new offering, the brand avoids being a stationary target. A moving target can be harder to imitate, and the cost of entry for new competitors will be high as the most desirable customers will already be taken (Aaker 2012).

Furthermore, it is known from existing literature that communities outside the company sometimes create content for the company (Arakji and Lang 2007), although this is restricted to those people who are involved. In this research, the dimensions of a virtual brand tribal community - *engagement* and *tribalism* - were found to have a significant and positive effect on extension acceptance. The effect of the factor of *engagement* was not found to be significantly different for different types of extensions: this suggests to managers that promoting community engagement can be a safe option when planning to extend; while at the same time they are unlikely to see incremental effects of community engagement on the acceptance of products with different levels of co-creation.

The current research confirms that the trend is towards greater brand openness to people. Nevertheless a marketer needs to consider the risks associated with that openness (Arakji and Lang 2007). Yet, as Kozinets (1999) observes, "in the digital economy… networks are often created by giving things away… the goal is not to control information, but to use it wisely in order to build solid, long lasting relationships" (p.263). The appropriate role of the brand manager is thus to ensure authenticity and sharing of knowledge, as a trusted friend rather than a supplier or a brand marketer (Aaker 2012). These can be important findings for managers in order to pursue both a holistic and an atomistic approach to the virtual brand tribal community they are regulating. Following strategies that reinforce different aspects of the community might give them the expected results. For instance, the present study found that only two of the four dimensions of the virtual brand tribal community have a positive and significant effect on brand extension acceptance, i.e., *tribalism* and *engagement*. In other words, the incremental effects that are associated with the constructs are the key factors in the decision of how to allocate resources. As a result, an intuitive model with equal resources can result in a largely inappropriate allocation of resources.

Furthermore, managers should concentrate their efforts in understanding the differentiating factors between the games that can allow success for all three types of extensions. For instance, from a virtual community perspective, managers should reinforce feelings of engagement and tribalism if they are to increase acceptance of an extension with any level of co-creation. Nevertheless, if managers are interested in gaining favourable evaluations for an extension product that entails a high consumer, low company level of co-creation then reinforcing the feeling of tribalism within the community is found to be the key determinant (see Chapter 7, Table 7.10). The fact that perceived fit between the brand and the extension affects all extensions positively, and its effect only varies significantly between a low and medium level of extension co-creation, suggests that the portfolio possibilities within the same category are wide ranging.

It is important for companies to recognise that the perceived quality of the brand does positively and significantly affect extension acceptance. This result suggests that companies who have created high perceptions of brand quality among consumers may profit by extending to products with different levels of co-creation. This result is in line with brand extension literature premises that brands with strong brand equity can extend further (Hem et al. 2003).

However, the results also showed that the perceived brand quality effect does not increase as the level of co-creation of the extension increases. Rather its effect weakens compared to the rest of the factors considered. In support of this finding, Christodoulides et al. (2012) found that consumers prefer to create content for less established brands because they feel they can have more impact. Therefore, co-creative products/services can constitute a differential advantage for less well established brands or new businesses.

Finally, managers can profit from this research by understanding consumer-brand relationship composition, and particularly the effects of the two way communication factor on acceptance. The findings suggests that the traditional approach, focusing solely on marketing mix elements, may provide less value to a company than a mixture of the relational and traditional approach (Zineldin and Philipson 2007; Constantinides 2006). Marketers are therefore encouraged to develop tools that contribute to relationship development, and more importantly, develop brands that consumers wish to interact with (Veloutsou 2007). In general, managers' efforts to create and maintain relationships are neither appropriate nor necessary for every customer, every market or brand (Day 2000). In the current context, nevertheless, it is found that creating and maintaining certain types of relationships can provide a sustainable advantage when extending to products with different levels of co-creation.

Overall, this research suggests and demonstrates that the most scientific approach to obtaining information about potential products is by asking the consumer. The mixed method approach adopted in the current study sets an example for marketers in terms of collecting accurate, up to date and relevant to the consumer information. Marketers have an important role to play in terms of attempting to generate products/services that will fulfill consumers' needs, wants and desires (Kotler, Armstrong and Wong 1996). However, it appears that one of the requests of current consumers is to be offered the opportunity to co-create their consumption items with their favourite brand. The consumer is willing to participate in a relationship with the brand as an equal partner. It is important to understand that this relationship is not something outside the brand's offerings; rather that the relationship that will be developed between the two parties will be part of the product/service (Day 2000). In the relationship spectrum, from transactional exchanges to value adding exchanges and collaborative exchanges, Day (2000) notes that an important element is the integration and alignment of processes.

The marketer's role in the current environment is not insignificant or diminished in any way. Rather, the marketer is asked to be much more knowledgeable, flexible, effective and efficient in understanding and collaborating with the consumer at all levels. The marketer is the proposition holder (Vargo and Lusch 2006; Vargo 2008). But this proposition should not be considered realisable without the contribution of the consumer. In this new co-creative marketing paradigm, the focus has shifted from designing relevant products to offering co-creative relationship experiences (Payne et al. 2008). The focus is on the "value in use" instead of mere product features. Normann and Ramirez (1993, p.69) argue that "the key to creating value is to co-produce offerings that mobilise customers". One may argue that some of the marketer's traditional job is now undertaken by the consumer. At the same time, the marketer has a new job to do, that of the process regulator.

8.11 Limitations

In conclusion it is important to consider the limitations of this study and thesis so that these can be kept in mind when considering and evaluating the results of the research and the conclusions drawn, and for the benefit of future researchers.

A potential limitation for consideration stems from the fact that the research design and data collection phases of the thesis were undertaken with one brand. Although it is not uncommon in brand extension research to base experiments on a single brand (see Appendix A, Table A-1), the extent to which it is possible to transfer the results of this study to other brands in a wider environment can only be hypothesised.

The lengthy nature of the questionnaire was also a difficulty of this research. As reported earlier, this was probably one of the reasons for the relatively small sample of usable questionnaires collected. The length of the questionnaire instrument was reduced (using the pilot test), but the final questionnaire covers five pages. However, the length of the research instrument was determined by the nature of this research.

One of the difficulties of the within-subject experimental design is the carryover effect. The carryover effect can be a result of practice and fatigue. The carryover effect can affect

positively or negatively (respectively) the last treatment of the experiment. To overcome the effects of the carryover effect and keep the respondents interested, the researcher used a software application that interchanged the order of the experiments, so that consumers would not be able to predict the logic of the next experiment and arbitrarily answer the questions following it.

Despite these limitations, it is anticipated that the findings reported in this study will stimulate greater research interest in the study of branding and consumer behaviour.

8.12 Future Research

A systematic review of the previous work can provide future researchers with guidance in respect of both methodology and theory. In addition, a synthesis of the previous research findings would certainly assist in generating strategic and managerial implications.

A commonly accepted definition and measure for the co-creation of value does not exist for the reason that this construct is very new. The researcher adopted the scales for Intentions to Co-create value and Level of Co-Creation for the very simple reason that these were the only scales that were found. The scale's reliability and validity were tested in the present study and it proved to be both reliable and valid. Yet clearly there is a need for developing better measures.

Most previous research that has examined brand extension fit (Aaker and Keller 1990; Barrett et al.1999; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Boush and Loken 1991; Dacin and Smith 1994; DelVecchio 2000; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Glynn and Brodie 1998; Holden and Barwise 1996; Nijssen and Hartman 1994; Park et al. 1991; Milewicz and Herbig 1994; Sunde and Brodie, 1993) has purely considered consumers' brand extension fit evaluations and has not considered consumers' line extension fit evaluations (aside from Nijssen 1999 and Grime et al. 2002). More research in this area could determine the inter-relationship between fit and level of co-creation. It would be interesting to see if there are certain facets of fit that are important to particular categories of brand stretches with different

levels of co-creation. Similarly, it would be interesting to see if there are certain facets of fit that are not directly linked to brand extension success with different levels of co-creation.

Scholars may also wish to broaden the scope of this research by looking to replicate the findings beyond the current research context. The reason is that replication of empirical research plays an important role in developing robust and generalisable brand marketing explanations (Kocak et al. 2007) By replicating the findings, small steps towards the holy grail of marketing 'generalisations' may be taken. This approach is consistent with Leone and Schultz (1980) who note that: "replication is the key to generalisation for without it, in the broadest sense; we have no corroboration of research results. We are left with one-shot studies that represent historical facts. Only by extending findings to other data sets do we perceive the generality of marketing relationships"(p.15). Hence, replication of the current study in different research contexts is regarded as a step towards assessing the generalisability of the model. For instance, future research could test more brands in different product categories, since the impact of the independent variables on the acceptance of the extension may vary depending on the product category.

An alternative model may consider dimension causality, thus considering the relationship between the dimensions of the multidimensional constructs used in the model. If such relationships are explored, it is essential that they are grounded in theory to prevent the findings resulting from data set chance (Byrne 2001; MacCallum 1995; MacCallum et al. 1992; Markland, 2007). Identifying such causality would help marketing managers sequence the development of the virtual brand tribal community and the consumer-brand relationship building programs and understand the formative drivers of these constructs. A more informed research approach would explore the relationships and not just correlations that exist between the multidimensional constructs. Managers would profit from the creation of a more realistic context in which to estimate the model.

It would be of real value to both managers and academics to conduct a long-term study into brand (line) extensions, by initially selecting a variety of brand (line) extensions for different brands. From this the research should follow the online brand (line) extensions over a number of years to determine how successful they are in the long run; whether different emotions are created around different brands; and whether different emotions and different levels of

communication demand are developed over time. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see how the community structure affects the acceptance of the extension over time; and also the relationship between the type of the extension and the community structure, and the acceptance rate over time.

The consumer may develop different feelings for every brand. Future research should look into which feelings the consumer develops towards the brand in question, and why and how transferable they are in a potential extension. In other words, the relationship between brand personality and its effect on other factors and acceptance is proposed.

Finally, consumer evaluations of the extension could be measured in terms of attitude and purchase behaviour. In the current research, it was measured as one construct - *acceptance*. However, scholars may replicate the study in different contexts and notice differences in results between purchase behaviour and attitude.

8.13 Concluding note

The opening section of this chapter consolidated and unified this research. This was achieved by reviewing the content and logic of the preceding chapters. At this stage, it was noted how the introductory chapter laid the foundations for this research and formulated the research questions. The literature review and theoretical framework chapters provided the theoretical grounding and conceptual apparatus for this thesis respectively. Next, the methodology chapter outlined how the research instrument was developed and data gathered in order to test the theoretical framework. The analysis revealed how the constructs were cleaned and tested for reliability and validity and included in the analysis to explore their effects on the dependent variables. Following this, the discussion chapter explains the results of this current study in relation to the literature.

With the content and rationale for each chapter considered, theoretical and managerial implications were discussed. The penultimate section of the chapter highlighted potential research limitations. These included reservations about the feasibility of generalising these

findings beyond the current research context, and concerns about brand identity-performance causality and issues surrounding the research paradigm that underpinned this thesis.

The final section of the chapter considered potential avenues for future research. These included opportunities for replicating this research, in addition to exploring causality that may exist within the multidimensional constructs.

The most critical output from this thesis is its contributions. While these have been drawn out throughout the work, and especially following the empirical investigation, a summary is presented in (Table 8.3) following for the benefit of readers of this doctoral thesis.

Table 8.3 Summary of the Contributions of the Study

Contributions of the Present Study	
Theoretical Contributions	
BRAND EXTENSION LITERATURE	RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND S-D LOGIC
Extends the literature on the antecedents to brand extensions through the introduction of the level of co-creation and intentions to co-create concepts.	Contributes to the literature on relationship marketing by conceptualising the notion of virtual brand tribal community (by incorporating the dimension of tribalism within the concept of community).
Extends the framework of antecedents in the brand extension literature by integrating the concepts of virtual brand tribal community and consumer-brand relationship.	Contributes to the literature on relationship marketing by re-conceptualising the concept of consumer-brand relationship.
Extends the applicability of the framework of brand extensions in product categories with unique characteristics, where to date very little research has been conducted (i.e., video games).	Contributes to the literature of value creation (S-D logic) by integrating the concepts of intentions to co-create and level of co-creation in one framework, in the context of the brand extension literature.
Empirical Contributions	
Contributes to empirical work that focuses on identifying the antecedents to the acceptance of extension product/services.	Contributes to the literature of consumer-brand relationship by offering empirical support for its sub-dimensions.

Empirically confirms the effects of all the antecedents on the extension with different levels of co-creation.	Contributes to the literature of value creation by examining the effects of intentions to co-create value and level of co-creation a product offers on its acceptance.
Contributes to literature of virtual brand tribal communities by examining the effects of all the sub-dimensions on acceptance of extensions.	Empirically confirms the importance of the sub-dimension of tribalism.
Contributes to the literature on extensions by empirically testing extensions with different levels of co-creation.	Empirically confirms that the level of co-creation of the extension is the most significant factor in its acceptance (in cases of joint co-creation).
Empirically confirms that consumer-brand relationship dimensions can have a direct and significant impact on extension acceptance	Empirically confirms that a combination of factors arising from the relationship marketing literature affect significantly and simultaneously the extension acceptance.

Methodological Contributions
Examines extension acceptance following a mixed method approach, i.e., combining exploratory focus groups research for hypothesis building and survey research for hypothesis testing. Operationalises the constructs following a very thorough method of pre-test and pilot tests.
The methodology and statistical analysis of this research built on the weaknesses of previous research: (1) the consumer sample used in this research was representative of the brand's customer base, not merely a general population sample or student sample as a lot of existing research has used; (2) the extensions in the research were based on realistic scenarios not on hypothetical brand extensions as opposed to existing research; (3) the research was conducted in the brand's official community, where consumers would make actual extension decisions in real life not in a classroom or other artificial setting; hence overcoming one of experimental design main disadvantages; (4) the study was conducted with European consumers, thus contributing to the paucity of brand extension research conducted in Europe.
Operationalise the survey and experiments in an online environment.

Managerial Contributions	
The effects or the non-effects of the antecedents on different types of extensions in terms of level of co-creation.	Managers benefits from insights into the online environment and the applicability of the present's study conceptual framework into the online domain.
Managers benefit from a model that explains more variance of extension acceptance than the traditional model introduced by Aaker and Keller (1990).	Managers benefit from better understanding the value of co-creation and which types of co-creation they prefer.

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Appendix A

Table 2.1 Summary of Selected Studies in Brand Extension Research

Author	Dependent	Purpose	Design	Stimuli	Subjects	Findings
Aaker and Keller (1990)	Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extension	Explored how an attitude toward a brand extension is formed and the effects of different positioning strategies of extensions on consumer evaluations.	Exploratory Experimental	FMCG: Beer, Shampoo, Sunglasses, Ice Cream, Toothpaste, fast food restaurant (services)	107 and 121 US students	Similarity: + (Quality* Similarity):+ Difficulty of the extension: + Attributes of the brand extension: +
Ahluwalia (2008)	Extension Evaluation	To understand how far can a brand stretch and the role of self-construal.	Experimental	Actual Brands	246 and 127 and 85 US Students	A relational processing advantage emerges in moderately close to the brand extensions, but not in very close to the brand extensions. In far from the brand extensions motivation has a prominent role. Similarity judgments are based on consumer characteristics.
Ahluwalia and Gürhan Canli (2000)	Consumers' Evaluations of the Family Brand	The effects of extensions on the original brand.	Experimental	Durable Goods Sector	68 and 113 US students	Both far and close extensions may cause dilution and enhancement effects on the core brand immediately after the exposure to the extension category. However consumers may not update their evaluation of the family brand unless they are asked. Spontaneous updating may occur when accessibility of the information is high. When accessibility of the information is low consumers are more influenced by negative information about close extensions and positive about far extensions. Diagnosticity of the extension information determines the impact on the family brand in this case. If information is highly accessible feedback effects are likely regardless of extension category.
Barone, Miniard and Romeo	Consumers' Evaluations of Brand	The Influence of Positive Mood on Brand Extension Evaluation.	Experimental	Durable Goods: Fictitious Electronic Brand	67 and 71 US students	Positive Mood Enhances Evaluations of Moderately Similar Extensions.

(2000)	Extensions					
Batra, Lenk and Wedel (2010)			Secondary Research(Data Set Analysis)			Develop a methodology to estimate brand and category personality structures.
Boisvert (2011)	Brand Association Transfer	To conceptualise and model behind brand association transfer.	Survey	Real Brands and Hypothetical Extensions	Actual Consumers	The capacity of the parent brand to transfer specific brand associations to line extension depends on the optimization process.
Bottomley and Holden (2001)		The authors investigate the empirical generalizability of Aaker and Keller's model of how consumers evaluate brand extensions.	Secondary Analysis			
Boush and Loken (1991)	Consumer Evaluations of the extension	To identify how important similarity is.	Experimental	Durable goods: Fictitious grocery and electronic brands (B/G)	144 US students	Similarity (typicality): + Depended on the brand breadth And the product category
Boush (1993)	Consumer Evaluations	How slogans can prime extensions.	Experimental	FMCG: Fictitious soup brand (Bella)	174 US students	When the slogan primes similarity: +
Boush Shipp, Loken, Gencturk, Crockett, Kennedy, Minshall, Misurell, Rochford, Strobel (1987)	Consumer Evaluations of the extension	The importance of similarity and brand reputation.	Experimental	Durable goods: Fictitious calculator brand (Tarco)	104 US students	Similarity: + Reputation:+
Bridges Keller and Sood (2000)	Perceived Fit of Brand Extensions	To enhance perceived Fit, by establishing explanatory links.	Experimental with manipulations	Experimental	181 university and staff	Results indicated that extensions were poorly rated when the parent brand's dominant association was inconsistent with the extension's dominant association.
Broniarczyk and Alba (1994)	Consumer evaluations of the extension	Explore the importance of brand specific associations.	Experimental	FMCG: Toothpaste, Cereal, Beer, Soap Durable goods:	76, 159 and 45 US students	Brand specific associations may dominate the effects of brand effect and category similarity when brand knowledge is high.

				Computers		
Dacin and Smith (1994)	Consumers	The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of three brand portfolio characteristics on brand strength.	Experimental	Durable goods: Fictitious brand portfolio brand (Jasil)	180,80 and 98 US students	Number of Products affiliated with the brand: + No support in the survey Portfolio quality variance decreases, a positive relationship between number of products affiliated with a brand and consumers' confidence in their extension evaluations emerges. Specifically, results regarding the moderating role of portfolio relatedness on the effects of fit suggest gradually extending a brand into more diverse product categories while maintaining a high degree of quality consistency across the products.
Dawar and Anderson (1994)	Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions	The study explores the following issues: Does the order of extension affect consumer reactions to the extension? How is direction of extension to be realized? And does the consistency of direction of multiple extensions affect consumer reactions to the target extension.	Experimental	True Brands Hypothetical Extensions	100, 117 undergraduate students	Both distance and direction must be taken into account in brand extension. Order of extensions must be useful provide that one takes into account the direction of the extension.
DelVecchio (2000)	Consumer Perceptions of Brand Reliability	The goal of this study is to suggest and assess the importance of additional factors that influence consumer perceptions of brand reliability.	Survey	True Brands with hypothetical Extensions	70 graduate students	Fit and Number of products affiliated with the brand has a positive affect on brand reliability. Fit increased as number of the brands affiliated with the brand. On the other hand, as the products affiliated with a brand increase in quality variance, brand reliability

						decreases, as does the positive affect of fit on brand reliability.
Diamantopoulos, Smith, Grime (2005)	Brand Personality	The impact of different types of brand extension on brand personality	Experimental	Actual Brand/ Hypothetical Extension	102 UK students	Brand extensions do not affect brand personality negatively, irrespectively of fit.
Estes, Gilbert, Guest, Mazursky (2012)	Consumer Brand Extension Evaluations	To examine how taxonomic feature based and thematic relation based similarity independently drives brand extension evaluation.	Experimental	Actual Brands/ Hypothetical Extensions Cross-sectors brands	Students	Taxonomic and thematic similarities contribute independently to evaluations of brand extensions. Thematic extensions are processed more rapidly than taxonomic extensions. Thematic extensions when assessed under unconstrained processing were evaluated more positively and judged as less novel; while taxonomic extensions had a judgment under commonality processing.
Farquhar (1989)			Conceptual Paper			
Farquhar, Herr and Fazio (1990)			Conceptual Paper			
Fedorikhin, Park and Thomson (2008)	Consumer Evaluations of Extensions	To examine the effect of emotional attachment on consumer responses to brand extension.	Experimental	Fictitious Brand Extensions/ Real Brands Product Categories Sneakers Cell Phones	Students	The results of the two studies show that consumers with elevate levels of attachment to a parent brand are willing to purchase and pay more for brand extensions, to forgive the brand's mishaps and recommend it to other even in moderate fit condition and even after accounting for the effect of attitude.
Grime, Diamantopoulos, Smith (2002)		Provides a conceptual framework combing key concepts from the extensions literature to guide future empirical work.		Conceptual Paper		
Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran	Evaluations of the family brand	The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of congruent and	Experimental	Durable goods: Sony and Sanyo	347 US students	Typicality and Motivation determine the effect of extensions on family brand name.

(1998)		incongruent extensions on family brand perceptions and to investigate the process mechanisms underlying dilution and enhancement effects.				In high-motivation conditions, typicality is not that important for incongruent extensions In low-motivation conditions, dilution and enhancement effects are higher when incongruent information relates to more versus less typical product. In high-motivation conditions, extensive processing of congruent information polarizes evaluations In low-involvement conditions, increases in memory and familiarity (repeat exposure), not accompanied by deeper levels of evaluative processing, can lead to belief changes.
Hamilton and Chernev (2010)	Brand Price Image	To examine the impact of product line extensions and consumer goals on the formation of price image.	Experimental	Actual Brands; Hypothetical Extension Prices Tea Brands DVD Brands Retail Store Brands	Students	The effect of vertical extensions on price image is moderated by consumer goals. For instance, for consumers that have a browsing goal an upscale extension can lead to a higher price image and a downscale extension to a lower price image. Nevertheless, for consumers that have a buying goal the results can be reversed.
Han and Schmitt (1997)	Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions	To compare product-category dynamics and corporate identity in brand extensions between Hong Kong and US Consumers.	Experimental	Fictitious Brands/Extensions Product Category Ice Cream Automobile Bank	Student and non-student sample; Hong Kong and US	Culture +
Hansen and Hem (2004)	Intention to buy the brand extension	To measure the effects of affective commitment, involvement, price consciousness and preference for bundling in the extension category.	Survey	One Car Brand	900 respondents from a customer base	The stronger the consumers are emotionally attached to their currently chosen brand in the extension category the higher the barrier to competitor's successful entry.
Health, DelVecchio	Parent Brand	To examine the symmetric effects of extending	Experimental	Real Brands/Real and Fictitious Extensions	Students	This study reports a robust line-extension asymmetry in

and McCarthy 2011		brands to lower and higher quality.		Clothing Stores (HandM) Beer (Heineken, Fosters) Restaurant (Ruby Tuesday)		which higher-quality extensions improve overall brand perception and evaluation more than lower-quality extensions damage them, the latter sometimes having no effect. The asymmetry is consistent across various evaluative dimensions, product classes, real and fictitious brands, a priori brand liking and familiarity, brands with austere and personable images, brands of low to moderate prestige, and consumer regulatory focus.
Hem and Iversen (2009)	Evaluation of brand extensions	To measure the effects of different types of perceived similarity and subjective knowledge in evaluations of brand extensions.	Survey	Actual brands Product Categories Bank, Computers, Snacks, Automobile, Telecom	760 general population, Norway	Perceived Similarity+ The relative importance of perceived similarity differs between extensions.
Iyer, Banaerjee and Garber (2011)	Consumers attitude towards the brand extension	To examine the effect of parent brand protoypicality; brand specific associations relevant to extension category; similarity and parent brand attitude on consumer attitudes towards brand extensions.	Experimental	Hypothetical Extensions /Actual Brands Product Categories Confectionary Rub and Balm Shampoo Soap	Actual Consumers	Parent brand prototypicality does not have a significant effect on attitude towards the extension. Parent brand attitude has a significant effect on consumer attitude towards the extension. Parent brand attitude has a greater effect on attitude towards the extension than on brand specific attributes. Parent brand attitude has a greater effect than Fit in the aggregate on the attitude towards the extension.
John, Loken and Joiner (1998)	Consumer evaluations of flagship products and the parent brand	The purpose of this article is to explore the possibility that extensions can dilute flagship products as well as brand names themselves.	Experimental	FMCG Johnson and Johnson	192, 139 and 124 American Consumers (women age 18-49).	Even when the overall parent brand beliefs are diluted, beliefs about the flagship product can be immune. Flagship products can be diluted only when the extension information describes a line extension that is associated very closely with the flagship product. When the brand extension information is perceived as moderately inconsistent with consumers' expectations

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						for the brand, beliefs about individual product marketed under a parent brand –both flagship and non-flagship products can be diluted.
Jun, MacInnis and Park (2005)	Consumers Evaluations of Brand Extensions	The current research examines the effect of several price related variables on consumers' judgments of brand extensions.	Experimental	Fictitious brand Hypothetical Extensions	191 business school students	Price expectations of the brand extension are affected by price of the parent brand, the relative price of the parent category in relation to the extension category and the heterogeneity of prices in the extension category. The impact of price, is also found to found to be stronger when consumers are confronted with the actual price of the extension than when they are not.
Jun, Mazumdar and Raj (1999)	Consumers' Evaluation of the extension and the parent brand	Effects of technological hierarchy on brand extension evaluations.	Experimental	Durable Goods: Fictitious brands TV, HDTV, Word-processor and mainframes	248 US students	High Technology of the original brand: + Similarity: + The technology level is important: +
Keller and Aaker (1992)	Consumer Evaluations' of new extension and core brand	The study investigates the effects of the sequential introduction of brand extensions on consumer evaluations of (a) a proposed extension and (b) the core brand.	Experimental	FMCG: Two fictitious potato chips brands (Crane's/ Medallion)	430 University employees in the U.S.	Quality of the core brand: + Extend with consistent quality:+ The effects of intervening extensions differ for high quality and average quality brands in relation to the number of intervening extensions introduced and the success or failure of the extension. The effects of intervening extensions on the core brand differ for average and high quality brands and the number of extensions introduced.
Kim and Lavack (1996)		The main purpose of this paper is to examine how introducing a vertical brand extension can have implications not only as to how consumers evaluate		Conceptual paper		

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		the new brand extension, but also as to how it may change consumer perceptions regarding the core brand image.				
Kirmani, Sood and Bridges (1999)	Owners evaluation of the parent brand and the extension	The purpose of this article is to examine how the ownership status may moderate consumer responses to brand line stretches and corresponding feedback to the parent brand.	Survey and	Car Industry: BMW, Acura Brand Fictitious extensions Calvin Klein and Gap Fictitious Extensions	Car owners,122, 76 US students	Owners greater linking for the parent brand translated into more favourable responses either for upward or downward brand line stretches of a non prestige brand. However, the ownership effect did not occur for downward stretches of prestige brands. Parent brand dilution occurred only when the prestige brand used a direct extension.
Klink and Smith (2001)	valuations of	exposure, consumer sure to the extension perceptions of fit and in f the extension.	Experimental	Actual Brands/Hypothetical extensions	229 and 58 students, US	Similarity increases with exposure to extension.
Lane (2000)	Consumers Evaluations of incongruent extensions	The impact of ad repetition on brand extension evaluations	Experimental	FMCG: Beer, Crest, Keebler and Michelin	109 US students	Repeated ad exposure influences evaluations of less similar extensions, but this relationship is attenuated when ad content evokes peripheral brand associations rather than benefit brand associations. Extension consistency is not a fixed property it can change with ad repetition.
Loken and John (1993)	Consumer evaluations of the core brand depending on typicality and quality of the extension	Identify situations in which brand extensions may be more or less likely to dilute specific attribute beliefs consumers have learned to associate with family brand name.	Experimental	FMCG: Fictitious Brand (A) Gentleness and Quality	196 American Consumers (women, age 19-49)	Dilution effects occur but depends on similarity Moderately typical extensions: - Atypical extensions: + Gentleness more important to Quality
Lomax, Hammond, Clemente, East (1996)	Cannibalisation risk of the parent brand	The paper aims to discover if the SOE model is appropriate for line extensions as well as new	Consumer Panel Data	Actual Brands/ Actual Extensions Detergents	UK and German consumers	All line extensions examined cannibalise on the brand. Managers need to use multiple methods when evaluating the degree of cannibalization and take samples over time as cannibalization is shown to be a

		brands. To detect situations where cannibalization has occurred. To discover if there are any cannibalization barriers.				dynamic phenomenon.
Magnoni and Roux (2012)	Consumer-Brand Relationship	To examine the impact of step-down line extensions on consumer-brand relationships in luxury brands.	Pseudo-Experimental	Actual Brands/ Fictitious Extensions BMW Peugeot	Actual consumers	The study has found that the components of consumer brand relationship (i.e., brand attachment, trust and commitment) significantly deteriorate after step down line extensions.
Maoz and Tybout (2002)	Consumer Evaluations of Extensions	To measure the moderating role of involvement and differentiation in the evaluation of brand extensions	Experimental	Actual Brand(BMW) Hypothetical Extensions	US Students	Involvement and similarity influences evaluations
Marsadoss, Eschambadi, Arnold, Bindroo (2010)	Consumers Brand Extension Evaluations	To examine the effects of perceived difficulty of manufacturing the extension product on brand extension attitudes.	Experimental	Actual Brands/ Hypothetical Extensions 16 product categories 10 high quality brand names	Students	Moderate extension difficulty products score the highest on consumer evaluations. Overall, the study supports the fact that parent brand difficulty matters and affects consumer quality inferences of the extension product.
Martinez and de Chernatony (2004)	Brand Image	To analyse the effect of brand extension strategies on brand image	Survey	Actual Brand Nike, Addidas, Reebok	UK Consumers	The perceived quality of the brand and consumers; attitudes towards the extension positively influence both general brand image and product brand image.
McCarthy, Heath and Milberg (2001)	Consumers Evaluations of Brand Extensions versus new Brands	To provide a definitive causal test of brand extension superiority over new brands.	Experimental	Actual and Fictitious Brands	Students US	Similarity+
Meyvis, Goldsmith	Consumer Evaluations of	To identify the importance of the context	Experimental	Actual Brands and Extensions	US Students	Key features in the shopping environment that affect consumers evaluations of the extensions are the visual

and Dhar (2012)	Brand Extensions	in brand extension.				information and the availability of comparison brands.
Milberg, Sinn, Goodstein (2010)	Consumer Reactions to Brand Extensions	To examine whether fit still matters.	Experimental	Real Brands/ Real Extensions	278 US students	Fit-extension relationship is valid in noncompetitive context. In a competitive context where the consumers are familiar with the competitive brands; the relationship is diminished. Perceived Risk mediates the relationship (Fit-extension) in non-competitive settings and familiarity in competitive settings.
Monga and John (2007)	Brand Extension Evaluation	To identify and measure the cultural differences in brand extension evaluation of analytic versus holistic thinking consumers.	Experimental	Actual Brands/ Hypothetical Extensions	57 and 76 US Students	Eastern cultures perceive higher levels of similarity than western cultures.
Monga and John (2010)	Consumer Evaluations of Extensions	To examine the influence of brand concept and styles of thinking on brand extension evaluation.	Experimental	Actual Brands and Hypothetical Extensions	US Students	Brand elasticity is jointly determined by parent brand concept and consumers styles of thinking.
Morrin (1999)	Parent Brand	The impact of brand extensions on parent brand memory structures.	Experimental	FMCG:	29, 39, 36 US students	The impact of extensions moderates by parent brand dominance and similarity.
Park, Jun and Shocker (1996)	Composite brand Extension	The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of a composite brand in a brand extension context.	Experimental	FMCG: Slim Fast Codiva	235 graduate students Northeastern University	When the header brand is , more favourably evaluated, the attribute level complementarity between the header and the modifier brand is a more important factor in the success of the CBE strategy. Greater effectiveness of the CBE strategy when composed of two complementary brands than two highly favourable not complementary.
Park, Milberg, Lawson (1991)	Consumers' extension evaluations	To identify the role of Similarity and Brand Concept Consistency	Experimental	Durable goods: Wristwatches	195 US students	Similarity: + Brand Concept Consistency: +
Pina, Iversen and Martinez	Brand Image	To find feedback effects of brand extension on the	Survey	Actual Brands and Hypothetical Extensions	Consumers form Spain	The findings highlight the moderating role of hedonist consumer innovativeness and social innovativeness.

(2010)		brand image of global brands.		Nike, Puma Skis and DVD players	and Norway	Culture is also analysed as a moderator.
Pina, Martinez, de Chernatony, Drury (2006)	Corporate brand Image	To analyse the Influence that service brand extensions have on corporate image.	Survey			
Rangaswamy, Burke and Olivia (1993)	Brand name extendibility	The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework allowing managers to assess the relative extendibility of existing brand names.	Experimental	FMCG: Real Brands Hypothetical Extensions	125 students aged 18-40	To maximise future extendibility, a brand should try to enhance the value to consumers of characteristics associated with its brand name such as quality, style, durability and reputation that they are not product-specific. Greater effectiveness of the CBE strategy when composed of two complementary brands than two highly favourable not complementary.
Reddy, Holak and Bhat (1994)	Extension Success	The purpose of the article is to determine empirically the extent to which the firm, brand and extension characteristics affect the success of line extensions.	Secondary data	Cigarette Industry	75 brand line extensions during 1950-1984 by 34 regular filter brands	Line extension of strong brands: + Line extensions of symbolic brands: + Line extensions that receive strong advertising and promotional support: + Line extensions of strong brands, entering earlier in the subcategory: + Firm size and marketing competencies: + Incremental sales generated by line extensions may more than compensate for the loss in sales due to cannibalisation
Romeo (1991)	Consumer Evaluations on Brand Extensions	The purpose of this research is to explore the effect that negative information about extensions may have on evaluations of extensions	Experimental	FMCG: Tropicana Brand Hypothetical extensions	26 and 80 undergraduate students in US	The extension's product category was more important than its attributes when assessing similarity to the family brand. Extensions that are closely related to the family brand may be more detrimental to the family brand image than information about extensions that are not closely

		and the family brand.				related to the brand name (Future Research is Needed). Increase in Brand Image when the extension was in the dissimilar product category.
De Ruyter and Wetzels (2000)	Consumers' Evaluations of Service Extensions	The role of corporate image and extension similarity in service brand extensions.	Experimental	Services Fictitious Telecommunication Brand	299 Consumers in the Netherlands	Late mover image (versus first): + Similarity: +
Sharon (2010)	Parent Brand	To examine the impact of motivation and extension typicality on cultural orientation and brand dilution.	Experimental	Actual Brands/Hypothetical Extensions Sony Nokia Dell	Students	Easterners with high motivation exhibit significantly greater dilution effects than Easterners with low motivation when a typical extension fails. Whereas for Westerns brand dilution is a result of low motivation condition. The pattern is reversed when the extension is atypical and fails. In brand extension success Easterners and Westerns behave the same.
Sheinin (2000)	Extension derived beliefs	The effects of experience with extensions on the original brand.	Experimental	FMCG Coca Cola	250 US students	Experience with extensions influences the evaluation of the original brand.
Shine et al. (2007)	Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions	To examine the brand synergy effects in multiple brand extensions.	Experimental	Actual Brands	252 US students	Similarity less important for multiple extensions.
Singh, Scriven, Clemente, Lomax, Wright (2012)	New Brand Extensions and Established Brand Extension	To examine the performance of successful and failing extensions to new brands.	Secondary Data (Consumer Goods Data Sets)	Actual Brands and Actual Extensions FMCG	Actual Consumers UK	The results suggest that the performance of successful new brand extensions is comparable to that of established ones.
Smith and Park (1992)	Market share Advertising Efficiency	The purpose of this article is to examine the effects of brand strategy (i.e., brand extensions vs.	Survey	79 brands in consumer goods sector	188 business people and 1383	Market Share **Characteristics of the Brand** Brand Strength (Reputation: +) Number of extensions associated with

					consumers in the US	the brand: 0 **Characteristics of the Extension** Similarity: 0 Experience goods greater effect that search goods. Age of the product: - **Characteristics of the extension market** Knowledge:- Number of Competitors:- Advertising Efficiency **Characteristics of the Brand** Brand Strength (Reputation: 0) Similarity: + **Characteristics of the extension** Intrinsic bases greater effect than extrinsic. Experience goods greater effect that search goods. Age of the product:- **Characteristics of the extension market** Knowledge:- Number of Competitors: 0
Sood and Keller (2007)	Brand Extension Evaluations Parent brand	To examine the effects of brand name structure and product experience on brand extension evaluations and parent brand dilution.	Experimental/ Survey	Actual Brands/Hypothetical Extensions Tropicana, Pepsi	US Consumers	Brand name structure can invoke different types of information processing strategies and therefore influence both extension evaluations and dilution effects.
Sood and Keller (2012)	Consumer Evaluations of Extensions	To examine how alternative brand name structures and varying degrees of similarity influence extension evaluations.	Experimental	Actual Brands/ Hypothetical Extensions	Consumers and Students	Category similarity affects family branded extensions, but not sub-branded. Dilution effects affect family branded extensions.
Speed (1998)	Branding Decisions	The purpose of the research is to predict how the established position of	Survey	Wine Industry	715 Wineries in Australia and New	The positions of new and original product lines can be used to predict branding strategies for the new line.

		the original product line and the various positioning options for the new product, interact to influence branding strategy.			Zealand	
Sullivan (1992)	Brand Extensions	This empirical study investigates whether brand extensions should be introduced early or late in the life cycle of a product category.	Longitudinal cross category	95 brands in 11 nondurable consumer goods categories	US	Entering late is the preferred strategy for brand extensions
Tauber (1981)			Conceptual Paper			
Tauber (1988)			Conceptual Paper			
Taylor and Bearden (2002)	Consumer brand extension evaluations.	To examine the effects of brand extension pricing on consumer brand extension evaluations across different levels of brand extension similarity.	Experimental	Actual brands	US students	Similarity moderates the effects of price.
Thurau, Houston Heitjans (2009)	Forward Spillover Effects	To measure the monetary value of brand extensions.	Longitudinal	Motion Pictures		Forwards Spillover Effects:
Völckner and Sattler (2006)	Brand Extension Success	To identify drivers of brand extension success.	Survey	Actual Brands/ Real Extensions

FMCG sector | General German population | Similarity the most important factor |
| Xie (2012) | | | Conceptual Paper | | | The study focuses on brand extension in international strategy research. The study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates three levels of internal and external factors (i.e., consumer-specific; industry-specific; firm specific). |
| Yeo and Park (2006) | Consumer Evaluations of | To examine the effects of parent-extension | Experimental | Actual Brands, Hypothetical Extensions | US undergraduate | Evaluation of Similarity varies. |

	Brand Extensions	similarity and self-regulatory focus.		CNN, MandM's, Guess	students	
Yeung and Wyer (2005)	Consumer Evaluations of Extensions	To examine the role of brand-elicited affect in brand extension evaluations	Experimental	Actual Brands/Extensions	Asian, Students	When people have an opportunity to for an initial impression of an extension based on the core brand, this impression can influence their subsequent evaluations independently of the extensions similarity to the core brand.
Yorkston,Nunes, Matta (2010)	Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions	To examine the role of implicit theories in evaluating brand extensions.	Experimental	Actual Brands Cross-Sectors	US Students	Implicit theories regarding brand personality traits affect consumer inferences about a brand's personality traits and thus its ability to extend.
Zhang and Sood (2002)	Children and Adults brand Extension Evaluations	To examine the effect of "deep" and "surface" cues on brand extension evaluations by children and adults.	Experimental	FMCG	Undergraduate population and elementary school in US	Children rely more on surface cues than on deep cues.
Source: Adapted from Grime 2001; Hem and Iversen 2009; Hem, de Chernatony and Iversen 2003						

Appendix B

University of Glasgow

Focus Groups Topic Guide

My name is Eirini Bazaki and I am a doctoral researcher at the University of Glasgow. I am currently interested in the behaviour of online game players. Please spare a minute to read through the paper with the aims and the objectives of my project and ask me any questions you may have. Overall, I would like to thank you for coming here today. This focus group will now start and please feel free to express your opinion as data will be treated strictly confidentially.

Warm up
Tell us your name and one or two things about yourself.

General Questions
From your viewpoint to what extent do you enjoy playing online games?
Probe for:
- Which online games do you play?
- How long have you been playing these games?
- Which is your favourite?

Questions Related to the Company
Now I want you to think about the company that has created this game. How much do you know and what are your feelings about it?
Probe for:
- Size
- Credibility

Questions Related to the Core Brand
Now I want you to think about the parent brand, how much do you know about it and how much do you think your opinion about the parent brand would affect your opinion about future extension products.
- Do you feel it is a well reputable game? Why?
- Can the fact that it is a well reputable game affect your decisions towards potential extension products?
- Do you feel that the fact that the original game has extended into many other games is likely to affect your attitude towards future extension products?

Questions Related to Extension Products
Now I want you to think about new products coming from the same brand?
Probe for:
- What do you consider most important when you buy a new product?
- What other products would you like to see from the X online game?
- Do you find that your behaviour is ever influenced by the opinion of other online game players?

Questions Related to the Persons Personality
Now I want you to think about your personal characteristics as an online player
Probe for:
- How knowledgeable do you perceive to be? Example?
- How innovative do you perceive to be and why? Example?

Questions Related to the Relational Elements
Now I want you to think about your relationship with your favourite game and your relationship with the other online game players.
Probe for:
- Could you describe your feelings towards the X game?
- In which ways does your online game contacts you?
- Do you enjoy giving feedback?
- Do you feel there is a two way communication between you and the X game?
- Could you describe your relationship with other game players?
- Which are the main topics of discussion with other players?
- Do you feel you belong to a community?
- Do you feel your opinion counts?
- How easy do you perceive it to leave this community?

Thank you for your time!

Items from the Focus Groups

I love…
My favorite game at the moment is…
Generally yea I do tend to like play different games.
I play lot of different games.
I met lots of people online.
I have started to make friends online.
I have friend lists and staff so when I go home I can still play games over the internet with the same people I met in these places.
I have a friend who I met through these games and who I also met in real life.
I have actually traveled to different countries to meet people like that.
Actually I sent a present to a friend with whom I used to play until today.
I have been for drinks with people I met online.
It's the same like meeting people in other places.
I play online games mostly with some people I knew from before.
Most of the time the reason I play online games is to get in touch with people, because computer games can be a little boring.
My friends go online and that's a good reason to go online.
Sometimes it is more about the forums and the clans attached to it rather than the actual game.
I do make sacrifices to play the game.
Some of the things I sacrifice are social life, water function, sanity, sleep
I ignore sleep to play my favourite game.
I tend to stay up when I should be going to sleep.
I sacrifice studying for a special gamel
Something that I like doing but it's not on the top of my list.
I play when I have free time.
I only play if I have free time that fits into that.
I am a game gig.
I am a hard core gamer.
I am a casual gamer.
I would say gamers like to socialize with gamers but not with no gamers.
Its just that people like people who are like people.
I play games because most of the people I grew up with play games and it's a way to spent more time together.
I have some friends and outside of that I will not really bother   .

Two way communication
I suppose it's really a non direct communication.
Its more you read it on another website.
We really kind of get it second hand.
Companies will post up a service like online diary and everyone will be able to read it sort of indirect personal.
It's nice to see whats going on and see what they are engaged in doing some companies are better writers than others.

Focus Group Findings

The focus group findings are presented in this section, as they have a significant input to the subsequent stages of the research strategy.

Objective 1

The first objective of the focus groups was to ensure that all the constructs in the model are relevant, as it has already been indicated that the researcher uses both deductive and inductive methods during the research process. Yet prior to the inductive methods the researcher has undertaken the relevant literature review. From the latter a number of factors were included in the model to be tested through empirical methods (see Pre Focus-Groups Research Conceptualisation). With the help of the focus groups and the review of the relevant theory some of the factors were excluded (see Chapter 4, Table 4.1.) These factors are size of the organisation; credibility; portfolio characteristics; knowledge; innovativeness; and involvement. For example, in order to exclude the factor *size of the organisation* because of potential minimal significance, the following process was asked: Question: "What do you think about the size of the manufacturing company?"*(Researcher).* "I never buy a game because of the company" *(Focus Group One).* "It can be a small company, as long as it has a good name" *(Focus Group Two).* A similar technique was used for the remaining constructs.

Objective 2

The second objective was to identify new constructs that may be relevant. The concept of co-creation of value has not been associated with the brand extension literature. During the focus groups the informants made it evident that were interested in greater control over the product they were offered. For example, "I think one thing that we would like to see in a game is something that will allow us to have more influence on the game itself - being able to do more things with it instead of being led to one direction" *(Focus Group One).* "I like something that is more interactive. And I like more and more games that are more and more interactive" *(Focus Group Four).* The focus groups with the video gamers brought to light the importance of this concept, and literature in the field of co-creation was reviewed to establish whether the inclusion of this concept could make an original contribution.

Objective 3

The third objective of the focus groups was to identify dimensions of the new concepts involved. The literature review in Chapter 3 established that different studies have selected various dimensions to represent the concepts of *virtual brand tribal community* and *consumer-brand relationship* in marketing. During the focus groups the informants were asked to describe their relationship with the brand and the other informants. In order to see which of these dimensions were more relevant in the context of online video games, the researcher had to interpret the themes analysis from the results of the focus groups. For example, the concept of tribalism within the virtual brand tribal community became obvious to the researcher: "So it becomes a situation where gamers attract other gamers by their own existence. But if they are not around other gamers they don't attract them"; "I would say gamers like to socialise with gamers but not with non gamers…"; "I find that... quite the opposite, that if I only go with one group I lose something… if I only go with one tribe. It's just that people like people that are like people, if you know what I mean" *(Focus Group Three)*. From the definition of tribalism that we have adopted in the literature review and from the phrases quoted above, it is obvious that there is some sense of belonging to a tribe among these video game players. Moreover, the notion and the characteristics of *tribalism* are described in Chapter 3. In this way, one can see many similarities between video gamers feeling of tribe and the definition that this research has adopted with respect to tribalism as a dimension of community. Chalmers, Schau and Price (2011) have attempted to differentiate the concepts by emphasising the key characteristics of a tribe, such as its ephemeral nature, unstructured character and most importantly its value as a social glue to keep the members of the tribe bonded around their interests (Cova and Cova 2002; Moutinho et al. 2007; Kozinets 1999).

Similarly for the concept of consumer-brand relationship, respondents provided evidence for the existence of the concepts of intimacy, love, interdependence, and two way communication; while their feelings in terms of commitment were mixed. Although the consumers seemed to want to continue their relationship with the brand in question, consumers did not reveal any oppositional loyalty towards competing brands. The latter clearly clarified that they were multi-players, and gave the impression they would play any game that they liked either from the brand in question or from an opposing brand. This feeling of lack of commitment is further supported by the fact that most players belonged to more than one brand community at a time,

and played several games during the same period in their lives. Finally, through their past behaviour the players seem to have changed many brands during the period they have been playing. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to include the concept of commitment in the next stage (quantitative stage) as the literature review on consumer-brand relationship is inconclusive regarding the dimensionality of the concept (see Chapter 3).

Objective 4

The fourth objective was to create items under the dimensions of the constructs involved. List of items from the focus groups (Appendix B)

Objective 5

The fifth objective was to decide on the type of the extension that the study would use as a stimulus in the second part of the research process. As we have seen in Chapter 2 in the literature review on extensions, a brand can introduce an extension into the same product category or a new product category. Participants in the focus groups were presented with three scenarios on products in the same product category as the original brand (i.e., computer/console video games; video game souvenirs; computer video game components), and three scenarios on products in another product category (soft-drinks; clothes; travel agency). The product categories chosen for these experiments are often used as potential product extension categories (see Appendix A, Table A-1).

The participants were asked to comment on the relationship between the original brand and the extension product; and give their opinion regarding its success and further ideas on how to develop the scenarios. Most participants claimed to prefer an extension within the same product category, and presented a few video game scenarios that would allow them a greater amount of freedom in the game to make choices and lead the game in different directions. Based on this understanding, the research has decided to base its experiments on three forthcoming games of the chosen brand that aimed to address the different levels of co-creation the gamers wished for. It is important to note here that despite the researchers' efforts the participants were not willing to develop ideas and participate in the co-creation process regarding other products. A possible explanation for this is that the gamers knew the brand in question and had no plans to expand into another category; and the players themselves were

not willing to participate in utopian extension products. Illustrations from the Focus Groups were as follows:

'There is a game I know, it started with 1 to 4 (and) really hope they make a 5 because I really love this game. I want something similar or the next episode. I want to see the next generation of this game.'

'The Wii console with a new hero. I don't know anything like that.'

(Focus Group Four)

'I don't know if it was an expansion for a game or something like this. I would buy it.'

'Give us more games.'

(Focus Group Three)

Interviewer: What do you think of a travel agency as a new product category for expanding?

'It's a bit, a bit weird.'

'I wouldn't trust the travel agency.'

'The idea is a bit weird.'

(Focus Group One)

'Honestly I like games, but I don't want them to influence other parts of my life.'

'I don't think it would be successful.'

'It's very risky. You may get up, who knows.'

'Yeah, I wouldn't risk it.'

(Focus Group Two)

Interviewer: What do you think of soft-drinks/garment as a new product category for expanding?

I know this company Valve. I think they give you a lunch box together with the game.'

'A lunch box? They have food in it?'

'Yeah, I wouldn't use the food.'

'Yeah, I would play the game.'

'I know two people who would buy it.'

'Someone would buy it like a novelty thing, but I can't see this happening.'

(Focus Group One)

'I may buy them for their comedy value, but I would never use them.'

'I like to impress people and if I think it looks good on me I would buy it.

'If it is functional I think people would buy it.'

(Focus Group Two)

Appendix C

Online Adminstration

Advantages of Online Administration

There are several types of data that can be collected in online environment: e.g., survey-based studies, psychological tests (e.g., IQ tests), aptitude tests (e.g., reaction times), participant observations, and interview-based studies. The reason the online environment constitutes an ideal context for certain types of data is the unique advantages it offers to the participants. Participants in online video game studies can usually take part from the comfort and privacy of their own homes, at their own pace, and at a time that is convenient for them. Online research is easy to publicise by posting links on relevant bulletin boards and sending emails to all the people that may be interested with a note to "forward this link to anyone else who may be interested." If the study sounds interesting enough, this snowball technique can be very effective and is not restricted to the geographical boundaries determined by the costs which are usually related to face to- face interactions. Therefore, using online research can allow a study to be both international and multicultural in scope.

Furthermore, the speed and efficiency of online research means that often the study can reach a much larger and possibly more diverse sample than research could otherwise hope to attain. For studying video game players, these advantages tend to be more prominent. Firstly, gamers nearly always have access to the Internet, and they are usually proficient at using it. They are almost always interested in what the researchers are studying and often want to take part. Furthermore, they usually know other gamers who will take part and can often recommend good places to post links to contact other gamers. However, all of this "good faith" is based on the premise that the researcher will treat them and their community with respect. Much of the early research on video games was based around the idea that video games make children aggressive or introverted, or other negative aspects of gaming. Currently there is a growing body of research that is beginning to examine video game playing as an entertainment and cultural phenomenon in its own right. Furthermore, much of this new research acknowledges

that video games are not just played by children and teenagers but by adults and people of all backgrounds (Wood et al. 2004).

Survey-Based Research Suitability

Surveys are probably one of the most suitable means of online research involving video game players. Surveys are usually cheap to produce, easy and quick to complete while the collected data can automatically be input into a statistics package (e.g., SPSS) for analysis. The online survey saves time for the researcher, in terms of administration and data inputting. In addition, large numbers of participants can take part with no increased consequences in terms of expense. Such studies can be performed quickly and efficiently, and can be particularly useful in quantifying opinions. For example, participants could be contacted soon after a new game has been launched for their initial impressions, and then contacted again at a later date when they have had more experience of the game. The online survey may be particularly useful for the discussion of sensitive issues that participants may find difficult to expand upon in a face-to face situation. The online nature of this medium increases consumers' comfort in answering sensitive questions compared to a face-to-face situation. However, to avoid causing offense or distress, due to a lack of non-verbal cues or ambiguity in wording, one needs to be careful in wording of the questions. This can be achieved by asking colleagues to proof-read the work, pilot-test the questionnaire, provide a good explanation of the content of the survey, and encourage participants to contact the researcher should they wish to. Ethical considerations related with the character of the research should also be taken into account.

Challenges with Online Research

A number of challenges are associated with online research related to issues such as confidentiality, validity and truthfulness, self-selection biases, as well as several ethical dilemmas, and these will also be discussed.

How the Research Dealt with the Online Research Challenges

One way to maximise the number of gamers who are likely to take part is by explaining in detail who the researchers are and why they are doing the research. Many people are suspicious of unsolicited requests to take part in studies, and they need to be assured that the

research is not a fraud or part of a marketing trick, and that intentions are truthful. Researchers from established institutions have the advantage here in that they can easily be traced back and are more likely to follow a set of ethical guidelines than an individual working independently (Wood et al. 2004; Dillman 2000).

When gathering online data from video game players, the researcher cannot always be sure that people are who they say they are (and that they only take part once), or that people are answering truthfully. However, this challenge also arises for any other kind of remotely administered study (e.g., postal or telephone). There is also the issue that any type of self report is reliant on participants answering truthfully, although this is not just limited to online studies but is a more general issue. One way to try to maximise truthfulness is to ask for participants e-mail addresses, so that checks can be made at a later date. To enhance the trustworthiness of the results, the software used for the data collection in the current study did not allow the participant to log in twice from the same IP address. In this way a respondent would be discouraged from taking part in the study more than once. In addition, non-genuine responses can become apparent at the analysis stage and tend to be in the form of overstated answers (see Chapter 6). For example, if a participant reported that they played video games for 20 hours a day, this may have necessitate further investigation and verification before being included in the data set (Wood et al. 2004).

Furthermore non-genuine responses tend to be inconsistent. For example, if a participant rates their enjoyment of video games as low and they say that they do not own any kind of computer or game console, then it is unlikely that they play for many hours at a time and seven days a week. Such inconsistencies were identified by the researcher in the current study and data from these questionnaires were not considered for further analysis. Another way to authenticate the data is to ask a sample of participants to complete the questionnaire again. Answers can then be compared with their previous responses, and the degree of correlation can be obtained. In such a way, the reliability of the data can also be assessed. However, this method is very time consuming and costly and it was not used in the current research. Another limitation of the present research is that it is difficult to verify that the participant is, for example, over 18 years old or is female or male. This should be taken into consideration in the limitations of the study and the generalisability of the results. The other inconsistencies were treated as scrap data (see Chapter 6): examples included very strong opinions towards

opposing anchors of the same psychometric scale and very positive opinions for one concept, but highly negative opinions for all others.

Moreover, the current research followed internet survey principles (Hewson, Yule, Laurent and Vogel 2003) to avoid measurement and coverage errors and also enable the researcher to check for inconsistencies and other scrap data. For instance, the questionnaire asked the respondents to provide information regarding their age, gender, education, occupation and frequency of playing the video game. The data provided to the research were then compared and contrasted with the data of other multinational online video game surveys (See Chapter 6) and further explanations were provided through literature review data from the online video gaming sector of the entertainment industry.

In addition to the principles mentioned above, further procedures can help to address the issues of participant tracking and honesty. Time and date attached to every data submission can help to increase the truthfulness of the results. For instance, long or short response times may suggest that responses are not accurate or honest. It is important to note here that the software that was used for data collection (Questionnaire Pro) provides the date, starting-finishing time and IP address of the respondent. In this way it allows the researcher to check the validity of the results. Furthermore, when designing an Internet survey, the design decisions should be motivated by the features and goals of the particular piece of research. In other words, the research question should be considered together with the resources available, target population and the level of expertise of both the researcher and the respondent (Hewson et al. 2003).

Ensure High Response Rate

In order to reduce survey errors from coverage, sampling, measurement and non-response, the following actions were taken. A tailored design involves the application of procedures that create respondent trust and perceptions of greater rewards than costs for being a respondent. This argument is supported by social exchange theory which claims that actions are motivated by return and therefore when return is likely to be positive, the individual is more likely to take action. Therefore, respondents' expectations for rewards and costs must be shaped as well as respondents feeling of trust. This can be achieved through the questionnaire design and

implementation process. Detailed guidelines for ensuring a high response rate, i.e., establish trust; increase rewards and reduce social costs were adopted by Dillman (2000).

For example, the questionnaire provides a token of appreciation to the potential respondent right at the first page after the introduction. In the introduction the researcher also stressed that the respondents' contribution would be valuable to the research, in an effort to increase the importance of the research. Furthermore, the university logo was included in every page of the questionnaire to build trust between the researcher and the potential respondent and increase its importance. Another example is the use of a warm opening at the beginning of the introduction i.e., ("Dear gamer!"). In this way, the researcher aims to built trust and lower the boundaries between her and the respondent. A university e-mail address is provided on the first page too. For more information see questionnaire (see Appendix D). Finally, the researcher thanks the respondents for their contribution on the last page, while issues regarding format and layout are analysed in the following paragraphs.

Furthermore, exchange concepts must be communicated both visually and verbally. Questionnaires are written in two languages, one consists of words, the other of graphic symbols. The two languages when put on paper need to stimulate a person to receive information in an interview. In order to achieve this, two aspects of the questionnaire need to be in concert.

Finally, good knowledge of the survey population, sponsorship and survey content is required to achieve more effective means for increasing rewards, reducing costs and establishing trust. For this reason, the format, content and layout of the questionnaire was checked by consumers as well as experts at the stage of the pre-test.

Non-response bias occurs in statistical surveys if the answers of the respondents differ from the answers of non-respondents. There are a few reasons why non-response bias may occur. For example, the respondents may not have had enough time to complete the survey, consider it irrelevant to complete, or other personal reasons. There are different ways to test for non-response bias that can compromise the generalisability of the results. To check for non-response bias, the researcher statistically compared the demographics of this study with that of another study as seen in Chapter 6.

Content of Individual Questions

The researcher's previous decisions on the questionnaire design (information needed, structure and method of administration) largely predetermine the decision regarding content of individual questions. However, there are a number of questions that the researcher should ask before editing the survey: 1) Is the question necessary? 2) Are several questions needed instead of one? 3) Do respondents have the necessary information? (Churchill and Iacobucci 2005).

An effort was made to keep the questionnaire length to a minimum as various studies suggest that questionnaire length is negatively associated to response rate. However, it is important to remember that there are limitations on the effects of a shorter questionnaire on the response rate (Herzog and Bachman 1981; Dillman, Sinclair and Clark 1993; Smith, Olah, Hansen, Cumbo 2003; Galesic and Bosnjak 2009). Potentially sensitive questions, such as age, occupation and academic qualification were asked at the end when rapport was built with the respondent (Couper, Traugott and Lamias 2001). To promote involvement and build a relationship with the respondent, it is suggested that the questionnaire starts with neutral questions at the beginning (Malhotra 1999). However, the research topic was not considered sufficiently sensitive or controversial to require neutral questions.

In order to test the conceptual model presented in Chapter 4, six main constructs formed the basis of individual questions (see Table 5.3). Moreover, questions on the perceptions of fit, level of co-creation offered and extension acceptance were repeated three times, once after every video game scenario was introduced.

Appendix D

Dear Gamer!

You are invited to participate in our survey about brand extensions in video games. The survey aims to understand consumer attitudes towards video game brands. This project is part of the work of a PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow and all data will be used to meet the degree requirements. The survey has approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Glasgow (see http://www.gla.ac.uk/lbss/research/ethics/).

It will take you approximately 17 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. Your survey responses will be strictly confidential. Data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate and used for academic purposes only. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point.

Your opinion is very important! Please click the **CONTINUE** button below to start!
If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may email business-branding-survey@glasgow.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for your time and support!

Please click on a button to state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

WoW is reputable.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

WoW is trustworthy.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WoW is of superior quality.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please click on a button to state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

I know a lot about the company that makes the WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I am willing to give feedback to the company.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I have feelings fro WoW that I don't have for other video games.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am important to WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am more willing to learn news about WoW than about other video games.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I understand WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I will be informed about WoW in the future.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

It's really nice to see what the company is engaged in doing.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I depend on WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel something is missing when I haven't bought anything from WoW for a while.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WoW depends on me.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel WoW really understands me.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am willing to make small sacrifices in order to keep playing WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel I have known WoW forever.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

No other video game in the category can take its place.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WoW is like a person to whom I am close.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

It's really an indirect relationship between the gamer and WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WoW is important to me.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would be very upset, if I couldn't buy WoW products when I wanted.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I enjoy creating online content about WoW.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If I can customize the game then I feel more confident playing the game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I expect what I create online about this game to remain unchanged by the company.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I want to be able to have an online dialogue with those who create the game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

VIDEO GAME SCENARIOS

Now that we know your views about the video game, we would like to ask you how would you feel and react, if three alternative games were launched under the same name. Each game is a fantasy role playing game with real time strategy elements. The scenarios aim to describe the MAIN STRUCTURE of a game.

FIRST SCENARIO

The plot is set by the company. The new game has a variety of characters to choose from. It is well structured and you play following the rules of the game. Finally, you have a few choices over the color of the graphics and the music.

Please now state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

This game offers a very high level of game co-creation.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would describe this game as a joint effort by the company and the gamer to create the game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of game functions.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The concept of the new game is similar to the original game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I find this game suitable for myself.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I like this game idea.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would consider buying this game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This is an interesting game idea.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would recommend this game to others.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECOND SCENARIO

The new game has a variety of characters to choose from. You can customise a character or you can create your own from scratch. There are three different plots available. The company also provides you with the tools to intervene with the graphics and the plot. Finally, you can add your results to the game statistics and there is a lot of space provided for you to create your own statistics.

Please now state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

This game offers a very high level of game co-creation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would describe this game as a joint effort by the gamer and the company to create the game.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of game functions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The concept of the new game is similar to the original game.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I like this game idea.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would recommend this game to others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This is an interesting game idea.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I find this game suitable for myself.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would consider buying this game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

THIRD SCENARIO

The plot is not set. There are recommendations over potential plots, but you are responsible for setting the rules of the game with your friends. The company offers a library of graphics and guideliness on how to make changes depending on the chosen plot.

Please now state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

The company really went out of its way to work with the gamer.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This game offers a very high level of game co-creation.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would describe this game as a joint effort by the gamer and the company to create the game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of the needs it satisfies.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of game functions.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The new game is similar to the original in terms of usage situations.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The concept of the new game is similar to the original game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

This is an interesting game idea.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would recommend this game to others.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I like this game idea.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would consider buying this game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I find this game suitable for myself.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please click on a button to state the degree of your agreement with the following statements.

I belong to WoW video game players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I play WoW everyday because other players expect me to do so.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I spend much time online socialising with other WoW players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel that I am a member of WoW video game players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel I control the group of people I play with.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I am addicted to WoW players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The players of WoW are my close friends.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I achieve a sense of belonging by acting the same as other WoW players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Replies to my postings appear frequently.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

My actions are often influenced by how other WoW players expect me to behave.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I have missed classes or work because of activities I was undertaking with other WoW players.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would buy a new computer game if my friends from WoW did so.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am very loyal to WoW, because the friends that I have made through this game are very loyal too.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Just before you finish, we would like to ask you a few questions about your online gaming behaviour.

I play games, because most of the people I grew up with play games and it's a way to spend time together.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Most of the time, the reason I play online games is to get in touch with people.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Sometimes it's more about the forums and the clans attached to it, rather than the actual game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

My friends go online and that's a good reason to go online and play a game.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I play games because it's a good way to spend time with people I know.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Finally, we would like to learn a few things about you.

Sex

☐ Male

☐ Female

Age Group

☐ <18

☐ 19-36

☐ 37+

How many hours do you play this game every week?

☐ <1

☐ 1-3

☐ 3-6

☐ 6-10

☐ >10

How many years have you been playing this game?

- [ ] < 6 months

- [ ] 6-12 months

- [ ] 1-2 years

- [ ] >2 years

Higherst level of eductation attained.

- [ ] No schooling completed

- [ ] High school graduate

- [ ] Bachelor's degree

- [ ] Master's degree

- [ ] Professional degree

- [ ] Doctorate degree

How many years have been playing online games?

- [ ] < 1 year

- [ ] 1-3 years

- [ ] 3-6 years

- [ ] 6-10 years

- [ ] >10 years

Occupation

- [ ] Student

- [ ] Part-time employed

- [ ] Full-time employed

- [ ] Retired

- [ ] Unemployed

Thank you for completing this survey! We would appreciate it, if you could send the link to your friends too **http://questionpro.com/t/AEy8kZIy51**.

Thank You!

Letter to the Guild

Dear Guild Leader (name as it appears on the screen),

I am a PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow. I focus my research on the area of brand extension in the context of online games.

I look for an online game with specific characteristics (i.e., reputable; encourage game customisation; host active communities and a significant number of frequent players) to focus my project on. From the games reviewed in this industry, WoW seemed to be one of the most suitable for this academic research project.

Therefore, I would like to ask for permission to communicate with the WoW players and members of the forum (name of the forum as it appears on the screen), in order to conduct an online survey. The research team here at the University of Glasgow would be most grateful, if you could facilitate this contact (i.e., an email to all your users or a link posted on the forum). Please feel free to scan though the questionnaire attached, send us your comments and sponsor this research project by offering some in-game money to be distributed to the users, who will participate in the survey.

We look forward to hearing from you and I or my supervisors will be willing to provide any additional information about this project. This project is conducted after receiving approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Glasgow.

Your participation would be most appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Eirini Bazaki
Doctoral Researcher in Marketing

Department of Management
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G12 8QQ
Tel: 0141 330 2363
Email: branding-survey@glasgow.ac.uk.

Appendix E

Acceptance Extension Model One

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Tribalism	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	FIT1	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	PerceivedQuality	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
4	LEVELOFCO1	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
5	Engagement	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
6	TwowayCommunication	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

Model Summary^g

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the	Durbin-Watson
1	.460^a	.211	.209	1.21795	
2	.671^b	.450	.446	1.01899	
3	.694^c	.481	.476	.99093	
4	.713^d	.508	.501	.96686	
5	.732^e	.536	.529	.94026	
6	.737^f	.543	.535	.93404	1.890

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1

c. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality

d. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1

e. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement

f. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement,

TwowayCommunication

ANOVA[g]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.864	1	126.864	85.522	.000[a]
	Residual	473.207	319	1.483		
	Total	600.071	320			
2	Regression	269.881	2	134.940	129.958	.000[b]
	Residual	330.190	318	1.038		
	Total	600.071	320			
3	Regression	288.794	3	96.265	98.035	.000[c]
	Residual	311.277	317	.982		
	Total	600.071	320			
4	Regression	304.668	4	76.167	81.478	.000[d]
	Residual	295.403	316	.935		
	Total	600.071	320			
5	Regression	321.583	5	64.317	72.749	.000[e]
	Residual	278.488	315	.884		
	Total	600.071	320			
6	Regression	326.130	6	54.355	62.303	.000[f]
	Residual	273.941	314	.872		
	Total	600.071	320			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1

c. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality

d. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1

e. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement

f. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement,

TwowayCommunication

g. Dependent Variable: vg1acc

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	6.474	.210
	Tribalism	.412	.045
2	(Constant)	4.128	.266
	Tribalism	.480	.038
	FIT1	.493	.042
3	(Constant)	3.330	.316
	Tribalism	.480	.037
	FIT1	.466	.041
	PerceivedQuality	.171	.039
4	(Constant)	2.844	.330
	Tribalism	.482	.036
	FIT1	.461	.040
	PerceivedQuality	.176	.038
	LEVELOFCO1	.118	.029
5	(Constant)	2.312	.343
	Tribalism	.422	.037
	FIT1	.524	.042
	PerceivedQuality	.153	.037
	LEVELOFCO1	.131	.028
	Engagement	.163	.037
6	(Constant)	2.000	.368
	Tribalism	.414	.037
	FIT1	.503	.042
	PerceivedQuality	.122	.040
	LEVELOFCO1	.130	.028
	Engagement	.151	.037
	TwowayCommunication	.134	.059

Coefficients^a

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
1	(Constant)		30.859	.000	6.062
	Tribalism	.460	9.248	.000	.324
2	(Constant)		15.515	.000	3.605
	Tribalism	.536	12.734	.000	.406
	FIT1	.494	11.736	.000	.410
3	(Constant)		10.528	.000	2.707
	Tribalism	.536	13.082	.000	.407
	FIT1	.467	11.290	.000	.385
	PerceivedQuality	.180	4.389	.000	.094
4	(Constant)		8.610	.000	2.194
	Tribalism	.538	13.465	.000	.411
	FIT1	.462	11.433	.000	.382
	PerceivedQuality	.185	4.627	.000	.101
	LEVELOFCO1	.163	4.121	.000	.061
5	(Constant)		6.732	.000	1.636
	Tribalism	.471	11.285	.000	.348
	FIT1	.525	12.544	.000	.441
	PerceivedQuality	.161	4.101	.000	.080
	LEVELOFCO1	.181	4.688	.000	.076
	Engagement	.196	4.374	.000	.090
6	(Constant)		5.439	.000	1.276
	Tribalism	.462	11.088	.000	.340
	FIT1	.504	11.859	.000	.420
	PerceivedQuality	.128	3.092	.002	.044
	LEVELOFCO1	.180	4.692	.000	.076
	Engagement	.181	4.035	.000	.077
	TwowayCommunication	.097	2.283	.023	.018

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B	Collinearity Statistics	
		Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	6.887		
	Tribalism	.499	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	4.651		
	Tribalism	.554	.976	1.024
	FIT1	.576	.976	1.024
3	(Constant)	3.952		
	Tribalism	.552	.976	1.024
	FIT1	.548	.955	1.047
	PerceivedQuality	.248	.978	1.023
4	(Constant)	3.494		
	Tribalism	.552	.976	1.025
	FIT1	.540	.954	1.048
	PerceivedQuality	.251	.977	1.024
	LEVELOFCO1	.174	.998	1.002
5	(Constant)	2.988		
	Tribalism	.495	.845	1.183
	FIT1	.606	.842	1.188
	PerceivedQuality	.227	.958	1.044
	LEVELOFCO1	.186	.986	1.014
	Engagement	.236	.734	1.363
6	(Constant)	2.723		
	Tribalism	.487	.837	1.194
	FIT1	.587	.804	1.243
	PerceivedQuality	.200	.845	1.184
	LEVELOFCO1	.185	.986	1.014
	Engagement	.224	.719	1.391
	TwowayCommunication	.249	.803	1.245

a. Dependent Variable: vg1acc

Excluded Variables[g]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		Minimum Tolerance
						Tolerance	VIF	
1	LOVE	.065[a]	1.301	.194	.073	.998	1.002	.998
	TwowayCommunication	.269[a]	5.619	.000	.301	.987	1.013	.987
	Interdependenc	.100[a]	2.024	.044	.113	.997	1.003	.997
	Commitment	.044[a]	.884	.378	.049	.998	1.002	.998
	Intimacy	.009[a]	.175	.862	.010	.999	1.001	.999
	IntentiontoCo	.068[a]	1.368	.172	.076	.997	1.004	.997
	PerceivedQuality	.248[a]	5.176	.000	.279	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Identification	.149[a]	2.821	.005	.156	.862	1.160	.862
	Engagement	.004[a]	.080	.936	.005	.848	1.179	.848
	Norms	.216[a]	3.974	.000	.217	.801	1.248	.801
	LEVELOFCO1	.170[a]	3.485	.001	.192	1.000	1.000	1.000
	FIT1	.494[a]	11.736	.000	.550	.976	1.024	.976
2	LOVE	.008[b]	.197	.844	.011	.985	1.016	.963
	TwowayCommunication	.171[b]	4.086	.000	.224	.942	1.062	.931
	Interdependenc	.048[b]	1.143	.254	.064	.985	1.015	.965
	Commitment	.038[b]	.902	.368	.051	.998	1.002	.974
	Intimacy	.040[b]	.955	.340	.054	.995	1.005	.972
	IntentiontoCo	.025[b]	.600	.549	.034	.989	1.011	.969
	PerceivedQuality	.180[b]	4.389	.000	.239	.978	1.023	.955
	Identification	.144[b]	3.262	.001	.180	.862	1.161	.843
	Engagement	.199[b]	4.268	.000	.233	.758	1.320	.758
	Norms	.109[b]	2.308	.022	.129	.768	1.302	.759
	LEVELOFCO1	.157[b]	3.853	.000	.212	.999	1.001	.975
3	LOVE	.024[c]	.588	.557	.033	.977	1.024	.939
	TwowayCommunication	.121[c]	2.729	.007	.152	.819	1.220	.819
	Interdependenc	.059[c]	1.438	.151	.081	.982	1.019	.942
	Commitment	.026[c]	.634	.527	.036	.994	1.006	.955
	Intimacy	.027[c]	.654	.514	.037	.989	1.011	.950
	IntentiontoCo	.007[c]	.166	.869	.009	.978	1.022	.950
	Identification	.094[c]	2.051	.041	.115	.778	1.285	.778
	Engagement	.173[c]	3.765	.000	.207	.742	1.347	.742
	Norms	.105[c]	2.289	.023	.128	.768	1.303	.759

	LEVELOFCO1	.163^c	4.121	.000	.226	.998	1.002	.954
4	LOVE	.025^d	.620	.536	.035	.977	1.024	.938
	TwowayCommunication	.121^d	2.816	.005	.157	.819	1.220	.819
	Interdependenc	.049^d	1.240	.216	.070	.979	1.022	.941
	Commitment	.039^d	.992	.322	.056	.987	1.013	.954
	Intimacy	.027^d	.687	.492	.039	.989	1.011	.949
	IntentiontoCo	.013^d	.317	.751	.018	.977	1.024	.949
	Identification	.105^d	2.355	.019	.132	.775	1.290	.775
	Engagement	.196^d	4.374	.000	.239	.734	1.363	.734
	Norms	.120^d	2.672	.008	.149	.763	1.310	.759
5	LOVE	.027^e	.697	.486	.039	.977	1.024	.733
	TwowayCommunication	.097^e	2.283	.023	.128	.803	1.245	.719
	Interdependenc	.047^e	1.216	.225	.068	.978	1.022	.733
	Commitment	.051^e	1.330	.184	.075	.982	1.018	.730
	Intimacy	.030^e	.781	.436	.044	.989	1.011	.733
	IntentiontoCo	-.020^e	-.517	.605	-.029	.941	1.062	.707
	Identification	.028^e	.584	.560	.033	.633	1.580	.599
	Norms	-.014^e	-.246	.806	-.014	.427	2.344	.410
6	LOVE	.035^f	.893	.372	.050	.970	1.031	.719
	Interdependenc	.040^f	1.028	.305	.058	.971	1.030	.719
	Commitment	.048^f	1.238	.217	.070	.980	1.020	.715
	Intimacy	.034^f	.887	.375	.050	.987	1.013	.719
	IntentiontoCo	-.059^f	-1.408	.160	-.079	.827	1.209	.702
	Identification	.014^f	.290	.772	.016	.622	1.608	.595
	Norms	.007^f	.115	.908	.007	.416	2.405	.392

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality

d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1

e. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement

f. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, FIT1, PerceivedQuality, LEVELOFCO1, Engagement, TwowayCommunication

g. Dependent Variable: vg1acc

Acceptance Extension Model Two

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Tribalism	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	LEVELOFCO2	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	TwowayCommunication	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
4	FIT2	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
5	Engagement	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
6	PerceivedQuality	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: vg2acc

Model Summary[g]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.641[a]	.411	.410	1.42610	
2	.777[b]	.604	.601	1.17239	
3	.831[c]	.691	.688	1.03619	
4	.875[d]	.766	.763	.90287	
5	.891[e]	.794	.790	.85000	
6	.895[f]	.802	.798	.83426	2.089

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2

c. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2

e. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement

f. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: vg2acc

ANOVA[g]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	453.600	1	453.600	223.036	.000[a]
	Residual	648.768	319	2.034		
	Total	1102.369	320			
2	Regression	665.280	2	332.640	242.010	.000[b]
	Residual	437.088	318	1.374		
	Total	1102.369	320			
3	Regression	762.006	3	254.002	236.568	.000[c]
	Residual	340.362	317	1.074		
	Total	1102.369	320			
4	Regression	844.776	4	211.194	259.080	.000[d]
	Residual	257.593	316	.815		
	Total	1102.369	320			
5	Regression	874.782	5	174.956	242.156	.000[e]
	Residual	227.586	315	.722		
	Total	1102.369	320			
6	Regression	883.830	6	147.305	211.650	.000[f]
	Residual	218.538	314	.696		
	Total	1102.369	320			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2

c. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2

e. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement

f. Predictors: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: vg2acc

Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	8.960	.246
	Tribalism	.778	.052
2	(Constant)	6.787	.267
	Tribalism	.736	.043
	LEVELOFCO2	.497	.040
3	(Constant)	4.365	.348
	Tribalism	.697	.038
	LEVELOFCO2	.476	.035
	TwowayCommunication	.557	.059
4	(Constant)	2.497	.355
	Tribalism	.741	.034
	LEVELOFCO2	.465	.031
	TwowayCommunication	.556	.051
	FIT2	.344	.034
5	(Constant)	2.342	.335
	Tribalism	.656	.034
	LEVELOFCO2	.464	.029
	TwowayCommunication	.526	.048
	FIT2	.330	.032
	Engagement	.203	.032
6	(Constant)	2.028	.340
	Tribalism	.664	.034
	LEVELOFCO2	.467	.029
	TwowayCommunication	.456	.051
	FIT2	.319	.032
	Engagement	.198	.031
	PerceivedQuality	.127	.035

Coefficients[a]

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
1	(Constant)		36.474	.000	8.477
	Tribalism	.641	14.934	.000	.676
2	(Constant)		25.388	.000	6.261
	Tribalism	.607	17.134	.000	.652
	LEVELOFCO2	.440	12.410	.000	.418
3	(Constant)		12.553	.000	3.681
	Tribalism	.575	18.249	.000	.622
	LEVELOFCO2	.421	13.411	.000	.406
	TwowayCommunication	.299	9.491	.000	.442
4	(Constant)		7.030	.000	1.798
	Tribalism	.610	22.066	.000	.675
	LEVELOFCO2	.412	15.057	.000	.405
	TwowayCommunication	.298	10.876	.000	.456
	FIT2	.276	10.077	.000	.277
5	(Constant)		6.985	.000	1.682
	Tribalism	.541	19.161	.000	.589
	LEVELOFCO2	.411	15.950	.000	.407
	TwowayCommunication	.282	10.873	.000	.431
	FIT2	.265	10.227	.000	.266
	Engagement	.180	6.445	.000	.141
6	(Constant)		5.956	.000	1.358
	Tribalism	.547	19.718	.000	.598
	LEVELOFCO2	.413	16.348	.000	.411
	TwowayCommunication	.245	8.899	.000	.355
	FIT2	.256	10.012	.000	.256
	Engagement	.176	6.396	.000	.137
	PerceivedQuality	.099	3.606	.000	.058

Coefficients^a

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B	Collinearity Statistics	
		Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	9.444		
	Tribalism	.881	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	7.313		
	Tribalism	.821	.994	1.006
	LEVELOFCO2	.576	.994	1.006
3	(Constant)	5.049		
	Tribalism	.773	.982	1.018
	LEVELOFCO2	.545	.990	1.010
	TwowayCommunication	.673	.983	1.017
4	(Constant)	3.196		
	Tribalism	.807	.966	1.035
	LEVELOFCO2	.526	.989	1.011
	TwowayCommunication	.657	.983	1.017
	FIT2	.412	.983	1.017
5	(Constant)	3.002		
	Tribalism	.723	.823	1.215
	LEVELOFCO2	.521	.989	1.011
	TwowayCommunication	.621	.974	1.027
	FIT2	.393	.978	1.022
	Engagement	.265	.836	1.196
6	(Constant)	2.697		
	Tribalism	.730	.820	1.220
	LEVELOFCO2	.523	.988	1.012
	TwowayCommunication	.557	.835	1.197
	FIT2	.381	.968	1.033
	Engagement	.259	.834	1.199
	PerceivedQuality	.197	.844	1.185

a. Dependent Variable: vg2acc

Excluded Variables[g]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
						Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1	LOVE	-.044[a]	-1.014	.312	-.057	.998	1.002	.998
	TwowayCommunication	.325[a]	8.290	.000	.422	.987	1.013	.987
	Interdependenc	.000[a]	.001	1.000	.000	.997	1.003	.997
	Commitment	.017[a]	.394	.694	.022	.998	1.002	.998
	Intimacy	-.056[a]	-1.300	.195	-.073	.999	1.001	.999
	IntentiontoCo	.115[a]	2.705	.007	.150	.997	1.004	.997
	PerceivedQuality	.229[a]	5.582	.000	.299	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Identification	.214[a]	4.776	.000	.259	.862	1.160	.862
	Engagement	.237[a]	5.287	.000	.284	.848	1.179	.848
	Norms	.202[a]	4.331	.000	.236	.801	1.248	.801
	FIT2	.291[a]	7.242	.000	.376	.984	1.016	.984
	LEVELOFCO2	.440[a]	12.410	.000	.571	.994	1.006	.994
2	LOVE	-.023[b]	-.650	.516	-.037	.996	1.004	.991
	TwowayCommunication	.299[b]	9.491	.000	.470	.983	1.017	.982
	Interdependenc	.001[b]	.032	.974	.002	.997	1.003	.991
	Commitment	.028[b]	.799	.425	.045	.998	1.002	.992
	Intimacy	-.025[b]	-.703	.482	-.039	.994	1.006	.989
	IntentiontoCo	.129[b]	3.704	.000	.204	.996	1.004	.990
	PerceivedQuality	.229[b]	6.942	.000	.363	1.000	1.000	.993
	Identification	.235[b]	6.560	.000	.346	.860	1.163	.855
	Engagement	.230[b]	6.350	.000	.336	.848	1.179	.844
	Norms	.197[b]	5.199	.000	.280	.801	1.248	.798
	FIT2	.277[b]	8.625	.000	.436	.983	1.017	.977
3	LOVE	.000[c]	.007	.995	.000	.990	1.011	.977
	Interdependenc	-.024[c]	-.750	.454	-.042	.990	1.010	.977
	Commitment	.011[c]	.340	.734	.019	.994	1.006	.980
	Intimacy	-.018[c]	-.563	.574	-.032	.993	1.007	.980
	IntentiontoCo	.016[c]	.461	.645	.026	.846	1.183	.835
	PerceivedQuality	.136[c]	4.120	.000	.226	.855	1.170	.841

		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
	Identification	.160[c]	4.738	.000	.258	.798	1.254	.798
	Engagement	.200[c]	6.228	.000	.331	.840	1.190	.840
	Norms	.188[c]	5.634	.000	.302	.801	1.249	.792
	FIT2	.276[c]	10.077	.000	.493	.983	1.017	.966
4	LOVE	-.018[d]	-.645	.519	-.036	.985	1.015	.962
	Interdependenc	-.041[d]	-1.506	.133	-.085	.986	1.014	.963
	Commitment	-.007[d]	-.269	.788	-.015	.990	1.010	.964
	Intimacy	-.020[d]	-.719	.472	-.040	.993	1.007	.964
	IntentiontoCo	.047[d]	1.579	.115	.089	.837	1.195	.834
	PerceivedQuality	.107[d]	3.673	.000	.203	.846	1.182	.840
	Identification	.124[d]	4.149	.000	.228	.785	1.273	.785
	Engagement	.180[d]	6.445	.000	.341	.836	1.196	.823
	Norms	.131[d]	4.342	.000	.238	.768	1.302	.759
5	LOVE	-.008[e]	-.308	.758	-.017	.982	1.018	.818
	Interdependenc	-.033[e]	-1.279	.202	-.072	.984	1.017	.819
	Commitment	.003[e]	.114	.909	.006	.986	1.014	.820
	Intimacy	-.023[e]	-.885	.377	-.050	.993	1.007	.822
	IntentiontoCo	.021[e]	.732	.465	.041	.819	1.222	.818
	PerceivedQuality	.099[e]	3.606	.000	.199	.844	1.185	.820
	Identification	.057[e]	1.820	.070	.102	.653	1.531	.653
	Norms	.041[e]	1.167	.244	.066	.540	1.851	.540
6	LOVE	-.004[f]	-.146	.884	-.008	.980	1.020	.815
	Interdependenc	-.025[f]	-.999	.318	-.056	.977	1.024	.816
	Commitment	-.001[f]	-.050	.960	-.003	.984	1.016	.816
	Intimacy	-.030[f]	-1.193	.234	-.067	.986	1.014	.818
	IntentiontoCo	.024[f]	.875	.382	.049	.818	1.223	.723
	Identification	.034[f]	1.066	.287	.060	.620	1.612	.620
	Norms	.041[f]	1.209	.228	.068	.540	1.851	.540

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2

e. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement

f. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Tribalism, LEVELOFCO2, TwowayCommunication, FIT2, Engagement, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: vg2acc

Acceptance Extension Model Three

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	LEVELOFCO3	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100)
2	Tribalism	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	TwowayCommunication	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
4	Engagement	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
5	FIT3	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
6	PerceivedQuality	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: VG3ACC

Model Summary[g]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.631[a]	.398	.396	1.40067	
2	.777[b]	.604	.602	1.13749	
3	.842[c]	.709	.706	.97687	
4	.864[d]	.747	.744	.91197	
5	.872[e]	.760	.756	.89041	
6	.876[f]	.767	.762	.87880	2.054

a. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3

b. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism

c. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement

e. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3

f. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: VG3ACC

ANOVA[g]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	413.280	1	413.280	210.656	.000[a]
	Residual	625.836	319	1.962		
	Total	1039.116	320			
2	Regression	627.664	2	313.832	242.552	.000[b]
	Residual	411.452	318	1.294		
	Total	1039.116	320			
3	Regression	736.610	3	245.537	257.301	.000[c]
	Residual	302.506	317	.954		
	Total	1039.116	320			
4	Regression	776.299	4	194.075	233.348	.000[d]
	Residual	262.816	316	.832		
	Total	1039.116	320			
5	Regression	789.376	5	157.875	199.130	.000[e]
	Residual	249.740	315	.793		
	Total	1039.116	320			
6	Regression	796.619	6	132.770	171.919	.000[f]
	Residual	242.496	314	.772		
	Total	1039.116	320			

a. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3

b. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism

c. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement

e. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3

f. Predictors: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: VG3ACC

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	9.677	.261
	LEVELOFCO3	.677	.047
2	(Constant)	7.198	.287
	LEVELOFCO3	.694	.038
	Tribalism	.536	.042
3	(Constant)	4.646	.343
	LEVELOFCO3	.673	.033
	Tribalism	.491	.036
	TwowayCommunication	.591	.055
4	(Constant)	4.356	.323
	LEVELOFCO3	.676	.030
	Tribalism	.396	.036
	TwowayCommunication	.556	.052
	Engagement	.233	.034
5	(Constant)	3.786	.345
	LEVELOFCO3	.681	.030
	Tribalism	.400	.035
	TwowayCommunication	.559	.051
	Engagement	.248	.033
	FIT3	.307	.076
6	(Constant)	3.451	.358
	LEVELOFCO3	.682	.029
	Tribalism	.409	.035
	TwowayCommunication	.497	.054
	Engagement	.243	.033
	FIT3	.309	.075
	PerceivedQuality	.113	.037

Coefficients^a

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
1	(Constant)		37.016	.000	9.163
	LEVELOFCO3	.631	14.514	.000	.585
2	(Constant)		25.111	.000	6.634
	LEVELOFCO3	.647	18.312	.000	.619
	Tribalism	.454	12.872	.000	.454
3	(Constant)		13.545	.000	3.971
	LEVELOFCO3	.627	20.635	.000	.609
	Tribalism	.417	13.659	.000	.421
	TwowayCommunication	.326	10.685	.000	.482
4	(Constant)		13.490	.000	3.721
	LEVELOFCO3	.629	22.192	.000	.616
	Tribalism	.336	10.912	.000	.325
	TwowayCommunication	.307	10.712	.000	.454
	Engagement	.213	6.908	.000	.167
5	(Constant)		10.971	.000	3.107
	LEVELOFCO3	.635	22.890	.000	.623
	Tribalism	.340	11.294	.000	.331
	TwowayCommunication	.309	11.026	.000	.459
	Engagement	.227	7.489	.000	.183
	FIT3	.113	4.061	.000	.158
6	(Constant)		9.647	.000	2.747
	LEVELOFCO3	.636	23.235	.000	.625
	Tribalism	.347	11.658	.000	.340
	TwowayCommunication	.274	9.211	.000	.391
	Engagement	.223	7.424	.000	.179
	FIT3	.114	4.143	.000	.162
	PerceivedQuality	.090	3.063	.002	.041

Coefficients[a]

Model		95.0% Confidence	Collinearity Statistics	
		Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	10.191		
	LEVELOFCO3	.769	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	7.762		
	LEVELOFCO3	.769	.999	1.001
	Tribalism	.617	.999	1.001
3	(Constant)	5.321		
	LEVELOFCO3	.737	.995	1.005
	Tribalism	.562	.986	1.015
	TwowayCommunication	.700	.984	1.017
4	(Constant)	4.992		
	LEVELOFCO3	.736	.995	1.005
	Tribalism	.467	.843	1.186
	TwowayCommunication	.658	.974	1.027
	Engagement	.300	.840	1.191
5	(Constant)	4.465		
	LEVELOFCO3	.740	.993	1.007
	Tribalism	.470	.843	1.187
	TwowayCommunication	.659	.974	1.027
	Engagement	.314	.829	1.206
	FIT3	.455	.978	1.022
6	(Constant)	4.155		
	LEVELOFCO3	.740	.993	1.007
	Tribalism	.478	.837	1.195
	TwowayCommunication	.603	.837	1.194
	Engagement	.308	.827	1.209
	FIT3	.456	.978	1.022
	PerceivedQuality	.186	.853	1.173

a. Dependent Variable: VG3ACC

Excluded Variables^g

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
						Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1	LOVE	-.062^a	-1.438	.151	-.080	.997	1.003	.997
	TwowayCommunication	.375^a	9.805	.000	.482	.997	1.003	.997
	Interdependenc	.007^a	.167	.867	.009	.999	1.001	.999
	Commitment	-.006^a	-.134	.894	-.007	.999	1.001	.999
	Intimacy	.041^a	.951	.342	.053	.999	1.001	.999
	IntentiontoCo	.127^a	2.949	.003	.163	.998	1.002	.998
	PerceivedQuality	.199^a	4.743	.000	.257	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Identification	.327^a	8.289	.000	.422	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Tribalism	.454^a	12.872	.000	.585	.999	1.001	.999
	Engagement	.385^a	10.198	.000	.496	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Norms	.332^a	8.430	.000	.427	.999	1.001	.999
	FIT3	.044^a	1.008	.314	.056	.998	1.002	.998
2	LOVE	-.083^b	-2.350	.019	-.131	.995	1.005	.995
	TwowayCommunication	.326^b	10.685	.000	.515	.984	1.017	.984
	Interdependenc	-.018^b	-.496	.621	-.028	.996	1.004	.996
	Commitment	-.024^b	-.676	.500	-.038	.998	1.002	.997
	Intimacy	.024^b	.687	.493	.039	.998	1.002	.997
	IntentiontoCo	.099^b	2.842	.005	.158	.994	1.006	.994
	PerceivedQuality	.209^b	6.254	.000	.331	1.000	1.000	.998
	Identification	.183^b	5.005	.000	.271	.861	1.161	.860
	Engagement	.246^b	6.862	.000	.360	.848	1.179	.847
	Norms	.162^b	4.204	.000	.230	.801	1.248	.801
	FIT3	.082^b	2.319	.021	.129	.992	1.009	.992
3	LOVE	-.058^c	-1.898	.059	-.106	.989	1.011	.978
	Interdependenc	-.045^c	-1.484	.139	-.083	.989	1.011	.977
	Commitment	-.043^c	-1.425	.155	-.080	.994	1.006	.980
	Intimacy	.034^c	1.132	.258	.064	.997	1.003	.983
	IntentiontoCo	-.029^c	-.894	.372	-.050	.848	1.179	.839

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
	PerceivedQuality	.100[c]	3.091	.002	.171	.855	1.169	.842
	Identification	.098[c]	2.921	.004	.162	.801	1.249	.801
	Engagement	.213[c]	6.908	.000	.362	.840	1.191	.840
	Norms	.151[c]	4.585	.000	.250	.801	1.249	.794
	FIT3	.090[c]	2.987	.003	.166	.991	1.009	.979
4	LOVE	-.047[d]	-1.653	.099	-.093	.986	1.014	.837
	Interdependenc	-.036[d]	-1.274	.204	-.072	.987	1.013	.838
	Commitment	-.032[d]	-1.127	.261	-.063	.991	1.009	.837
	Intimacy	.031[d]	1.082	.280	.061	.996	1.004	.840
	IntentiontoCo	-.060[d]	-1.941	.053	-.109	.832	1.202	.824
	PerceivedQuality	.089[d]	2.950	.003	.164	.853	1.172	.837
	Identification	.009[d]	.258	.797	.015	.664	1.507	.664
	Norms	.045[d]	1.185	.237	.067	.562	1.779	.562
	FIT3	.113[d]	4.061	.000	.223	.978	1.022	.829
5	LOVE	-.052[e]	-1.887	.060	-.106	.984	1.017	.827
	Interdependenc	-.037[e]	-1.338	.182	-.075	.987	1.013	.828
	Commitment	-.031[e]	-1.111	.267	-.063	.991	1.009	.826
	Intimacy	.037[e]	1.324	.187	.074	.994	1.007	.829
	IntentiontoCo	-.045[e]	-1.475	.141	-.083	.818	1.222	.816
	PerceivedQuality	.090[e]	3.063	.002	.170	.853	1.173	.827
	Identification	.015[e]	.438	.662	.025	.663	1.509	.663
	Norms	.036[e]	.969	.333	.055	.560	1.786	.560
6	LOVE	-.049[f]	-1.793	.074	-.101	.982	1.018	.825
	Interdependenc	-.031[f]	-1.119	.264	-.063	.981	1.019	.826
	Commitment	-.035[f]	-1.291	.198	-.073	.988	1.012	.824
	Intimacy	.030[f]	1.095	.274	.062	.987	1.013	.827
	IntentiontoCo	-.041[f]	-1.354	.177	-.076	.816	1.225	.725
	Identification	-.010[f]	-.278	.781	-.016	.626	1.596	.626
	Norms	.034[f]	.937	.350	.053	.560	1.786	.560

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication

d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement

e. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3

f. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), LEVELOFCO3, Tribalism, TwowayCommunication, Engagement, FIT3, PerceivedQuality

g. Dependent Variable: VG3ACC