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**Music Consumption: The Impact of Social
Networking, Identity Formation, and Group Influence**

Richard Lloyd Warr

**Submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

2015

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Summary

Previous researchers such as McGuire & Slater (2005) noted that people have an inherent need to share favourite music with other people, and also theorised that a democratisation of culture is taking place with consumers effectively standing by (or in some cases even replacing) traditional tastemakers by sharing music with one another through the Internet; thus shaping culture and in turn themselves. In addition, this theory supports the notion that once music consumers discover others online who have similar or interesting tastes, they may begin to interact with one another; therefore leading to the formation of communities around an artist or genre (or around a particular tastemaker such as a podcaster) which may also provide benefits to consumers in other areas of their social lives. The motivation of this thesis was to explore how these online social influences compared to the traditional offline social influences that can be inferred upon music consumption behaviours and habits. Methods of consumption can include listening to music alone or with others, obtaining music in different formats and on various platforms, and attending live events such as music shows or festivals. A study was conceptualised on behaviours relating to live music consumption, with a literature review being conducted on the exploration of the music industry and its digitisation, identity theory (both individual and collective), and social influence. The research methodology was separated into two phases; the first being a qualitative exploratory investigation consisting of a webnography data collection which was used to examine relevant trends in online forums, and the second an online survey. The online survey allowed for the quantitative testing of the theoretical frameworks identified by the literature review, as well as enabling the development of predictive models for live music consumption behaviours in both the online and offline social contexts.



Declarations and Statements

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STATEMENT 1

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the scope and purpose of the thesis within the field of music consumption behaviour, along with a summary of each chapter and the overall framework of the thesis.

1.1 Scope and Purpose of the Thesis

The world of the modern music consumer is a very different one compared to that of even just a decade ago. Research already conducted shows that through the widespread use of the MP3 format, and especially the mass-adoption of portable music devices such as Apple's iPod, there is now a greater trend than ever for the private consumption of music. Despite this, the same consumers still appear to have concurrent needs to communicate their music consumption with others; be they friends, peers, or otherwise. The development of the Internet and its myriad of discussion platforms have contributed greatly to enabling online conversations about largely offline events; in the process allowing music consumers to share opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. Perhaps most importantly, this also includes their values placed on products and services offered by the music industry.

However, there is currently a distinct lack of literature and research that focuses on the predictors of consumers' online and offline music consumption behaviours in relation to the products and services available in the digitised music industry. The establishment of predictors of music consumption behaviours can have managerial implications for the industry, particularly in terms of future marketing strategies through factors that may predict the effects of influence from other consumers. By conducting research on several of the potential factors of the level of influence by others, namely in the form of social group influence, in relation to music consumption and music-based products and

services, the thesis intended to identify the views on social influence that today's music consumers possess.

1.2 Contribution of the Thesis

Despite a substantial number of previous studies being conducted on comparisons between online and offline social interactions, the previous literature across a range of academic fields has yet to encompass the realms of music consumption and live music attendance, and the similarities or differences that may exist between online and offline social networking groups. Therefore, drawing from the literature, the thesis hypothesised that there would be significant differences between the influences from online and offline social groups that are conducive to an individual's music consumption and live music attendance.

In addition, the same measures were used to investigate music consumption in terms of the consumption of music itself and related merchandise, in order to draw comparisons between such behaviours and live music attendance; all of which was identified by the literature review as forming key core components of music consumption. The addition of questions aimed to measure consumers' perceptions of their online and offline social group influences, as well as the perceived influence upon their music consumption and live music attendance enabled any differences that were found between these two core constructs of music consumption to be discussed.

The next section provides a brief summary of the contents of each chapter, as well as the overall framework for the thesis.

1.3 Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of the thesis, by providing an introduction to the field being studied and supplying a brief overall view of the current situation that appears to be prominent in this particular area of consumer behaviour. As well as defining the

scope and purpose of the thesis, its contribution to existing theories of consumer behaviour knowledge is discussed.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review of important existing theories, previous studies, and research in the fields relating to the topic of the thesis. This includes a review of the prominent authors in the field, with the review aiming to establish academic basis for the thesis and to provide links with previous research.

Chapter 3 conceptualises the study by drawing upon the literature review and identifying gaps in the existing body of knowledge. These gaps are subsequently used to also identify research questions, with conceptual models being generated based on the key concepts discussed in the literature review. Finally, research hypotheses are derived from the conceptual models in order to test the enquiries posed by the thesis.

Chapter 4 reviews the research methodology used for the study, which in this case was divided into an exploratory qualitative data collection and a main quantitative survey. This includes explanations of the methodologies employed by the study and the reasons for their use, as well as the linking of the methodologies to those used in previous studies in the field.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the exploratory qualitative research, and in doing so presents selected comments from the qualitative data that was collected through the webnography methodology that was employed for the study. In addition, an analysis of the data is provided and both implications for the overall thesis and the design of the main quantitative data collection are discussed.

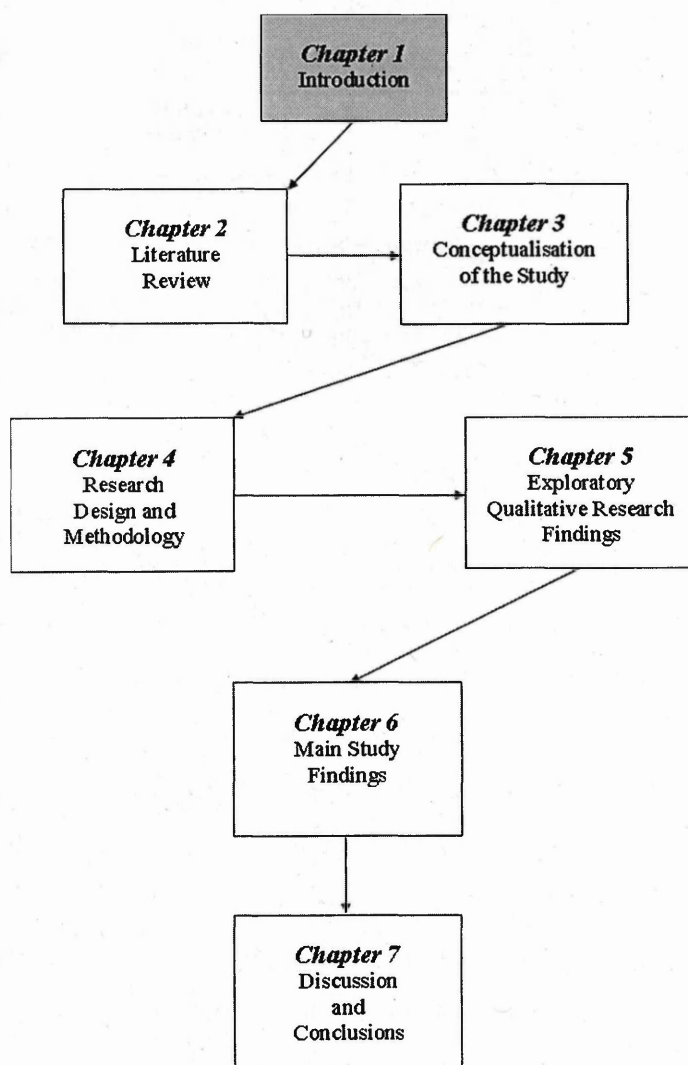
Chapter 6 presents the statistical results of the data collection achieved through the use of an online survey. The significant predictors of offline and online social group influence, along with their effect upon behavioural intentions, are presented and discussed.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings of the main study, which are subsequently considered in light of both the literature reviewed in chapter 2 and the findings of the exploratory qualitative research. These findings are also used to provide possible recommendations

for the music industry, based upon the new theories in consumer behaviour developed by the conclusions drawn from the study. The limitations of the thesis are also discussed in this chapter, along with considerations for further research. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the overall process of conducting the entire thesis.

A map of the framework for the thesis is provided in Figure 1.1, which illustrates how the thesis develops from the introduction through to the conclusions and recommendations.

Figure 1.1: Thesis framework



The thesis begins with the next chapter, which presents a literature review of previous research and existing theories within the particular field of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature in academic fields, which was identified as being relevant to the thesis. This includes discussions surrounding the important existing theories in these fields, which had implications for the thesis.

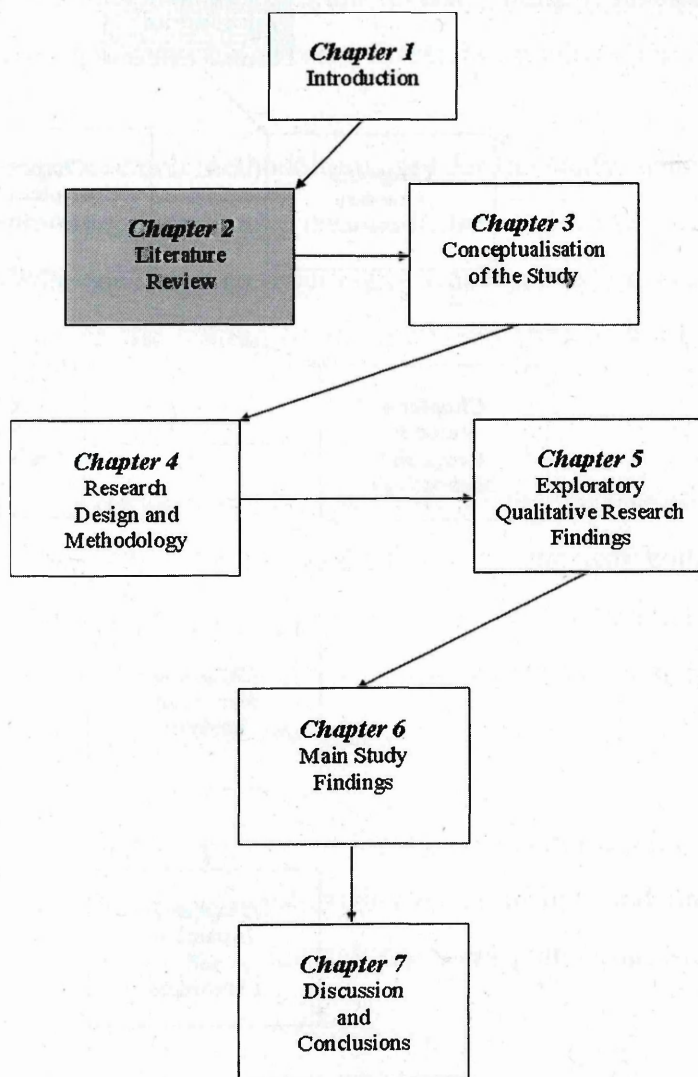


Figure 2.1 is an illustration of the pathway adopted by the literature review, which assisted in establishing the framework leading to the conceptualisation of the thesis.

Figure 2.1: Literature review pathway

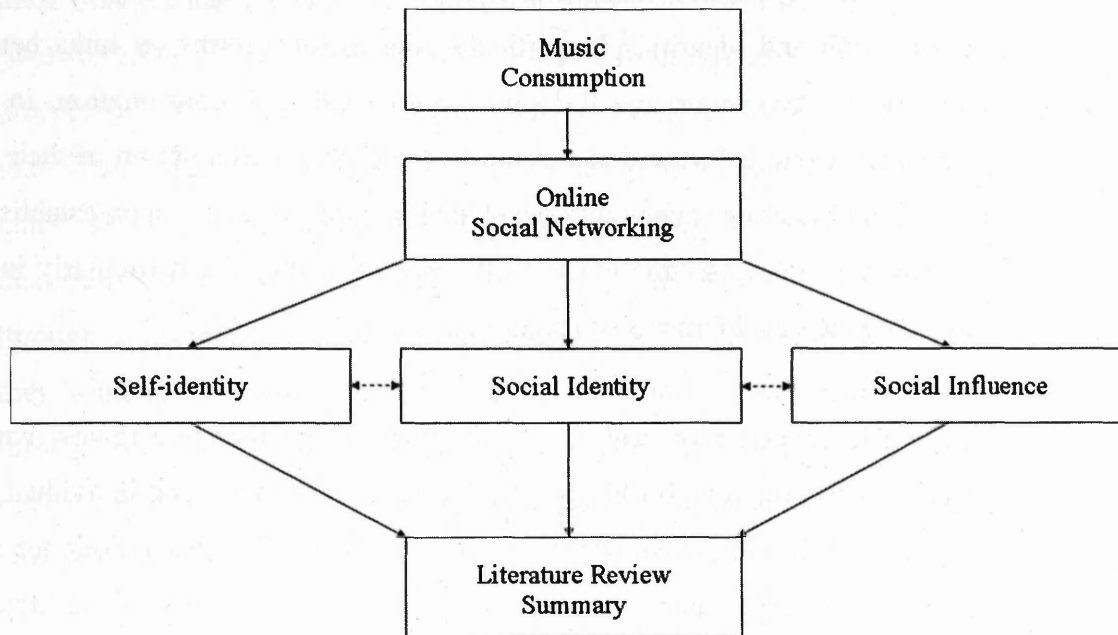


Figure 2.1 shows the literature review began with a discussion of existing theoretical concepts surrounding music consumption. This also considered the rise of online social networking in recent years, with a focus on the online environment afforded by the Internet and new virtual landscapes for both the consumption of music and online interactions with other consumers, as well as changes in music consumption behaviours brought about by such networking. The discussion took place with the aim of providing a basis upon which subsequent sections could be built, particularly in developing a background of the music industry and setting the scene for the thesis. In addition, an examination of the critical technological and sociological developments that have greatly affected the music industry enabled a preliminary analysis of considerable changes within the sphere of music consumption behaviour over the past few years. This also included key target markets for the music industry, including important youth segments such as teenagers and young adults.

Having considered existing knowledge surrounding music consumption behaviours in light of key studies, along with major developments and changes instigated by the

advent of online social networking, the literature was used to provide a platform and context in which links to identity could be examined in subsequent sections of the review. In order to build upon the elements of modern-day music consumption behaviour and consumer values discussed by past research studies, further literature review sections were established to examine the current knowledge surrounding music consumption and identity. In particular, discussion centres on links between music consumption behaviour and the values associated with consumption, in conjunction with what music consumption can mean to an individual's notion of their 'self'. This area of the literature review was developed in order to reflect upon established theories as to why people consume music in the ways that they do, particularly in light of the technological developments of recent years.

The music consumption and identity sections of the literature review were split into three. Firstly, the relationship between music consumption and individual self-identity is examined through existing theory, followed by similar discussions for social group identity, and finally, general social influence. The separation of the literature review into these subsections was undertaken to recognise that music consumption might have different implications for a person's behaviour as an individual, as opposed to when taken in the context of a social group. Therefore, the social group identity section attempted to build upon the theories associated with music consumption and self-identity by considering how an individual's self-identity can also affect, and be affected by, their identity. This is then explored further in the social group identity section, with a discussion of relevant existing literature surrounding identity and influence within social groups of friends, family members, and other peers. A discussion of the impact of online social networking in the case of the relevant theory also takes place within each section of the literature review, along with its applicability to music consumers. Finally, all of the discussions will be drawn together into a summary of the literature review, which was subsequently used to conceptualise the study.

The literature review pathway begins in the next section of the chapter, which focuses on defining identity within the context of music consumption.

2.2 Music Consumption and Identity

Identity theory is a long-established sociological concept that helps to understand the ideal persona that an individual strives to create for themselves in the eyes of others (Brown, 2000). An individual's identity draws from interactions with their 'ingroup' as distinct from their 'outgroups'. The results of comparisons with others may lead to an individual perceiving their identity to be different to that desired, resulting in them either seeking to leave the social group that they are involved in, or engage in discovering methods to increase its positive distinctiveness. In Western societies, it is through consumption that people are empowered to 'make up' their identity, or who they want to be (Shankar *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, consumption becomes a means through which the symbolic potential of identity can be incorporated, reproduced, and realised into the extended self through product designs and benefits (Belk, 1988; Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Music as a consumption activity has been at the heart of individuals' identity creation. There is a long history of groups identifying by their musical preferences and using artefacts to emphasise their identity. 'Mods', 'Rockers', and 'Punks' have reinforced their shared interest in a musical genre with similar clothing, hairstyles, and general attitudes to life to assert their identity with the group. Concerts and festivals appealing to these groups have allowed further reinforcement of identity in a face-to-face environment, evidenced by social discussions surrounding such events. The ability of music to develop identity in a real face-to-face environment is now well documented by researchers such as Hebdige (1979) and Shankar *et al.* (2009). However, music consumption that was once dominated by tangible purchases of records and CDs, and physical presence at concerts, is now being replaced by online streaming of music through multi-media channels. Sharing of music consumption by peers is as likely to occur through online social media as through traditional concert-based interactions.

Consumers actively construct, maintain, and communicate their identity partly by using the symbolic meaning of brands, leisure, and lifestyle pursuits (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Music forms an important basis for identity formation because it offers intensely

both a sense of the self and others – of the subjective in the collective (Frith, 1996). At the social level, the music that people like, the bands that they see perform live, and the records that they buy symbolise the social groups that they belong to and, in so doing, those groups that they reject or do not want to belong to (Bourdieu, 1984). Music consumption in the form of vinyl records was used by Shankar *et al.* (2009) to enable participants to ‘spin a biographical thread of self-remembrance’ (DeNora, 1999). Therefore, as the reproduction of an existing identity and its incorporation into ongoing identity projects is also a social act, consumers must gain recognition from others to assume a valid and recognised identity (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995; Jenkins, 1996). Some of the identities that people reproduce over the course of their lifetime are assigned or given to them by others. In the case of ‘enforced identities’, the reproduction of a different identity is regarded as being a demarcating strategy or endorsing one identity whilst rejecting another. For example, part of punk rock’s appeal lies in its anti-establishment sentiments (Hebdige, 1979), and by associating with such sentiments, a person can express resistance to and of the rigid social system into which they may be being socialised, i.e. the anti-thesis of social and cultural values represented by the character of a ‘punk’ for example.

The basis of social identity theory has been held to involve individuals classifying themselves, as well as others, into pre-defined social categories, such as organisational memberships, affiliations to religious orders, and cohorts based upon such factors as gender and age (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The categories are defined by prototypical characteristics drawn from the category members themselves (Turner, 1985). Peer groups involve the exchange of subcultural capital, or in these instances, with-in group capital, a form of status seeking and currency, being seen to be ‘in the know’ (Thornton, 1995). Observations such as these support existing literature which suggests that social groups get to know themselves as groups (as a particular organisation of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) through cultured activity (Frith, 1996). For example, it has been found that social groups can actively cultivate an image through music and fashion (Shankar *et al.*, 2009), and activities in school-based offline environments can provoke reactions such as fear and disgust in those they are differentiating themselves from (Wilk, 1997).

Consumption behaviours associated with music include the actual music an individual purchases, the music they go to see performed live, and the music they dance to (Shankar *et al.*, 2009). All of these behaviours were found to facilitate social interaction. In addition, historically, the purchasing of the latest eagerly awaited release from a favourite artist was a much-anticipated social event, functioning as a form of within-group identity, helping emergent social groups to coalesce around shared, valued activities (Shankar *et al.*, 2009). This suggests that effects through peer group recognition may be prevalent in the field of music consumption behaviour; such is its connection with identity formation.

In a similar manner to the consumption of other hedonistic products and services, music can be linked to the creation of a desired self. Music consumption as a source of identity can be illustrated through several practical examples, such as the wearing of a particular style of clothing or other fashion-related items attributed to a particular genre of music. In the case of a heavy metal music fan, the identity of being a fan may be projected towards others by the wearing artist-related T-shirts, hats, bandanas, certain brands of trainers, torn jeans, bullet belts or artist belt buckles, spikes, and 'kutte' battle jackets. This may be in addition to an individual possessing, or obtaining, physical characteristics that may support a music-related identity, for example, through tattoos, long hair, and beards. This stereotype appears to be particularly geared towards the heavy metal sub-genre of thrash, or 'neo' thrash which may indicate a development of identity created through the genre over a period of time that has resulted in a 'modern' take on a music-based identity dress code.

While the psychological and sociological underpinnings of identity theory in the context of music consumption may be the similar for offline and online environments, the transfer of social interactions from the offline environment to an online environment has changed considerably the ways in which social exchanges take place. Previous research has stated that traditional sub-cultures of local scenes are now limited to that of one sub-culture – that of the internet (Williams, 2006). It has also been suggested that within small groups a social identity can operate as a contextual given shaping the behaviour of individuals within the group, as much as the behaviour of individuals within the group can shape social identity (Postmes *et al.*, 2005). The use of narratives/storytelling has been discussed by previous researchers (Saren, 2007), particularly as consumers are

regarded as identity seekers and makers, and a consumption market is a primary source of 'mythic and symbolic resources' through which people construct 'narratives of identity'. (Holt, 2002; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). It is also suggested that online music social groups constitute elements of brand communities, which have also recently been the focus of netnographic research methodology (Seraj, 2012), as well as the multidimensional aspects and dynamism of consumer engagement in such environments which may be governed by users' interactive experiences and reflected in value co-creation with other participants (Brodie *et al.*, 2013).

As already discussed, products can become an extension of consumers, and consumers themselves believe this to be true (Belk, 1988). This has also been recently claimed to be true in the case of extending one's identity to the digital world (Belk, 2013). This again appears to refer to the concepts and theories surrounding self-identity. It can be suggested that online social discussion platforms and communities may present a further avenue for such identity extensions, albeit it in an even greater public domain. These platforms may also be used to discuss physical music purchases such as CDs, vinyl records, T-shirts, and other music-related merchandise; in addition to intangible offerings in the form of MP3 downloads and online content. Therefore, consideration should also be given to the role that online discussion platforms play in the promotion of both tangible and intangible goods and services, which are related to the topic of the thesis.

In the context of the music industry, these 'possessions' could include such products as recordings of music in the form of vinyl records, CDs, cassettes, or MP3 digital downloads; or other physical products such as artist-related T-shirts, posters, and a wide range of clothing and apparel. The ownership of such products may be suitably appraised by consumers and, according to Belk's (1988) theory, constitute a certain level of development towards an individual's conceptualisation of him or herself. Likewise, the appraisal of 'performance' could relate to consumers' perceptions of live music events which they attend, which may result in them soliciting positive or negative feedback that may be communicated to others, whether it be through offline or online social environments. It can be argued that the rise of the Internet, Web 2.0, and online social networking platforms may have increased the number of online appraisals regarding live music in relation to the construction of self and social identity, in addition

to the online appraisal of possessions that can accompany recorded music and music-related merchandise consumption.

Reflected identity was originally defined by Rosenberg (1981). In terms of music consumption, the prevalence of social groups, that form around a particular genre of music for instance, may cause a greater reflection of appraisals than in other industries; perhaps even above those of other cultural industries. This may also extend to the multitude of virtual online communities relating to music consumption on the numerous online social platforms that now exist. In addition, both reflected and self-appraisal could extend to music consumption in the two forms of appraisal already discussed, i.e. that of possession-based and performance-based appraisal. Therefore, both individual appraisal and appraisal concerning other consumers may impact upon an individual's self and social identity regarding aspects of music consumption behaviour and live music attendance.

As a result of an individual's core 'self' becoming more prominent and self-defined as they mature psychologically, they may subsequently harbour lower levels of attachment to possessions in general; which may not always mean less possessions, and instead a higher level of attachment to possibly just a few possessions that still reflect that person's integrated core (Belk, 1988; Ball & Tasaki, 1992). It can be argued that applicability of this theory to the products and services offered by the music industry is also evident. For example, as consumers grow older their tastes in music may change dramatically when bearing in mind the concept of self-identity and external pressures from external forces such as social peer groups and the media. This may be in addition to other pressures that may accompany the ageing process and achievement of new stages of the life cycle, such as starting a family. In these contexts, it can be suggested that consumers may start listening to different genres of music or artists in an effort to construct a new identity for themselves, which may result in a similar disposal of related possessions that were previously used extensively to amplify an individual's previous identity.

In terms of music-based possessions that could be affected by such theoretical underpinnings, the consumption of the various formats of music (either physical or digital), music-related merchandise, and perhaps even attachment to certain artists

through changing levels in an individual's attendance at their live music events is suggested. When considering music consumption and peoples' life cycles, previous research has identified that possessions tend to have life cycles of their own, over time that represent different levels of a relationship with the owner, with speculation that individuals will use products to support the notion of their self-identity with a systematically-varying level dependent upon the occurrence of critical events (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). These range from events deemed as being obvious, such as purchase and disposal, to events that are more difficult to capture (Ball & Tasaki, 1992).

In the particular instance of music and related products, and in the case of the artists or bands themselves as constituting a 'product', applicability of this theory is also evident. In perhaps another variation of music constituting a unique product, artists' live performances at events or festivals may be construed as being successes or failures. For example, a live performance deemed to be of high satisfaction by a consumer may represent a critical occurrence that increases the importance of the relationship between the consumer and the artist. Likewise, a live performance that is deemed to be of low satisfaction by a consumer could potentially decrease the importance of the relationship between the consumer and the artist.

Therefore, it is suggested that subsequent behaviours may be affected in forms such as an increase or decrease in the consumption of an artist and their offerings. This includes consumption of their music or related products such as merchandise, which may be used to visually or verbally support an individual's concept of his or her identity. The critical comments of others, such as social peers, may also play an important role in the music industry, especially in terms of the discussions surrounding music consumption that take place between consumers. As established by the literature review, the modern day environment appears to facilitate such discussions of musical tastes, music obtainment, other related-purchases, and live event attendance through both 'traditional' offline means and in an online capacity through social networking platforms.

Previous researchers have also felt that the character of an individual's identity is also constantly in a state of evolution, with continuous changes to the propositions and schemata that are connected to the self, due to new propositions about the self being

continually introduced and processed within the consumer's mind (Ball & Tasaki, 1992).

It is also possible that nostalgia-based behaviours and associated emotions may be created by consumers referring to their history and various stages of their life cycles. Therefore, it can be suggested that such behaviours may also be evident within the field of music consumption.

It can also be argued that social media and symbolic interactions associated with product attachment and identity appear to be especially prominent in terms of music consumption behaviour. Historically, the music industry has been populated by highly visible media outlets, which appear to have had considerable influence over the general population and their music consumption behaviours, as well as their live music attendance. The MTV video channel, which began broadcasting in 1981, is just one example of a television-based media outlet that has had considerable impact. In addition, other forms of media exist, such as numerous magazines and newspapers dedicated solely to the music industry, including *New Musical Express* and *Kerrang!* in the UK.

However, it is the most recent media phenomenon that has the most relevance to this thesis; which is that of the multitude of Internet websites, social networking sites, music streaming services, digital internet radio stations, forums, groups, and news boards that now exist within the music industry. It can be suggested that these platforms provide music consumers with not only a more diverse range of places in which to consume music, but also exposure to a greater number of potentially influential music-related media outlets. These platforms may represent both official artist web pages and unofficial 'fan' sites created by consumers. Therefore, it can be considered that the magnification of the number, and potentially the influence, of online-based media outlets may have important implications for self-identity. For example, when considered in conjunction with the perceived appraisals from social peers and other users with whom an individual interacts when engaging in online social networking.

As well as music and related products or services, it can be suggested that a similar application of such theory may apply in the field of live music attendance behaviours

relating to online influences. In both areas of music consumption, the presence of online influences may need to be compared to those that have previously existed only in 'traditional' offline environments, due to a current lack of research on the topic that compares the two contexts and examines potential similarities or differences in resultant consumption behaviours. Therefore, the literature suggests the presence of music-based media outlets, and particularly those that have developed in recent years through Web 2.0, may provide another aspect of potential examination by the thesis. It can be theorised that a consumer's perceived view of media appraisals have considerable impact upon an individual's evaluation of their self-identity, particularly when investigating potential influences on music-related consumption behaviours and live music attendance.

In terms of other related industries, previous research has noted the links between popular music and fashion. For example, a relationship was established between the clothes that artists wear and their subsequent appeal to consumers (Hogg & Banister, 2000). Subsequently, the imitation of fashion trends was shown to be a vital instrument for the transfer of meaning from pop stars to adolescent music consumers, and these results were linked to the grooming ritual proposed by McCracken (1986) which identified the transfer of meaning from products to consumers. This theory would appear to indicate that there are two aspects of fashion that are closely related to the music industry. Firstly, in the product area of merchandising providing artist-related clothes and apparel such as T-shirts, hooded tops, and bags, amongst others. Secondly, in the use of such merchandise to attract and inspire consumers into forming an attachment to the artist. Therefore, attachment theory may provide an indication as to how attachment to music and associated offerings could predict future consumption behaviours. By reviewing the existing literature, it can be suggested that this is not just in terms of consumption of products and services themselves, but also in other related areas such as attendance of live music events. In addition, this could be due to a perceived attachment by a consumer to a particular artist or other music-based celebrity. In addition, the attachment itself may be an emotional one, or be represented by some other factor, such as a fashion-related preference.

Again referring to the youth market segment, existing literature suggests that sometimes in the case of young consumers, attachment does in fact *precede* them actually

purchasing or obtaining the product in question (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). This may also have implications for music as a product, in that a consumer may become emotionally attached to a piece of music or a song, or indeed an artist, before they have engaged in actual ownership of the music or other artist-related offerings such as merchandise. It can also be suggested that this may apply to aspects of live music attendance, in that consumers could potentially see an artist perform in a live context and, through the experience of the event, discover an emotional attachment to the performer or their music. It can again be theorised that an attachment may be created prior to any associated offerings being obtained. In this regard, music may take the role of being a particularly unique product in terms of the way in which consumers can become attached to it through a variety of manifestations, including such potential factors such as emotions and culture. In addition, the particular appeal of music to youth, as highlighted by the existing literature, may also present it as being a unique product which consumers in younger age groups are particularly susceptible to a form of attachment. Therefore, in the context of the thesis, it can be suggested that such attachments may subsequently assist in the construction of self-identity, particularly amongst the adolescent age group.

However, there has also been previous research that indicates that people in older age groups also continue to consume music to aid in the promotion or maintenance of self-identity. Behaviours traditionally associated with youth and music were found to be more prominent in the lives of older consumers, particular in the case of consumers aged between 30 and 40 who are fans of dance or rave music that is traditionally viewed as being a reserve of the younger generations (Goulding *et al.*, 2002; Goulding & Shankar, 2004). In defining the commoditisation of the sub-cultural movement that frequents this particular genre of music, the existence of a previously hidden market of older music-based consumer groupings that enjoyed hedonic and leisure pursuit-filled lifestyles, which are usually perceived as belonging to younger age groups, was discovered. It has also been previously noted that music, films, video games, and other forms of entertainment, which fall under the category of popular culture offerings, can provide satisfaction for consumers in terms of their aesthetic or hedonic needs (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994). Therefore, in terms of hedonic experiences, it can be suggested that this theory may potentially be applied to consumers of all ages.

2.2.1 Web 2.0 and Online Social Networking

Communities that predominantly existed in a face-to-face environment have been extended to encompass online 'virtual' interactions. The Internet presents a range of online forums which can be described as communities, ranging from large-scale, multi-purpose sharing sites such as Facebook and MySpace, to small niche sites that cater for narrowly defined communities of shared interest, for example music or leisure interests. The targeting of online forums also means that these may play an important social role in identity formation, especially for those whose main target segment is young people in the phase of life when identities are developed. The users of both large general purpose and small niche online communities are often geographically spread. Consumers have been found to use online communities to engage with others around brands, and interactive environments enable relationship building (Seraj, 2012).

One variant of interactive environments are virtual worlds' that combine the power of social networking with technology. For example, multi-player computer games allow new forms of collaboration through 'virtual reality' (Lanier, 1988). Virtual worlds best encompass the term 'playful consumption' as the distinction between work and play is blurred (Yee, 2005). Therefore, virtual worlds have created a new place to enact the social (after Law & Urry, 2000) and are more technologically, economically, and politically advanced than social media platforms (Saren *et al.*, 2013). For example, an avatar may be seen as the embodiment of an individual's identity in the virtual world.

Online subcultures, much like 'offline' subcultures, appear to be based around product constellations, places, events, and services. Businesses emerge to serve the wants and needs of participants. Hence the creation of subcultures or tribes (Saren, 2007). Tribal aspects of consumption foster collective identification grounded in shared beliefs, meanings, myths, rituals, practices, and status hierarchies. Subcultures are made up of diverse groups of people – not gender or class-based. Subcultures provide a platform for the display and construction of alternative consumer activity-based identities. There are different levels of commitment that reflect the individual's identity. People can escape from their 'everyday life'. For example, the subculture enables the bank manager during the week to become a biker at the weekend.

In opposition to database-driven relationship marketing, previous research has indicated that online tribes are more active and discerning and are less accessible to one-to-one processes, and provide a wealth of valuable cultural information; as well as online interactions constituting an important supplement to social and consumption behaviour, as consumers add online information gathering and social activities in addition to face-face communications (Kozinets, 1999). Hence, online interactions and groupings increasingly appear to affect consumers' behaviours.

The rise of social networking has potentially led to the creation of another avenue for the mass marketing and consumption of music. It may also allow for the practice of one-to-one marketing on a personally tailored level by drawing upon information of consumers' own likes and dislikes. This is a practice already being utilised through similar-product recommendation services by music retailers such as Amazon and the iTunes Genius suggestion function. In addition, music companies advertise goods and services through social networking sites such as Facebook, which are targeted towards consumers based upon users' listed preferences for not just music artists, but also film, television, and fashion.

Previous research has also suggested that face-to-face communication is not being displaced by the rise of the Internet age. For example:

“...while social networking is to some degree displacing other forms of online communication (email, chat rooms, website creation), it incorporates others (instant messaging, blogging, music downloading) and remediates yet more (most notably, face to face and telephone communication)...Consequently, the simple distinction between offline and online no longer captures the complex practices associated with online technologies as they become thoroughly embedded in the routines of everyday life”. (Livingstone, 2008, p. 5)

It can be theorised that this generalised view of social networking may also extend to the online discussion of music, be it recorded or live music. Yet in research of particular relevance to this study, Mitchell & Imrie (2011) found that in the case of vinyl record collectors, face-to-face interactions were preferred to online areas for socialising. In the research these authors carried out, this linked directly to an online community that used social networking to arrange live events, in the form of gatherings

that met to listen to vinyl records in specific venues. Therefore, in light of the literature reviewed in this chapter, the thesis attempted to explore the impact of social networking in terms of discussions (in both offline and online contexts), which may influence music consumption and live music attendance.

Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace have been extended to numerous types of mobile phone and other portable devices. This channel could represent great importance in the future of music consumption, and therefore further exploitation may be required. The influence of such social networks has already been illustrated with the Facebook campaign launched in December 2009 which enabled rock band Rage Against the Machine to become the Christmas number one single in the United Kingdom. As well as the increased use of online social networking through mobile phones, similar web-based applications that enable the streaming of live music concerts and festivals appear to have created a new model for the consumption of music. These services extend to Apple's iPod devices and iTunes software, which appear to represent the current industry leaders and standards. This is in addition to users being able to create such content through constant updating of their online profiles, as well as the ability to use social networking websites to facilitate their own groups, engage in conversations with new people with a view to establishing friendships, and to use their profiles to communicate with other users who they are already familiar with in the 'real world'. Further to this, typical uses of online social platforms include discussing daily events, keeping in touch, and organising events (Beer, 2008).

Social networking websites do not only include official and unofficial music artist pages, but also third-party owned pages which can utilise platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. These platforms have already been used considerably by businesses in terms of advertising both music-related and non-music related products, as well as promoting new music discovery. Consumers' use of online profiles and social networking has been identified as being integral in their descriptions of themselves to others, particularly in terms of their consumption tastes in music and films (Bonhard & Sasse, 2006). Therefore, these behaviours could be considered as online representations of the offline activities of consumers. The use of such information in online recommendation systems, allowing both consumers and companies to recommend

music to other consumers and customers based upon listed musical tastes, is also now prevalent (Bonhard & Sasse, 2006).

Previous research has indicated that in the case of young American consumers, social networking has essentially become their online life (Li *et al.*, 2007). In this instance, media consumption is not the focal point of their online activities, but instead the communication platforms afforded by social networking websites are used to stay in contact with friends and other peers.

Since then, research has conducted on the use of social networking in an educational context, with it being discerned that young people in particular appear to be highly involved in the use of Web 2.0:

“These young adults, born in the 1990s or later, are typically referred to as the *i*Generation for their consistent and simultaneous use of technology such as *i*Pods, *i*Phones, *i*Chat, and otherwise. With virtual communication and connections playing significant roles in their interactions, this group is characterized by their highly social attributes.” (Mills, 2011; p. 345)

This group of consumers also appears to revere friendship that is often virtually-based, tend to consume a considerable amount of online information, and can in fact be considered to be the most communicative generation so far (Rosen, 2010). Hence, Mills (2011) also noted that:

“In fact, *i*Geners are claimed to have redefined communication with their virtual communicative interactions via text messages, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook, and the representation of identity, expression, and connection play key roles in their navigation of the cyberworld.” (Mills, 2011; p. 345)

It has also been established that social networking sites, particularly MySpace, possess notable music presences that have been found to illustrate a growing use by consumers for music appropriation, as well as the creation of specific official pages for artists from a multitude of genres (Beer, 2006).

In the context of popular music consumption and Web 2.0, the influence of ‘blogs’ and podcasts, which appear to be the more modern approach to music reviewing, have seemingly increased in importance in recent years. These blog websites have been

shown to be fundamental in distributing and reviewing music-based content, with some of these pages also attracting a considerable consumer following (Knowles, 2008). The demise of the United Kingdom music television programme *Top of the Pops* has been heavily attributed to the rise of social networking and its role in the decline of a once nationally popular programme watched by a considerable number of music consumers (Beer, 2006).

The nature of social relationships amongst musicians and music students, in terms of both their offline and online social activities, has indicated that social networking is a core characteristic of being a musician (Salavuo, 2008). Therefore, social networks tend to arise around local music scenes featuring artists of the same or similar musical genres. Subsequently, these networks have been found to rely on both distributed knowledge and expertise, along with cognitive diversity (Brown *et al.*, 1993). While communities may be formed based on interests and geographical location, Web 2.0 presents opportunities for consumers to connect with others who do not reside in the same geographical location. Therefore, it can be argued that the advent of online social networking has given rise to an increased importance in other factors. For example, in the context of music education, factors such as the genres of music that a musician listens to and the type of instrument that they play were deemed more important by fellow social networkers (Salavuo, 2008). In spite of this, 'real world' physical meetings may still be arranged through online social networking platforms. Previous research has found this to be true among young Australian consumers, where online social networking services have been identified as being increasingly popular amongst this group, regardless of geographical location, background, or age (Collin *et al.*, 2011).

Differing, but more generalised, views of social networking have also been expressed by previous researchers. For example, it has been found by previous studies that the majority of consumers (especially teenagers) possess local online contacts, these contacts being based on strong previously-established relationships in such social contexts as study places or work, in spite of the abundant potential for global networking (Livingstone, 2008). Therefore, this presents a counter argument which suggests that many consumers in fact displayed little interest in communicating with people they classed as being 'strangers', or other distant users (Livingstone, 2008). On the other hand, niche social networks were often found to be geographically spread

(Livingstone, 2008). On these grounds, it can be argued that this may have a considerable impact on the music industry and related consumption behaviours, if the geographical spread of consumers of niche musical genres such as jazz and blues are considered.

When taking into consideration factors including actual 'real world' familiarity with other online users and geographical distance, the behaviour of younger consumers (such as the teenage and young adult segments) in regards to who they communicate with in online discussions surrounding music consumption also presents potentially important concepts to the thesis. The previous literature appears to suggest that Internet-induced changes in social trends amongst these particular consumer demographics are especially prominent. This particularly seems to be the case when considering these consumers' high-involvement in the creation of personal web pages on social networks such as Facebook and MySpace, (in addition to 'mashups' or web pages that draw from several sources) which can include further features such as blog elements and voice-chat facilities, the displaying of songs recently listened to via online music providers such as Last.fm, the promotion of a consumer's own music via social platforms through the use of third party applications, or the ability to add a Google Map to their sound sample database (Salavuo, 2008).

Due to the ability of artists and producers (both professional and amateur) to upload their own songs to websites and social networking sites, provisions have been made for online users to tag, rate, and comment any content that is submitted in such a manner. It can be considered that these reviews may lead to online discussions about music and artists. These types of reviews may also be considered as being similar to the features of other online media-related outlets, such as the video channel YouTube, which allows consumers to conduct ratings and reviews of videos posted on the website.

Social networking platforms have also been used by artists and record companies to feature online 'listening parties' prior to new album launches (LeBlanc, 2006). This could be likened to a live music event, albeit in an online capacity. Therefore, it can be argued that certain elements of Internet use, which may be accessed by a wide range of companies who operate within the music industry, have increased the potential number

of avenues for marketing communications. Hence, this suggests further opportunities in both the promotions and consumption of popular music.

Existing literature also appears to suggest that artist community use of online social networking platforms has already been incorporated into marketing strategies. For example, musicians may use such platforms to invite friends and colleagues to their own live performances, or to present their new musical compositions. Practices such as these have been shown to create communities within social networking platforms, the main purpose of which is to keep musicians up to date with the activities of other musicians, along with the types of media they are producing (Salavuo, 2008). In terms of content, this will usually include full musical compositions or excerpts in MP3 format, videos of performances or music videos, photographs of the artist or band (including performance or promotional photographs), and blog posts about their lives as musicians, including live performance dates, new songs and releases, and studio sessions (Salavuo, 2008).

When reviewing the existing literature, online social networking can also be linked to music consumption behaviours relating to file sharing, which has been established by previous researchers as constituting an illegal behaviour that infringes upon copyright laws through the duplication and distribution of musical compositions to other people through online networks. This may also include the use of online music streaming platforms, although services such as these have been established generally to be fee-paying and therefore legal in nature, particularly as they are often constituted of usage via a subscription-based method. As a result of this, the literature review will also later focus on specific examples of the use of online social networking to group together like-minded music consumers, notably those groups which appear to represent online communities or tribes.

In order to draw comparisons between the offline and online social contexts examined by the literature review, including an examination of the perceived differences between the two environments, it was necessary to consider previous research that has attempted to explain online social networking and the ways in which consumers have been found to use it to interact with their offline or 'real world' lives. The transfer of consumers' offline characteristics to an online setting has been widely researched in a number of

academic disciplines, such as consumer behaviour, psychology, sociology, and information systems management.

2.2.2 Online Social Networking and Music Consumption

Music has played a vital role in popular culture for at least the last sixty years, and the companies contained within the industry have embraced the rise of the Internet and new technologies in recent years in order to communicate with consumers through a multitude of new channels.

Therefore, it can be considered that Web 2.0 has forever changed the landscape of the music industry. Arguably, it has allowed consumers of all ages to access music and music-related merchandise in a number of new ways. For example, the ability to browse through music artists in the convenience of a consumer's home, to sample music videos and clips online through the use of services as YouTube and official artist channels, and to engage in consumption practices through both official and unofficial artist-based websites. Fan communities have also been built on and around both official and unofficial websites. Some of these communities have also featured artist participation, where the band or artist themselves have left messages or joined in discussions that take place within these communities.

In addition, artist-specific subscription services are already being used to some extent by consumers, especially in the replacement of postal-based fan clubs, which proved to be historically popular. These subscription-based services may also garner long-term loyalty that builds upon the aspects of traditional offline fan clubs, and continue to add value. This has already been recognised by previous researchers, for example, Sylva (2000) proposed the use of websites which have the artist's domain name, providing web sites that are hosted by the artist themselves, offering real-time online chats or special live performances, the provision of collaborative opportunities with an artist, the enabling of registered users to access pre-released music, and creating loyalty reward programs and online communities. Sylva (2000) also noted the need to provide superior services to those offered by illegal peer-to-peer file-sharing services, or ensuring that

artists' websites are more attractive to consumers than those websites that contain pirated music.

As technology has improved over the past decade, particularly the vast improvement of optical high-speed broadband connections, it appears that there are new opportunities in two major sections of the music industry value chain. Firstly, considerably reduced distribution costs due to the digitisation of products and services. Distribution costs have been reduced to a level that is more or less free, or near free, afforded by the use of digital distribution services, file sharing, peer-to-peer networks, and social media networks (Knowles, 2008). This is in addition to new large-scale websites and services that have emerged in recent years, which provide a link between music producers and consumers via methods of artist similarity, taste profiling, and recommendation data; in addition to linking together consumers who possess shared tastes and interests. This leads to dramatic cost savings in terms of distribution. Secondly, in terms of marketing strategies, there are also greater opportunities for the provision of not just the value of the music itself, but also added value through additional products and services that can accompany artists' musical output. Previous researchers have also noted the arrival of online social networking along with Web 2.0 (Beer, 2008). Therefore, social networking and music consumption will be examined in further depth in the next section of the literature review.

Virtual music communities have helped to dispel a sense of alienation that has become prevalent since the industrialisation of the popular music market. They also highlight music consumption as being an active and incorporative practice that solidifies the illusory bonds between artists and consumers, particularly through the ways in which artists' official websites are recognised as virtual places that have facilitated a belief in local music communities (Kibby, 2000). The Internet and its myriad of social discussion platforms allow consumers today to engage in online conversations about offline consumption of products, services and events. It permits the exchange of experiences, the sharing of opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and perhaps most importantly in a marketing context, values placed on products and services.

What is different about sharing music online rather than through more traditional face-to-face methods? On the one hand, some commentators have noted that technological

changes have not changed the 'real' business of music, how its consumption brings people together, or its social linking value (Shankar *et al.*, 2009). It can be suggested that the same music-based social groups that have traditionally existed in the offline environment, especially in the youth market segment, may continue to exist in the online context. Therefore, the relationship between music sharing in an online group capacity may also have important considerations for the development of self and social identity.

Some recent research has attempted to define the differences between offline and online social networks. For example, in the case of university students and their communications with close friends through online social networking websites, instant messaging, and face-to-face contexts, the social networking websites in particular were used by many participants in order to both connect and reconnect with close friends and family members (Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008). In addition, a considerable amount of overlap between consumers' online and offline social networks has been identified, but it was noted that:

"This overlap was not perfect, suggesting that emerging adults may be using social networking sites and instant messaging to selectively strengthen different connections within their offline networks." (Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008, p. 432)

This finding would appear to suggest that online and offline social networking may in fact be used by consumers to complement each other. In other words, online social networking may not be used by an individual to completely replace their social contact in an offline environment, and vice versa. Therefore, in a general sense, existing research indicates that in certain areas at least, online and offline social networks may be mixed together to form the whole part of an individual's personal communications with friends, family members, peers, and other social groups.

In terms of music consumption, it can also be suggested that as well as personal communications being mixed and shared between an individual's online and offline social environments, various forms of social influence that can affect an individual may be present. For example, peer group influences may result in subsequent behaviours and practices such as obtaining recorded music and merchandise, as well as attending live music events or festivals. Therefore, individuals may be subject to two sources of

social influence in relation to the goods and services that they consume, these being comprised of online social group (or network) influences, and offline social group (or network) influences. It is also possible that in both online and offline contexts, individuals may engage or interact with others at different levels. For example, a person may choose to, or be more comfortable with, either online or offline social networking in particular. Therefore, they may favour one form over the other. On the other hand, it can be suggested that an individual may be equally comfortable engaging in both contexts of networking.

As consumers may have differing levels of engagement and interaction in either offline or online social contexts, or indeed both, it can also be envisaged that individuals may be a member of one or more social groups in either environment. Accordingly, it can be suggested that levels of engagement and social interactions in either context may be also be affected by the number of groups of which an individual is a member. This may also be linked to an individual favouring socialisation through one context over another. For example, the modern-day online environment offers a considerable number of websites, social platforms, and virtual communities in which an online user can engage and interact with other like-minded individuals.

In the case of the music industry in particular, a large variety of social networking platforms and virtual communities can be found online. These include groups dedicated to numerous different genres of music. In addition, other platforms, although not specific to a particular genre, exist that still facilitate discussions surrounding the products and services of the music industry. Examples of specific online social groups would include members of an online fan club dedicated to a particular artist, who use a forum to discuss the artist's music and other related products or merchandise. This may also include live events in which the artist has, or will be, featured in. Other online groups based around music consumption may consist of individuals who regularly discuss music consumption in communities that revolve around certain artists or genres of music. Further to this, non-music specific online social groups may also exist. For example, any online social networking website or platform which individuals use to communicate with each other on a regular basis, such as Facebook or other virtual communities. While the focus of these other platforms or groups may revolve around non-music based topics such as films or automobiles, it can still be suggested that

discussions may take place on music consumption-related topics in the course of group members' engagements and interactions with each other.

In the offline social context, it can be noted that there are a wide variety of social groups of which an individual may potentially become a member. This could include traditional social groups such as those established at schools, colleges, and universities, as well as youth clubs that exist outside of educational boundaries. Arguably, these same offline social groups are also important for younger members of the population for whom music may be crucial in terms of identity formation and social peer influence, as established by the literature review. Other offline social groups may be constructed by individuals and social peers who live in the same geographical location and spend considerable amounts of time socialising together, which may again be a reflection of the adolescent age groups. In addition, consumers of a range of age groups may form social groups that revolve around employment and the workplace, as well as groups that are formed around leisure and recreation activities, such as those found in sports and hobby clubs.

It can also be noted that offline social groups may again either be primarily focused on music consumption, or non-specialising in music but still frequently including music consumption as a topic of conversation. For example, offline social clubs that would specialise in music consumption and related activities would include 'record clubs' that meet together in a variety of venues to listen to and discuss vinyl records. Other examples may include offline fan clubs dedicated to a particular artist or musical genre that arrange social events, or groups of amateur musicians who meet together to play in bands or other musical acts. For all of these types of groups, frequent discussions surrounding music consumption and artists may take place. In the case of groups of musicians, such social interactions may also include listening to and discussing musical influences by certain artists or pieces of music. Conversely, examples of offline social groups that may not be necessarily focused on music consumption would include any groups of friends, family members, or work colleagues. Also included may be other social group colleagues, who get together for a non-music related activities such as members of a sports club, but who may still discuss music consumption during the course of such activities.

As previously established in the literature review, music can be considered as a 'product' which is subject to a higher level of social peer influence than many other goods and services produced by other industries, particularly in terms of the cultural impact that music can have. This is not just in the field of recorded music it is also the case of other related industries such as art and fashion. It can also be recognised that individuals may engage in social interactions in both offline and online contexts at differing levels. Therefore, it may be theorised that each of the different social contexts can result in differing levels of peer group influence on a music consumer. For example, it can be proposed in the context of the thesis that a music consumer who tends to engage and integrate themselves with others in more of an offline (online) capacity would be more influenced by offline (online) social peers. However, it cannot be said with any certainty that this will be the case. For instance, it could be argued that the two social contexts are in fact vastly different. Arguably, there exists the potential for the face-to-face contact of the offline socialising environment to be more influential in nature, due to the physical and possibly more personal contact that face-to-face contact may bring. As discussed in the literature review, the physical environment may also provide increased opportunity for physical cues that may indicate preferences for music consumption, such as the clothes that an individual wears and their sense of fashion, as well as the music that they obtain and live music events that they attend.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the same physical cues surrounding music consumption in an offline context are also present in the online environment, albeit in a more virtual form. For example, a person may list the music and artists they like on their social networking profiles such as those found on Facebook and MySpace, along with other related cultural interests such as films, fashion, and art. It can be perceived that such lists may be used to signify personal tastes in music and favourite artists to others. It was also recognised that the use of other media, such as photos and videos, might be included by individuals to indicate or symbolise an affiliation with a particular artist or genre of music. In a similar vein to offline 'physical' networking, such media may also be used to portray images, clothing (artist-related merchandise in particular), fashions, or trends that feature the individual concerned and hence aid in the projection of an identity. Arguably, these online expressions may form some of the physical cues that can be far more apparent in an offline socialising context. In addition, other

elements of music consumption, such as the live music events the individual has attended or will be attending, may also be listed and discussed through online profiles.

Crucially, it was identified that individuals' expressions of their experiences and narrative stories of these live events through online profiles and blogs, along with the provision of photos and videos taken from such events, may also be instrumental in both signifying an identity and potentially influencing other online music consumers.

2.3 Self-identity

This section of the review will concentrate on the concept of individual identity, or the notion of one's self, with a view to establishing its role in music consumption.

Previous research has established theories surrounding image congruency and the consumption of music through certain preferences or tastes (Larsen *et al.*, 2009), particularly in the way in which music can be used to inform self-representation in either a fixed identity or a possible self. This 'presentational self' was also found to be affected by situational contexts, which may be represented by people-based factors and music-based factors, the latter incorporating both recent listening patterns and access to music, while the relationship between situational context and image congruency was subject to a self-monitoring process. In addition, the level of image congruency was also affected by the level of musical involvement undertaken or experienced by consumers.

According to Larsen *et al.*'s (2009) model, whether an individual finds their image congruency to be acceptable or unacceptable, the adoption of self-representative consumption or consumption ritual behaviours will subsequently be enacted through a constant feedback loop to changes in the presentational self and music preferences. In addition, in defining their conceptual model, Larsen *et al.* (2009) established that a consumer's judgement of whether their image congruency is acceptable or unacceptable in their eyes would lead to differing outcomes. While both acceptable and unacceptable perceptions may lead to behaviours that can be associated with self-representative

consumption or consumption rituals, an acceptable image congruency may also lead to an individual electing not to divulge in further consumption, and an unacceptable image congruency may lead to individual choosing to engage in behaviours associated with non-self-representative consumption (Larsen *et al.*, 2009).

The concept of the self, variously described by previous researchers under banners such as self-identity, social identity, and self-categorisation, is a fundamental aspect of the field of social psychology. The very purpose of social psychology is to consider the nature of human beings and their flexibility in their creation and relation to their social worlds, incorporating the interactions, which enable them to do so (Reicher, 2004). When considering the self and social identity, the crucial role that social identity plays in forging a relationship between the psychology of a person and the structural and functional aspects of their social groups has been highlighted (Brewer, 2001). However, previous research has also emphasised that rather than merely relying on psychological processes to explain the social interactions, it is important to take into consideration the context in which the process takes place. In other words, the social interactions are also dependent on cultural and structural contexts (Reicher, 2004).

The concept of the self has also been defined as being a sense of who and what we are, or an organising construct through which people's everyday activities can be understood. (Kleine *et al.*, 1993). It has been noted that occupation is one aspect of particular prominence in the construction of identity (Bourdieu, 1985). Therefore, in other words, it can also be defined or maintained through the nature of one's job or career. Another method of identifying one's self may be for an individual to express themselves through aspects of their hedonic consumption. This may be achieved through the visible consumption of the cultural industries and their offerings, including music, fashion, films, and art, as well as other leisure and recreational pursuits. Therefore, in the field of consumer behaviour research, an individual's view of their self may contribute towards an understanding of a person's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes, and ultimately, their consumption behaviours in regards to a wide variety of goods and services.

The concept of an individuated-self has also been identified as being one where a person's sense of unique identity differentiates from that of others (Brewer & Gardner,

1996). Therefore, in the case of music consumption, as with many other goods and services, consumers may carve out unique identities for themselves from their different interpretations of the same offering. In other words, consumption of the same musical composition may inspire individuals in different ways, and an identity that is subsequently constructed from the consumption may be affected by the individual's attitude, beliefs, and behaviours. Therefore, the concept of the self, and related theories, appear to be applicable to music consumption behaviours and the thesis. When considering music as a product, identity has been found to be a prominent feature in its consumption. It was also noted that identity theories might also be important in the behaviour of a consumer who is engaged in online discussions about music, as an individual may decide to project a particular identity towards others through Internet-based social platforms. Therefore, the concept of the self, self-identity theory, and social identity theory, amongst others, will be discussed in this section.

The conceptualisation of the self has included the notion of the 'Western' self, characterised as being autonomous and egocentric, and acting as a base for the development of conceptualisations of other non-Western cultures (Sökefeld, 1999). Therefore, it was found that Non-Western cultures tend to be defined by the negation of these qualities, as they also are with the conceptualisation of identity.

Previous research in psychological and sociological fields has examined the concept of self-identity, often in conjunction with other similar concepts such as social identity, identity construction, self-categorisation, and group identity. It has been claimed that issues of the self and one's identity is usually conceptualized at the level of the personal self (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002). Yet, the concept traditionally implies a degree of influence from the interactions that individuals make during their lives. This appears to imply an importance of social roles, and social interactions, in order for a person to truly discover who they are, or who they perceive themselves to be. However, it has also been stated that these roles and interactions are mainly regarded as being:

“...interindividual processes, in terms of how reflected appraisals from others contribute to the definition of self...or may help fulfill a generic need to belong...” (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002; p.162)

The theory of the self, or self-identity, has also been described as constituting the concepts of social validation, grounded aesthetics, and linking value (Shankar, 2000).

The concept of the self has also been found to be comprised of a personal identity, which revolves around idiosyncratic characteristics (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This includes physical representations such as bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, or interests, in addition to a social identity that incorporates salient group classifications. Both of these notions are suggested by existing social identity theory, with social identification being defined as, "...the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate." (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; p.21). A general example of this theory would be a person defining themselves by the sex or nationality with which they class themselves; such as a man from Wales stating that he is a man, or that he is Welsh. Therefore, it can be argued that this concept may also be applicable within the realm of music consumption and related behaviours. For example, an individual may define themselves through a musical genre (such as being a punk), or through considerable consumption of heavy metal music and related merchandise (commonly referred to as a 'metal head'). This may also lead to more physical representations of an individual's consumption or tastes, such as the wearing of certain types of clothing, or another fashionable item associated with (or inspired by) a particular genre of music or artist. Examples of this would again include the wearing of safety pins and chains by punk rockers, and bandanas and biker jackets by heavy metal fanatics.

Previous researchers have used various terms to describe similar concepts to the idea of the self and self-identity theory. For example, the term 'self-concept' has been used in relation to the fashion industry to describe the incorporation of relational, individual, and collective identities or self-concepts in finding that shopping behaviours (in conjunction with fashion orientations) varied greatly depending upon the identities of the consumers in question (Peters *et al.*, 2011). It is argued that this theory could also be applied to the music industry, in that although this particular piece of previous research focused on fashion orientation and shopping behaviours, the music industry possesses a large market for artist-endorsed apparel. Notable examples include band T-shirts, particularly popular in the 'indie' genre, and other clothing. Other related merchandise extends to jewellery and fragrances offered by 'mainstream' pop artists such as Lady Gaga and Beyoncé.

In addition, some genres of music have historically developed a certain dress code or fashion sense amongst consumers, be it as individuals or in-group contexts. Notable examples in this sense would include the heavy metal genre and Goths, who tend to adhere to a style of dark clothing and make-up (Hodkinson, 2011). Therefore, in the context of the thesis, this theory may be of relevance when attempting to determine the ways in which online social networking can potentially affect upon individuals' expressions of music consumption through their sense of fashion. It can also be considered that use type of fashion-related music consumption may be used by consumers in order to assert self-identity, again either as an individual or as part of a social group. In addition, this theory could also be deemed important when considering the wide range of merchandise that is often found at live music events and festivals. These may again include fashion-related music products such as artist T-shirts, hats, and bags, as well as other merchandise such as posters and programmes.

Previous researchers have attempted to discern differing strains of identity theory to those traditionally discussed in the field of identity research, albeit ones that were closely related to traditional theory. For example, the notion of possible relationships existing between social structures and identities, along with the possibility of relationships and complementation between these and the concept of self-verification, have been proposed which constitute a process that is internal in nature to the individual concerned (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This is in addition to an observation that each of the factors provided a context for the other, with the relation of social structures to identities influencing the process of self-verification, and in turn, the process that governs self-verification creating and sustaining social structures (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

In the context of the thesis, it can be suggested that the role of social structures may be played by the various music-based social groups that exist in both online and offline environments. For example, membership structures of such social groups are often present, especially in online virtual communities where organisational roles such as group or forum administrators and moderators exist, in addition to prestige held by long-time contributors to the groups. It can also be argued that musical genres may have an impact upon the social structure or standing of certain music-based consumer

groups. For example, classical music and opera have been traditionally held to possess a higher social standing than that of other musical genres. Therefore, this may have an impact upon members of social groups who meet to discuss classical music or opera, with possible subsequent effects upon not just the group members' sense of identity, but also their attitudes, values, and resultant behaviours.

Cross-cultural differences and the construction of the self also appear relative to the thesis, in the sense that online music discussions can take place between a wide range of consumers from differing cultures across the world. A distinction has been made in the existing literature between whether the self tends to be construed as individuated or interpersonal, which can be dependent upon the culture itself (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). Previous research has also noted that all theories focusing on the social self and cross-cultural differences recognise that the differing self-construals can exist alongside each other within the same individual, as well as each having the possibility of activation at different times or in different contexts (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Therefore, when engaging in music consumption, it can be considered that individuals may also experience an identity construction process that does not just include aspects of themselves and their relationships with others in social groups, but also factors such as the cultural context in which a person is consuming music, the culture of the other individuals with who a person is interacting with, and the traditional aspects of an individual's culture which may impact upon the formation of his or her personality and their subsequent identity construction.

2.3.1 Self-identity and Music Consumption

The consumption of popular music helps people to make sense of their everyday lives and experiences (Willis, 1990). When discussing the theory of grounded aesthetics (or the process by which people comprehend their social and cultural worlds), previous research has also stated that consumers do not merely accept what is given to them, but instead embark on a journey of symbolic creativity (Shankar, 2000). In other words, individuals may actively strive to re-interpret their social and cultural worlds in order for them to make sense. This would appear to suggest that popular music has a place in assisting people of all ages to make sense of their world, and their place in it, as the

process of grounded aesthetics also assists in the construction of self-identity. Existing literature has also identified that popular music is vital for consumers in letting other people know who they are, who they want to be, what group they belong to, or what group they want to belong to (Shankar, 2000). Therefore, previous research concludes that music consumption can also be important in the construction of social identity. This theory may be considered in light of individuals' interactions with friends or other members of a social peer group, and arguably, other users who frequent the same online music discussion groups and social networking websites as an individual.

It can also be argued that the establishment of self-identity through music consumption is perhaps an important factor of what makes music unique as a cultural art. Again, previous research has indicated that social aspects of music in the case of tribalism in music consumption (Nuttall *et al.*, 2011) and in niche groups such as vinyl record collectors who frequent independent retail stores (McIntyre, 2009) have already been shown to provide consumers with a sense of self-identity. In relation to the formation of communal neo-tribes, it has been claimed that music consumers are no longer bound together by a certain formal code, as was the case with music-based sub-cultures in earlier decades such as the 1960s and 1970s, but rather by emotions, lifestyles, a new moral belief, a sense of injustice, and similar consumption practices shared by the group (Cova, 1997). In addition, it has also been suggested that the shared consumption of music, along with its ability to join people together, can not only validate an individual's sense of self-identity, but also assist in the uniting and creation of neo-tribes (Goulding & Shankar, 2004).

When considering these theories in the context of the modern technological age, it can be argued that they may also be applied to the establishment of an identity through online interactions via social media. In addition, the creation of virtual communities that cater for a wide range of tastes in both musical genres and artists appears to have led many consumers to interact with one another in an online environment, specifically with the aim of socialising around aspects of music consumption. It can also be suggested that in some cases, these online communities may have replaced traditional offline social groups that may include forms of music consumption discussion, as well as postal-based artist fan clubs. On the other hand, it can also be suggested that virtual communities may in fact complement the more traditional means of socialising around

music consumption in an offline environment; or in fact may differ from offline communities completely.

Social behaviours relating to music consumption in the offline context can include not just individuals gathering together to discuss music, but also the hosting of record listening parties or group attendance at live music events or festivals. In many ways, there also appears to exist an online replication of these previously exclusively offline music-related activities. This extends to being able to watch live music events together online, while at the same time discussing an artist's performance as if the consumers were actually at the venue. Therefore, the existing literature appears to suggest that social groups that revolve around music consumption may provide relational or parallel constructs for self and social identity. For example, the groups can act as benchmarks for individuals' to compare themselves and relate their own identity, or rather their perception of their identity, with that of the social or group 'norm'. This reference to other individuals within a social group may also extend to a perception of other different groups, for example groups of consumers of other musical genres. This may also lead to subsequent behaviours relating to the stereotyping of other people and groups, by both the individual and the group as a whole.

It is also important to note that the concepts discussed by Shankar (2000) on music consumption and self-identity may apply to a wide range of musical genres, and not just to the traditionally viewed forms of popular music. Music that is deemed alternative to the mainstream, such as alternative rock or extreme forms of heavy metal, as well as niche genres such as folk or blues, may possess the same qualities and values to consumers in the construction of their self-identities as it does to consumers of traditional popular music. In the event that an individual's social group is one that represents an alternative or niche genre, this may especially be the case. Therefore, in light of the apparent applicability of the theories on self-identity to music consumption behaviours, the next section elaborates further upon the existing knowledge surrounding the theories of social identity, with a view to also developing these theories in line with the thesis.

Previous research has noted the association between music consumption and the construction of one's identity (Holbrook, 1986; Negus & Velázquez, 2002; Larsen *et*

al., 2010; Roy & Dowd, 2010), as well as music consumption combined with self-identity and emotion (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). In addition, much research has been conducted on the formation of identity in consumers' younger years, namely those of teenagers and adolescence in general. Several researchers have noted the importance of music to the construction of the self and self-identity at this time of life (Holbrook and Schindler, 1989; Havlena & Holak, 1991; North and Hargreaves, 1999; North *et al.*, 2000; Holbrook and Schindler, 2003; Schindler and Holbrook, 2003a; Nuttall & Tinson, 2008; Nuttall, 2009). Music has been described as being, "...the single most powerful commodity in creating allegiances between and within social groups of young people." (Nuttall, 2009; p.211). Previous research has also established the ages at which younger consumers begin the process of identity formation, separating the process of information gathering and the use of that information later on in teenage or adolescent years to assist in the construction of self-identity (Nuttall, 2008). This includes the ages of 12-14 years being primarily used for information and experience gathering, and 15-18 years of age as the period in which a young person uses the information and experiences previously collected to construct a new identity (Nuttall, 2008). Therefore, it can be argued that music consumption during these years may have a considerable impact upon an individual's identity, which may last for a substantial portion of their life.

When considering identity formation amongst this age group, in conjunction with psychological or peer group practices, it has also been found that adolescents use music consumption to build up social capital, in the creation of boundaries, and to aid the enhancement of social inclusion and exclusion (Nuttall, 2009). Crucially, it has also been noted that music consumption may be involved in an individual discarding certain parts of their identity (Nuttall, 2009). In other words, a change in music tastes may signal the end of one aspect of a certain type of identity, with the possibility of it being replaced by a new taste in music.

There have also been reflections upon youth-orientated consumption and the way in which it may affect a consumer's actions later in their life, often in the form of nostalgia-driven behaviours (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Schindler & Holbrook, 2003b). In general terms, nostalgia has been researched in conjunction with peoples' need for social connectedness (Kopf & Wolf, 2007); with the consumer's mission to

obtain authenticity in mind (Leigh *et al.*, 2006); and in conjunction with the ways in which aging can affect consumers' processing of advertisements (Kusumi *et al.*, 2010). Consumers who are heavily influenced by nostalgia have been shown to be important customers for businesses, due to mutually interdependent relationships between measured constructs of nostalgia and consumers' nostalgic preferences being found, as well as further significant links between the measured constructs and biographical variables that were deemed distinctive (Rousseau & Venter, 2008). In addition, nostalgia is often considered in the meaning of its use in the marketing activities of products, and brands in particular (Kessous & Roux, 2008).

Thompson & Hirschman (1995) epitomised two points that appear relevant to the thesis. Firstly, they theorised that there exists a long-standing cultural idealisation of youthfulness, or the ideal that to be forever young is the most commonly expressed form of peoples' desire to transcend the limits of the body. Secondly, they described a dualistic view of the individual as being:

“...an essential self whose true identity is not constrained by the body in which s/he is housed. In a culture that values youth, it is expectable that our essential transcendent selves would also happen to be constructed in youthful terms.”
(Thompson & Hirschman, 1995; p.143)

Therefore, in the case of music consumption, this may provide further explanation as to why nostalgia-driven behaviours appear to be prominent, in addition to the importance placed upon youth consumption of music as a means of informing self-identity.

In terms of music-based nostalgia, existing research has concentrated upon its effect on people and their memories and personalities (Barrett *et al.*, 2010); its role in the generation of consumption preferences and patterns in consumer tastes (Holbrook, 1993); in conjunction with the tones and content of song lyrics which inspire emotions (Batcho, 2007); its associated perceptions and satisfaction levels of social support (Paul, 2010); its importance in cassette culture (Toal, 2007); in relation to mix-tapes or compilations of music (Drew, 2005); in relation to music and fashion retro trends, as well as other entertainment industry offerings such as cult television programmes which embody styles of the past (Buckingham, 2006); its use in specifically targeting emotional responses from consumers through marketing activities (Coleman, 2009); in

conjunction with the concept of 'self-empowerment' through consumption of heavy metal music (Henry & Caldwell, 2006); its role in invoking individual and social memories, including music-based memories, which are provoked by online use or discussion, and digital storage via the Internet (Taddeo, 2009); in respect to Goth culture and heavy metal music consumption (Hodkinson, 2011); and in conjunction with music and advertising, specifically relating to the use of relevant songs and lyrics (Chou & Lien, 2010). Nostalgia has also been discussed in the literature surrounding other entertainment-based industries such as that of video games, particularly in the form of retro-gaming that features older classic games (Suominen, 2008). Therefore, it can be implied from previous research that consumption behaviours that are adopted in order to facilitate identity construction at younger stages of life may affect, or possibly even determine, an individual's future music-based tastes and consumption activities.

When considering the consumption of goods and services, previous research has also recognised that differing levels of commitment to the good or service may be displayed by consumers, including music as a product. While recognising that not all consumers of adolescent age may display the same levels of commitment when it comes to engaging in music consumption as a means of self-identity construction, it has been discerned that differing levels of 'investment', or commitment, with which some participants approached the use of music to build their identities exist (Nuttall, 2009). In this case, phrases such as, 'insiders', 'regulars', and, 'tourists' being coined to describe differing investment levels (Gronnow, 2004). In addition, it can also be theorised that levels of commitment and related consumption practices at the adolescent stage of an individual's life may extend beyond this age period, or even provide the continuation of such investment throughout one's life.

Contemporary consumers can also be considered identity shoppers, who are constantly renewing their identity by purchasing goods and services (Nuttall, 2009). This theory again appears to be prominent among adolescent consumers. In addition to consumption playing a key role in the supply of meanings and values which can be instrumental in creating and maintaining consumers' personal and social worlds, it has also been noted that consumers engage themselves in 'symbolic projects', in which identity is constructed through active use or consumption of symbolic materials (Nuttall, 2009). These projects are then subsequently incorporated into coherent

narratives of self-identity. Therefore, it can be suggested that popular music and artists may be considered as being similar to traditional brands, in that they can be used by consumers to project a desired identity to others. Brands themselves have been identified as containing many of the available cultural meanings, and may subsequently be exploited by consumers as important, if not exclusive, resources towards the symbolic construction of the self (Elliott & Davies, 2005).

In further application for the music industry, previous research has found that experience tends to be linked closely to cognitive age, and cognitive age dimensions such as 'felt' age, 'look' age, 'do' age, and 'interest' age have also been suggested (Goulding & Shankar, 2004). These represent dimensions with which consumers, including those that consume music, may bear in mind when defining their self-identity. Therefore, the concept of the self may depend upon how old a consumer feels in relative to their actual chronological age; how they look for their age; the practices they are performing; and the interests that they are pursuing (Barak, 1987). In addition, the notion of cognitive age as a reflection of group referral has been discussed by previous research, which represents a behavioural concept that focuses on the formation of new communities, and a behavioural manifestation that may result in age identity being confirmed through interaction with other people of a similar identity (Barak, 1987). This manifestation may also result in the creation of specific codes of behaviour and the formation of neo-tribes (Goulding & Shankar, 2004).

As such, the relevance of the existing literature to the thesis is twofold. Firstly, it appears that the notion of age-related identity feeds into the overall concept of one's self, and in particular, an individual's identity. Secondly, it can be argued that the concept of cognitive age as a reflection of group referral has implications for the creation of tribes. As discussed elsewhere in the literature review in the work of researchers such as Nuttall *et al.* (2011), this has particular relevance to the thesis, in that it can be suggested that online social communities may also possess elements of tribal behaviour. Therefore, both concepts provide potentially rich avenues for research when considering virtual communities and the sense of identity that may be created by belonging to a particular music-based group, in addition to the individual members' own notions of their selves. As these factors may feature prominently in online social networking, it can be argued that they may also be applicable to music-based virtual

groups in their members' subsequent consumption behaviours and live music attendance.

In regards to the existing literature discussed in this section so far, the following section will lead on from the theories of self-identity construction through consumption practices to examine the actual attachments that can take place between a consumer and a product or service that they have obtained.

2.3.2 Self-identity and Product Attachment

As established by the preceding sections of the literature review, in the field of consumer behaviour research the notion of one's self may be used to contribute towards an understanding of an individual's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes, and ultimately, their consumption behaviour in regards to a wide variety of products and services. It has been proposed that products are a social stimuli that can influence reflected appraisals by consumers, with the appraisals themselves being regarded as an individual's evaluation of their own identity performance that can subsequently also influence definition of the self (Solomon, 1983). In addition, previous research has empirically confirmed the important relationship mediated by appraisals between possessions and self-determination (Kleine *et al.*, 1993), and subsequently built upon by combining applications of identity theory, appraisal theory, and sociological perspectives of emotions to determine a more accurate and complete approach to the development of the appraisal process (Laverie *et al.*, 2002). Further to this, by incorporating aspects of cognition and emotion, conceptualisation of the process facilitated the emergence of a greater distinction between the appraisal of possessions and the appraisal of performance, in addition to a distinction between reflected and self-appraisals (Laverie *et al.*, 2002).

Existing literature has also investigated the effects of symbols or icons contained within the 'urban fabric' of our lives, which also highlights something about the owners of the symbols themselves (Hull *et al.*, 1994). The importance of these symbols or icons would appear to be paramount, with this aspect of the urban fabric being called the glue that bonds people to place. Hull *et al.* (1994). This is an example of how the self may

also be affected greatly by exterior physical factors, such as places in which individuals reside, in addition to the social and psychological factors that are more commonly attributed to the construction of the self, identity theory, and social identity theory. In a practical application of this theory, it has been considered an integral part of the urban design decision process, as such symbols and icons contribute greatly to place identity, a factor that feeds directly into individuals' self-identity, health, sense of community, and sense of place. Therefore, such research has also emphasised the memories and meanings that participants had associated with the physical features of their localities, such as buildings and places of historical interest which represent a special interest to them; while the major categorisations of the reasons for importance being attached encompassed the symbols or icons providing a connection to the individuals' pasts, acting as symbols to social groups to which people belonged or with which they identified, gave the local community its distinctive or unique character, satisfied important functional needs, evoked emotions or feelings, and served as reminders of personal accomplishments and concerns (Hull *et al.*, 1994).

Due to existing beliefs that self-appraisal may assist in building identity as perceived by the individual concerned, and that it may also be the reflected appraisal concerning others (or the individual's perception of how other people evaluate them in the context of a particular identity) which also contributes towards that identity (Laverie *et al.*, 2002). Hence, in addition to the cognitive and emotional components attributed to the construction of such appraisals, the notion of reflected versus self-appraisal may also be of relevance to the music industry. For example, it can be suggested that when constructing a music-based identity, similar theoretical concepts may apply. Consumer behaviour cannot be truly understood without first comprehending the meanings that consumers may attach to products that they have obtained, and a key feature of possessions has been defined as being that they are recognised by an individual, consciously or otherwise, as forming part of their self (Belk, 1988). Bergadaà (1990, p.292) also supported this concept by stating that, "...individuals are thus motivated in the search for their own identity through the objects that surround them".

Therefore, the literature indicates that a desired self can be created through acts of consumption and possession of objects that display a certain style or image. It has been

noted that the modern-day consumer has much scope for creating the identity that they desire:

“...the postmodern consumer is free to choose - with little sense of enduring commitment - from a wide range of cultural narratives and identities to become the person s/he wants to be at the moment of self-construction.” (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995; p.151)

It can be argued that music, with its' many different genres and sub-cultures, may provide a particularly expansive field from which an individual can select a music-based identity. According to the literature, in terms of music consumption the moment of self-construction is more likely to occur during the adolescent or teenage period, although this does not rule out changes in music-based identity in later years.

Consumers have been found to use their owned possessions to assist in the development and maintenance of a concept of self-identity, with a concept of 'attachment' also being suggested which represents the relationship held between people and products that they have obtained, and is also related to social-cognitive theories of the self (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). Therefore, it can be theorised that as a product, music and related-offerings may also be subject to such theories.

In addition, it has been found that the emotional aspects of owning a product could also be more greatly understood by the concept of attachment. For example, a consumer may become dissatisfied with a particular product that was purchased in association with their identity, subsequently creating a psychological conflict in the consumer's mind (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). Therefore, in the case of music as a product, it can also be suggested that were a consumer to develop new musical tastes, there may a similar occurrence of the discarding of one form of music and replacement with another form. Arguably, this may create similar psychological conflicts, particularly if an individual had previously been emotionally attached to a particular type of musical genre or an artist. In addition, were they to find that their musical tastes were changing, whether it is of their own accord or in association with social connections to others, their self-identity may subsequently also be affected and changed.

2.3.3 Self-congruency

The concept of the self may also be consolidated in a consumer's mind via the theory of self-congruency, which attempts to define the level of congruency that brands have upon a consumer's notion of their own self-image; with these consumer-perceived differences in self-image and product-image also providing different levels of influence upon purchase motivations (Sirgy, 1982). Previous research in this field has noted the adaptability of self-congruency theory in relation to products and brand images, with the mechanism that is provided with symbolic interaction as being one of the key foundations of the concept of self-congruency (Beerli *et al.*, 2004). It can be argued that music artists may represent 'brands', and adhere to similar properties and characteristics which apply to 'normal' brands. For example, a music artist's image may be held by a consumer in a certain way, as well as the use of symbols that accompany the image when communicating with others, or an image about themselves' that a consumer may wish to portray to other people.

Existing literature also suggests that possessions are part of a social communication system that may be subsequently actively used by consumers to highlight aspects of their selves to others. Previous research has also held that consumers are more likely to care about their possessions that hold public meanings that are congruent with their self-image (Richins, 1994a). Therefore, the concept of the self may be consolidated in a consumer's mind via the theory of self-congruency. It can be argued that music is a 'product' that can provide meanings that are widely shared by the public. In addition, related possessions can be part of a social communication system, and thus actively used by consumers to highlight aspects of their selves to others, meaning they are more likely to care about their possessions that hold public meanings that are congruent with their self-image (Richins, 1994a).

These meanings are likely to have been conceptualised as part of both socialisation and enculturation experiences, which can also include the exposure of consumers to external elements such as advertising and other factions of the media (Richins, 1994a). Existing literature has also discussed two types of meaning for personal values, these being public and private; defining public meanings as those that are subjective in terms of

how an object is viewed by society at large, and private meanings whereby an object holds certain subjective meanings or value for a particular individual (Sirgy, 1982; Richins, 1994b). Therefore, in the context of both public meanings and the thesis, it was recognised that other entities, such as the media, could also prove to be influential in individuals' music consumption behaviours. In addition, the objects discussed by this theory may include music-based artefacts such as CDs or vinyl records, or music-related merchandise such as clothing. As consumers may also tend to cultivate meanings for products that are in line with their personal values, the cultivation process will lead to consumers' valued products or possessions becoming meaningful in terms of embodying or characterising individuals' personal values, as well as other aspects of their selves (Richins, 1994a).

Therefore, in terms of owners' personal experiences of object use, music-related possessions can also be examined under this strand of self-congruency theory. This may particularly be in terms of both private and public meanings of music-based possessions that perform the dual role of satisfying the individual and others. As already noted, the theory of self-congruency is important to the thesis in the way that it encompasses both brand and product images, as well as symbolism that is highly relevant to music as a product. In addition, the concept of public and private meanings may be of particular relevance to a study of music consumption behaviours; for example, in the private consumption of music as opposed to public consumption of music, and the public-related aspects of attending live music shows or engaging with other music consumers through online social networking platforms. It can be suggested that private and public consumption of music may actually represent similar or differing behaviours and practices, and therefore both forms of consumption are of relevance to the thesis.

The literature review has discussed numerous aspects of some of these theories of the self that appeared to possess several differences, but also notable similarities. In the music industry, as it can be argued with other fields of consumption, these theories may have important implications for the construction or development of an individual's identity. This may particularly be the case when individuals form or join groups, which may be used to either create or enhance their own sense of identity. In this sense, the apparent differences of the terms used to describe the concept and theories surrounding

the self may in fact all construe a very similar concept of individuals' development of their selves through their music consumption. It can be suggested that not only will this be in terms of individuals' values of music, but also their subsequent music consumption behaviours, including the purchasing or obtainment of recorded music and attendance at live music events. Therefore, in light of this viewpoint, the literature review considered the differences and similarities of the various terms used to theorise upon the construction and development of the self.

2.4 Social Identity

In a similar fashion to the theories behind the concept of self-identity, this section of the literature review will discuss the notion of social identity.

2.4.1 Self and Social Categorisation

In regards to the extent to which self-categorisations may affect the construction of social actions, previous research has indicated that flexibility can be formed through the categories that individuals feel that they belong to, in addition to other people with whom those individuals interact and compare themselves, and the dimensional framework in which the comparisons happen (Reicher, 2004).

Therefore, it can be theorised that interactions between music consumers, in both online and offline environments, may be similarly constructed or affected by the flexibility lent to social actions which are conducted by individuals. As well as the structural regimes of music-based social groups, it can also be considered that cultural implications may exist. For example, if music consumers are interacting with one another through online social platforms, the border-less and multicultural environment fostered by Web 2.0 may prove to emphasise potential similarities and differences that may exist between the multitude of cultures, races, nationalities, and subsequent behavioural actions of users. It can be suggested that the globalisation effects of the Internet may have important implications for the formation of one's self, particularly when an individual is engaged

in online social actions relating to music, or indeed a multitude of other cultural offerings, in addition to normal every-day goods and services.

Social categorisation theory has proved to be a dominant theoretical framework surrounding the study of social and psychological aspects of intergroup relations. The prominence of two strands of theory surrounding social identity and self-categorisation in regards to the field of social categorisation theory have been noted, along with a recognition that social categorisation is an approach which provides an explanation for intergroup behaviour in terms of underlying cognitive representations (Brewer, 1996).

In the context of the music industry, and in line with the theory discussed in the social categorisation theoretical framework, it can be proposed that members of music-based social groups may not only become emotionally attached to a group, but also perceive their group to be superior to that of other groups. Theoretically, this could occur between groups within the same musical genre, or across different genres if groups are sharing similar social spaces in online or offline environments. Music-based consumer groups may exist on the same online social platforms such as Facebook or Last.fm, or in the same geographical location in the offline context, particularly in youth-orientated areas where music consumption has been found to be a critical element in the formation of identity. For example, a variety of music-based social groups are found co-existing in such places as school playgrounds, youth clubs, colleges, and universities. When considering existing literature surrounding communities and tribes (Nuttall *et al.*, 2011), it can be argued that groups such as these may represent the communities and tribes which can form around a particular element of music consumption. In addition, notions of collective identity may form around these groups. Therefore, it was recognised that collective identity amongst such groups also potentially formed an important part of the thesis. Collective identity theory will be explored in greater depth later in this section of the literature review.

In the context of the thesis, the categorisation of a music consumer may be defined by themselves, by others, and by other external outlets such as the media. It can be considered that the main method for distinguishing between different types of music consumer may relate to the musical genre that they primarily listen to, although it may be the case that many consumers listen to a variety of types, styles, and genres of music.

However, it is suggested that the pre-eminence of one genre in particular, if identified by an individual as being a favourite, could have an effect on music consumption behaviour and live music attendance. Beyond music consumption practices, it can also be speculated that spillover effects in terms of the extension of music consumption to other areas of an individual's life may occur. For example, in consumers' general lifestyles and other related behaviours.

The ideas expressed in this section possess elements, which may be linked to other theories that have been discussed in the literature review, such as those relating to self-identity and the existing knowledge surrounding communities and tribes. In particular, the ways in which consumers in younger age groups use music consumption to construct their self-identities, and extend these identities into social group contexts. Therefore, the next section of the literature review was undertaken in an attempt to recognise that music consumption and one's own values may have different implications for a person's individual behaviour, and their behaviour when taken in the context of social group membership. Hence, the literature review built upon the theories associated with individual identity and music consumption by considering how one's self-identity can also affect, and be affected by, identity within groups or communities such as friends, families, and other social peers.

Numerous researchers have attempted to deduce a generalised theory for the concept of the self, yet it would appear that in fact several strands of theory needed to be drawn upon in order to fully establish a universal theory. The concepts of identity theory and social identity theory have been discussed as possessing notable differences, yet linking them together can in fact create a more complete and integrated view of the self, as the two theories' differences are more concerned with emphasis than they are in kind (Stets & Burke, 2000). Different bases of identity for each theory, such as category/group or role; identity salience and the activation of identities that are encompassed by each theory; and the cognitive and motivational processes that emerge from identities which are based on category/group and on role, have also been identified by previous research studies (Stets & Burke, 2000).

The basis of social identity theory has been held to involve individuals' classifying themselves, as well as others, into various pre-defined social categories via means such

as organisational memberships, affiliations to religious orders, and cohorts based upon such factors as gender and age (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The categories are defined by prototypical characteristics that have been drawn from the category members themselves (Turner, 1985). However, in terms of assigning prototypical characteristics, theoretical perspectives on the concept of stereotyping have shown that these commonly designated assignments may not in fact be reliable (Hamilton, 1981). Theory on stereotyping will be discussed in greater depth in this section

The concept of social identity has been developed as being distinct from that of personal identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), also implying that this provides the difference between interpersonal and group situations. Interpersonal situations represent those where behaviour is largely determined by personological variables, and group situations represent situations in which behaviour is mainly directed by category-based processes (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory has also been held to encompass the ideal that people strive to create a positive identity for themselves, with subsequent repercussions for personal characteristics such as an increase in self-esteem (Brown, 2000). Therefore, the development of social identity appears to mainly be drawn from interactions with the ingroup and relevant outgroups that result in favourable comparisons. In another basic aspect of social identity theory, the results of unfavourable comparisons that lead to an individual perceiving their identity to be unsatisfactory are held to involve people aiming to either leave the social group that they are involved in, or engage in discovering methods to increase the positive distinctiveness of that group (Brown, 2000). It has also been previously established that there are three variable categorisations in which intergroup differentiation may be influenced. These incorporate the need for individuals to be subjectively identified with their ingroup; the presence of a situation in which evaluative ingroup comparisons are enabled; and the outgroup being comparable in terms of similarity or proximity, with the comparability resulting in an increase in the pressure on the ingroup to differentiate itself further (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The discussion surrounding the conceptualisation and development of social identity theory has also emphasised that the two theories of self-categorisation and self-identity are in fact very different, and should be treated as such (Brown, 2000). In particular, the two theories' difference in scope, with social identity theory being developed to provide

a range of explanations to problems regarding intergroup relations, and self-categorisation theory being used to provide a general explanation of group processes (Brown, 2000). While the latter theory does in fact incorporate intergroup-related behaviours, Brown also considered self-categorisation to include other forms of phenomena, including aspects of stereotyping, group polarisation, social influence, and leadership. In addition, it has been felt that social identification incorporates several aspects, such as it being essentially a perception that an individual has of their oneness held with a group of other persons; this being dependent upon the categorisation of individuals, how distinctive and prestigious the group is, the salience of that group in comparison to other outgroups, and other factors deemed to be traditional in group formation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These factors are likely to lead to activities that are agreeable with the concept of the identity, provide support for any institutions that have come to embody the identity, provide stereotypical perceptions of the self and others, provide outcomes that are again traditionally associated with group formations, as well as coming to reinforce the antecedents that drive the construction of identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Social identity theory has also been identified by researchers as being responsible for the development of several other related theories. For example, a critique of social identity theory led to the creation of system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004), as well as social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993). While these theories are suggested as being useful, it has been claimed that only social identification theory offers the potent ability to explain social change and social stability (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). This supplemented the views held by previous researchers on these two theories (Reicher, 2004; and Huddy, 2004 respectively). Relationships between changes in self-identity and the social environment in which individuals operate have been explored by early previous research. In addition, previous research has noted that not only were changes in self-identity found to follow this pattern, but also these changes were dependent on the differential importance of various peers, the extent to which peer perceptions were communicated, and the individual's degree of involvement in the group (Sherwood, 1965).

The contribution of social identity theory towards the purchasing of mundane or everyday goods and services has also been previously investigated, and it has been

found that there is an implication that consumers use goods and services to enact one of their social identities, instead of the consumption of offerings relating directly to the overall or global self (Kleine *et al.*, 1993). In a further example of how this may affect consumption patterns and behaviour, it has also been found that the frequency with which consumption takes place depends to a large extent on the salience of the identity that such activities represent, with individuals being attracted to offerings that are both consistent with and enable the enacting of various social identities that can comprise a person's sense of self; thereby prompting a direct correlation between the concepts of identity and attraction to particular goods and services, in that it appears that the more important an identity is to an individual, the more likely they are to be attracted to associate offerings (Kleine *et al.*, 1993).

2.4.2 Social Group Identity

Existing literature has also conceptualised a framework for collective identity, which attempted to clarify and make distinctions between dimensions of identification. This included such elements as self-categorisation, evaluation, importance, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioural involvement, and content and meaning; all of which may also be moderated by the context or situation in which they occur (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the notion of collective identity can be considered as a key component in the forming of groups who subsequently share an identity. In considering levels of collective identity and self-representations, previous research has also highlighted the need to examine cross-cultural perspectives that may in fact affect the social aspects of the self, in conjunction with the extent to which people tend to define themselves in terms of their relationships with both other individuals and social groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Social identity theory views individuals as deriving their concept of their selves from the knowledge that they gain of their membership of one or more groups, in addition to placing value and emotional significance on that group membership which results in perceptual and attitudinal biases (Greene, 1999). In addition, it was noted that individuals tend to favour the in-group to which they are a member, and to which they define the group in comparison to that of another out-group that is relevant to their

group (Greene, 1999). The rise of the social identity perspective has also been established as enabling an integrated conceptual focus on group phenomena, in addition to the dynamic links that may be present between this phenomena and social cognitive and intergroup processes (Hogg, 2001).

In terms of intergroup relations, the concept of social identity stemmed from the way in which people conceptualise themselves within an intergroup context, with an individuals' own perceived place in society being somewhat determined by the social system in which that particular individual resides (Tajfel, 1982). Subsequently, it was believed that it is the individuals' knowledge that they belong to a particular social group, together with membership of that group creating emotional or value significance to them, which does in fact determine an individual's social identity (Tajfel, 1982).

Based on this, it has been suggested that groups only exist in relation to other groups, and therefore they derive their social meaning through both descriptive and evaluative properties that are in relation to other groups (Hogg, 2001). This may be an important distinction due to the fact that social identity is self-evaluative, and its value is derived from evaluative properties attributed to the 'ingroup' (Hogg, 2001). This would indicate a possible trend of individuals, and the social groups that they are members of, attempting to emphasise their own unique attributes in a manner that suggests they are superior to others. This element of competition was noted by other previous research that described intergroup relations as incorporating a process of competition in terms of groups and their members attempting to protect or enhance positive identity, with identity including both distinctiveness and social identity (Turner, 1975).

The dynamic mediation between the socially constructed self has also been considered in the existing literature, in particular the mediation between individual behaviour and social structure, which is constructed from both identity theory and social identity theory (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). However, significant differences have been found between the two theories. These differences include those in the level of analysis, the role of intergroup behaviour, the relationship between roles and groups, and the salience of social context and identity (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). In addition, the importance of role identities have been shown to relate specifically to the roles that people perceive

themselves to hold in society, ranging from traditional family roles such as mothers and fathers to workplace roles such as organisational leaders (Hogg *et al.*, 1995).

Further to this, social identity was established as being constructed of several components and emphases, which can be compatible or interrelated (Hogg, 2001). As well as social identity and self-categorisation, other components consist of social comparison, intergroup relations, and self-enhancement motivation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Other previous research has featured a cognitive emphasis on the categorisation process (Turner *et al.*, 1987). This subsequently became known as self-categorisation theory, and was integrated into social identity theory. Subsequently, a framework was established which could be used to organise conceptualisations of social identity, incorporating four dimensions comprised of the perception of the intergroup context, in-group attraction, interdependency beliefs, and depersonalisation (Jackson & Smith, 1999). Under this framework, the impact of each dimension on the consequences attributed to social identity is dependent upon how much each dimension is evoked or assessed.

In terms of self and social identity, previous research has considered the different conditions under which these concepts are affected by the group to which an individual belongs, often in the form of a social grouping they regularly frequent (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002). Further to this, from the perspective of social identity, it has been suggested that group commitment and features of the social context are in fact crucial determinants of central identity concerns (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002). By exploring different classifications of situations that reflected a range of different concerns and motives that could affect an individual in response to threats to both personal and group identity, and also to that individual's degree of commitment to the group, it has also been subsequently found that issues of self and social identity impinged upon a wide range of responses at various levels; namely perceptual, affective, and behavioural (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002).

Responses such as these are also evident in other previous literature. For example, devices of consumer-based identity construction have been described as essentially being self-directed consumer choices which enable individuals to achieve their goals,

and to feel more content with their lives (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). This narrative of consumer choice highlights the lasting endurance of past social influences that can assist in structuring consumers' perceptions of what they believe to be desirable identities (Ewen, 1988). Therefore, when considering music as a product, similar consumer-orientated goals may be involved. For example, consumers could use music consumption practices and live music attendance as goals that may enhance their content with their lives. It can also be theorised that this is not just in terms of entertainment purposes, but also for constructing self and social identity, and the facilitation of acceptance to other members of social peer groups.

Previous research has also suggested a greater depth to these social interactions, particularly in discussing the role of procedures in social groups that help to form the social identities amongst the group members (Tyler & Blader, 2003). While social identity is driven by these procedures, it has been found in turn to influence individuals' attitudes, values, and behaviours (Tyler & Blader, 2003). Therefore, it can be suggested that this theory may also be applicable to the music industry and its' consumers. However, in the longer term, there is also research that indicates that maintenance of identity can become an issue, especially when a change in context (often social) occurs (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). This phenomenon was shown to affect not just identity maintenance, but also the implications of maintenance efforts for group identification, as well as the effects of perceived threats to an individual's identity, which can be related to self-esteem associated with group membership (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Therefore, previous literature has discussed these various social group contexts and situations in relation to identity in considerable depth, particularly in terms of how individuals can use other members of social groups as a reference point for their own identity and behaviours.

The presence of reference groups have been deemed to be of great importance in terms of perceived age, social comparison, and self-evaluation:

“...this self-evaluation is closely related to the individual's sense of identity which is expressed and mirrored in the social context.” (Goulding & Shankar, 2004, p. 648)

It has also been motioned that consumption spaces are in fact spaces of sociality, where the status of an individual is encoded or mutually adjusted in favour of the group to which they belong (Shields, 1992). These reference groups are subsequently even more important for self-referencing when they become the primary focus for doing so. However, it can be suggested from the literature that differences may exist between consumers from different demographics and life stages, such as individuals with families being less likely to be reliant on social approval than young consumers who live leisure-driven single lifestyles.

A wide range of goods and services possess consumer groups in the form of individuals who actively share similar consumption patterns for a particular offering. Therefore, a shared social identity may also be created by the formation of such groups, whether they exist in an online environment or in more traditionally based offline groups who meet and socialise together. It has been stated that the essence of the theory regarding social identity is, "...its concern with those aspects of identity that derive from group memberships" (Skevington & Baker, 1989, p.1). As a result, it can be argued that membership of music-based social groups may provide similar identity constructs. It has also been noted that personal, relational, and collective levels of self-definition can represent forms of self-representation which are distinctive; all of which can also incorporate differing origins, sources of 'self-worth', and socially-driven motivations (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). In other words, consumers are subject to a multitude of influences in the formation of their selves and their identities, whether it is through their own personalities or characteristics and their relationships with other consumers.

In considering such theories, it may especially be the case that the collective identity of a group of consumers can determine members' identities and the way in which they describe themselves to others. In terms of application to the music industry, it can be suggested from the existing literature that the collective identity of a group of music consumers, when repeatedly exposed to certain stimulus, may have a telling effect in the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes of the group members, as well as influencing their subsequent actions and consumption behaviours. As well as the presence of relationships between group members that can determine individuals' identity formation, sense of self, and their subsequent behaviours, it can be suggested that other influential factors in the form of external stimulus may also be present. Therefore, in

the context of the thesis, it could be hypothesised that similar effects will take place in music-based online social groups and virtual communities, with the focus being centred on how group members' music consumption and live music attendance are affected.

2.4.3 Social Group Identity and Music Consumption

It has been suggested that music consumption may not only act as a means of identification-building and social validation for consumers, but it provides a linking value over that of other cultural products that can help determine the theory as to why music is such a pre-eminent and ubiquitous form of culture (Shankar, 2000). Likewise, previous work in the field has indicated that rather than just reflecting individual, social, and cultural values, music does in fact produce them as well (Frith, 1996). Therefore, the concept of music as a unique product may be an important factor in the consideration of the thesis.

A difference appears to exist in the closeness between an individual and the people with whom they interact socially, which could also affect the self or social identity. Previous researchers have felt that it was important to differentiate between those people who are close friends with a participant and those who were part of a wider social group, as well as taking into consideration the influence of non-parental adults (Nuttall & Tinson, 2008). Therefore, in the context of the thesis, this may also be an important factor. For example, an individual may consider their identity more important when presenting themselves to close friends than when engaging in online socialisation in music-based discussion groups with less familiar people. On the other hand, a person may want to project their identity more prominently or in a certain kind of way to those fellow online users, while feeling more comfortable with their close friends to not feel the need to project their identity as much. In terms of an online identity, there may also be a factor relating to how truthful the individual is being in regards to the identity that they are projecting to others in these types of social environments. This may make online research projects more difficult to validate if truthful identities are not being utilised or expressed by online users. Therefore, this was potentially identified as being a problem when collecting data using methodologies such as netnography or webnography. This will be discussed further in the qualitative methodology chapter of the thesis.

In a similar manner, there may be issues of truthfulness regarding music consumption in the younger age groups of consumers such as adolescents or teenagers. For example, it has been found that peer group influence appeared to be more intensive for those at the lower end of their teenage years, making it more difficult for these consumers to commit to what music they did in fact like, as opposed to music that they did not like (Nuttall & Tinson, 2008). This finding concurred with other previous research, which suggested that the negative aspects of choices made in consumption at a vital stage of identity formation for these younger consumers might hold important meanings in the creation of personal, social, and cultural identities (Hogg & Banister, 2001). Therefore, this theory may also be applied to the case of music consumption, and it can be suggested that external pressure from peer groups may be prominent in the music consumption behaviours of young consumers, as well as in activities such as live music attendance.

2.4.4 Online Communities and Tribes

Existing literature suggests that consumers initiate, build, and maintain consumption focused-groups (Kozinets, 1999; Cova & Salle, 2008), in addition to previous research noting the development of many online tribal communities that counter-act the increasing fragmentation of the world that exists in post-modern societies (Simmons, 2008). Theories surrounding online tribal communities have been developed upon four elements that are essential to their creation, identified as being comprised of people, purposes, protocols, and technology (Johnson & Ambrose, 2006). When discussing the key characteristics of such social networking technology, emphasis has been placed on its ability to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous interaction, enhance information richness through multimedia, provide a range of information for various processing needs, to be ubiquitous, and to be impervious to spatiotemporal limitations (Johnson & Ambrose, 2006).

In gauging the effect that online social networking and user-generated content has had on the discipline of consumer behaviour, it has been claimed that these virtual networks can be centred on a variety of niches of interest or content, and as such, have become an

important part of everyday conversations in post-modern societies (Simmons, 2008). This includes the use of social websites such as MySpace to build communities around independent music and party scenes. This again appears to indicate the importance of the impact of online social networking on the music industry, especially when it is also considered that it has been claimed that online tribal group members also possess shared purposes and beliefs, and tend to interact socially through the adherence to protocols which are tacit and explicit; as well as rituals and roles using internet technologies that support social interactions (Preece, 2001).

2.4.5 Online Communities, Tribes, and Music Consumption

In the modern-day environment, official artist websites now often possess a large number of user-friendly features, as well as offering consumers special gifts, promotions, and 'exclusive' content. Such offerings can include photographs and videos of artists, live performance clips, 'backstage passes' which allow consumers to see an artist behind the scenes, recordings in the form of MP3 format downloads, practice session clips, and news about the artist. It was recognised that these websites are often registration or subscription-based, in addition to possessing options, which enable a consumer to purchase artist-related merchandise through online shopping facilities, attached to the website. As well as effectively replacing former postal-based artist fan clubs, these websites also appear to have fostered the creation of online communities and discussion platforms for fans of an artist. Therefore, tribal aspects of music consumption, as epitomised by Nuttall *et al.* (2011), can be considered to emanate from social communities in both on and offline contexts. In the online environment, it appears feasible to suggest that fan club websites can play an important role in creating and sustaining online discussions surrounding a particular artist. Therefore, these communities may also form a key role in music-based online social networking.

Socially positive uses of virtual music communities have been already suggested by previous research. For example, it has been suggested that these communities form entities that can help dispel a sense of alienation that has become prevalent since the industrialisation of the popular music market (Kibby, 2000). The consumption of music

has also been highlighted as an active and incorporative practice, solidifying in the process the illusory bonds between artists and consumers that have become commonplace, as well as the virtual place that is an artist's website home page having facilitated the belief in a local music community (Kibby, 2000). For example, in the context of vinyl record collectors as a tribal grouping, it has been found that:

“The internet is a key information medium used by the tribe; it has become a hybrid resource of information, communication, purchasing and facilitation of tribal membership. This facilitation occurs through allowing individuals, who are limited in time and/or money, to connect with other collectors through online forums, locate and purchase records without a physical visit to a record store. The internet also facilitated exploration of new genres and artists that ultimately contribute to the specialised knowledge (i.e. cultural capital) and authority of individual members.” (Mitchell & Imrie, 2011, p. 50-51)

In addition, business applications relating to online social networking and music consumption, in terms of marketers having the capacity to provide information to consumers, online purchasing resources, and to reach tribal networks or communities in an online context, have been emphasised by recent research (Mitchell & Imrie, 2011).

Therefore, numerous potential effects of online communities and discussion forums on music consumption behaviours appear present, not least the social effects that can characterise the music consumption process. In a similar manner to discussions in an offline environment, it can be argued that online forums appear to provide another platform for users of Web 2.0 to express their music consumption in terms of emotional, memory, and cultural attachments. This particularly appears to be the case in the youth or teenage segment of the market (Livingstone, 2008). In addition, online communities and fan clubs may potentially foster expressions of addictive behaviour, as witnessed in areas of music consumerism such as iPod use (Cockrill *et al.*, 2011). It can also be considered that online communities may be similar in form to music-based social groupings that existed before the popularisation of the Internet and Web 2.0. Social groupings based around certain genres of music, such as ‘Goths’ who prefer darker forms of music, style, and imagery according to Hodkinson (2011), and ‘rockers’ which existed particularly in youth-orientated and educational establishments, may still be prevalent in the online context. However, it can also be theorised online collectives such as these may attract a more diverse range of consumers in terms of lifestyle and

demographics. For example, while friendship networks are being stretched out by online social networking, and in the process also disassociating the same networks from particular localities, there is a need to reconsider the impact that this has on music culture.

Another possible key element of the relationship between online social networking and music consumption, which may be linked to activities within communities, is the potential impact of 'taste-makers'. Research has been conducted on the powerful combined forces of amateurs, Internet peers, and 'prosumers' that are created through 'taste-making', artist exposure, and the establishment of relationships between content found online (McGuire & Slater, 2005). When considering the more widespread means of the distribution of music that is prevalent through mass consumer use of the Internet, this appears especially to be the case. Consumers may need these types of recommendations or 'services', as it has been shown that the majority of consumers want and need tastemakers who are credible personalities in their eyes, and proven entities that provide packaged programs and exposure to new music (Stein-Sacks, 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that online social communities may provide a platform upon which tastemakers can operate. In regards to the thesis, the focus will be on the impact that online tastemakers may have in terms of both general music consumption and live music attendance.

Having considered the foundations of Web 2.0 and its relationship with modern-day music consumption, as well as existing knowledge surrounding music consumption behaviours in light of recent key studies, the literature review will continue by attempting to build further upon elements of modern-day music consumption behaviours. An examination of the literature surrounding music consumption and identity will now be discussed, specifically in order to provide potential links between music consumption and the values that can be associated with it. In particular, the meanings of these values to a person's notion of their 'self' will be explored.

In consideration of the various different strands of theory that relate to the concept of the self, it was notable that some previous researchers and authors appeared to have used different terms to essentially describe the same theoretical base. For example, the use of terms such as 'personal identity', 'social identity', 'self-identity', 'self-

categorisation', 'self-concept', 'self-verification', and 'self-congruency' may all in fact be terms that essentially describe similar theories of the self and the construction or development of an individual's identity. For example, previous research has claimed that social identity theory has come under great invention and reinvention, particularly in terms of providing a crucial link between the psychological behaviour of an individual and the structure and function of social groups to which they may belong (Brewer, 2001).

Therefore, in the context of the thesis and in the interests of providing both clarity and consistency, it was deemed necessary to draw together some of the differing terms and concepts which have been used by previous researchers to describe the self. This was not only due to a need to distinguish between the various definitions of social identity that can be found in a range of theoretical frameworks, but to also draw distinctions among identities that are person-based, identities that are relational or role-based, identities based on group membership, and those identities established through collective-based behaviour; as epitomised by previous research (Brewer, 2001).

2.5 Social Influence

Previous research has indicated that the monitoring of identity is very much dependent on group approval and acceptance (Goulding & Shankar, 2004). Therefore, music-based reference groups may also be important in individuals seeking social approval, which may in turn lead to an element of social influence. This section will discuss this in light of online social networking and music consumption behaviours.

2.5.1 Social Influence and Online Social Networking

In association with the rise of online social networking that has been enabled by the technology developments of the early 21st Century, the reasons for consumers' actual uses of such networks have been scrutinised and defined:

“Online communities exist not only for task-orientated communications, but also for personal relevant information sharing, trust and intimacy creation, and social relationships building.” (Rau *et al.*, 2008, p.2758)

It has also been found through survey methodology that for consumers of a university-going age, external influence on individuals' attitudes towards online social networking can also be enforced through their perceived level of self-efficacy relating to Internet use, a need or sense of belonging, a need for cognition of the relevant knowledge, and the collective self-esteem of being a member of a social group (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Further to this, self-efficacy in Internet use, a need or sense of belonging, and collective self-esteem from group membership all indicated positive effects on consumers' attitudes towards online social networking (Gangadharbatla, 2008). It has also been shown that college students' attitudes towards online social networking mediated the relationship between an individual's willingness to engage and interact with online social networking in the first place, and both perceived self-efficacy of Internet use and a need or sense of belonging, with only a partial mediation between a student's willingness to join an online social network and the factor of collective self-esteem (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Such existing research indicated examples of factors that may influence a consumer's attitude towards online social networking, and subsequently the way in which they use such communication platforms to interact with other people and join in virtual communities.

The existing literature would also appear to suggest that in terms of online social groups, an individual's identity and influence may also be affected by a person's use of online social platforms in general to communicate with other consumers, whether it is with people who they are familiar with in an offline context or people who are essentially 'strangers' or previously unknown. Therefore, the role of the Internet and new communications technology in an increasingly globalised world is one that has had a considerable impact upon the concepts of self-identity and social identity. For example, an increasing uncertainty has accompanied an increase in the effect of globalisation upon self and identity; that uncertainty proving to be instrumental in both individuals and groups to discover localised niches for their identity construction (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

This previous research appears to represent a case that an identity is constructed by interacting with both people who are geographically close to an individual and others who may be far away, for example, members of online virtual communities. It can be suggested that this theoretical disposition is also important for the music industry. For example, consumers may attempt to discern their own identity through music consumption and interactions with immediate social groups in their lives, such as friends and family, in addition to seeking to verify their identity with other consumers from further afield. Again, this can now take place in the form of online interactions and information exchanges through music-based social platforms and networking websites.

The increase in the impact of new communications technology has also resulted in the delineation of the processes of globalisation and localisation on an individual level. These processes have been found to be construed of an increasing number of voices and counter-voices, as well as involving the role of both social power and emotions, and perhaps even more crucially, that the widening of horizons enabled by globalisation has caused tensions with the need for localised niches (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

When studying the self and identity, it has been proposed that the concept can be explored on three different levels, these being individual, local, and global planes (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). In the context of the field of music consumption, it can be suggested that this would incorporate a consumer constructing their individual self-identity through the music that they obtain; a local identity that is constructed through their particular music consumption behaviours and interactions with local peers and social groups; and effectively on a global audience level, where the individual's self-identity and related behaviours on the previous two levels are extended to interactions through online social networking.

Having considered areas of music consumption behaviour and the advent of online social networking, as well as existing literature in the fields of both individual and collective identity in relation to music consumption, the review will now draw the different elements together in the proceeding discussion section of the chapter.

The literature review has established the potential importance of factors surrounding social group membership, such as identity and influence, in both online and offline contexts. While these two environments could be considered as separate entities due to the physical differences that exist between them, a review of the existing literature appeared to suggest that identity and influence might be linked to both contexts. In other words, while it has been historically shown that an individual's perceived level of identity with an offline social group will subsequently affect the level of influence that the group has on the individual, it can be hypothesised that this will also extend to online social environments. As noted in the review of the literature, recent studies have indicated that for goods and services offered by other industries, online social networking and the formation of virtual communities and e-tribes has generated a growth in online global influence on consumers of all ages. In addition, the concepts of both self and social identity have been investigated in relation to these new online forums. Therefore, this hypothesis can be extended to include the influence that online social groups may have on consumers in the music industry. More specifically, social influence on such practices as the obtaining of and listening to recorded music, live music attendance, and the consumption of other music-related products and services.

Therefore, the existing literature appears to suggest that products and services offered by the music industry are implicit within the realms of hedonic consumption behaviours, self-identity, and social identity. This would especially appear to be the case due to the cultural impact of popular music, which has been shown to have a profound effect upon individuals in terms of image, identity, and the self, particularly amongst younger age groups of the population. Therefore, in line with the existing theories that have been constructed from previous studies, factors based on an individual's perception of their identity with both online and offline social groups, along with their perception of the groups' influence upon their behaviours appeared to warrant inclusion in the research design methodology of the thesis.

By reviewing the existing literature, it was recognised that individual consumers have differing levels of personal characteristics, such as levels of self-esteem and inter-personal susceptibility, the latter of which it can be argued may be used to define a form of general social influence, which may also determine the level of influence that an individual incurs from their online and offline groups.

By deriving from the literature review, it can be suggested that an individual may possess a certain number of social characteristics which may subsequently determine how influenced they are by social peers such as friends, family members, and significant others. For example, an individual's perception of how they are viewed by others, or the way in which they feel their consumption behaviours, attitudes, and practices will be received by others, may have a considerable impact upon the level of influence that offline and online social groups have on behavioural intentions. This may lead to implications for subsequent effects on consumers' attitudes, thoughts, feelings, opinions, beliefs, and, perhaps most importantly, their behaviours and practices surrounding music consumption and live music attendance.

In addition, it can also be considered that other factors relating to the individual may be present which may also affect or determine the amount of influence that offline or online social groups have on behavioural intentions. For example, it can be suggested that a consumer who possesses a greater level of self-esteem will rely less on the views of their social peers towards them and therefore not be as influenced by such parties, as opposed to an individual with lower levels of self-esteem potentially being more susceptible to how they are viewed by social peers. In the case of the thesis, it can be proposed that the views of social peers towards an individual may be influenced by the music consumption in which the individual engages, including their favourite artists and genres of music. This may subsequently lead to behavioural intentions surrounding the obtainment of recorded music and attendance at live music events.

There may also be present differing levels of inter-personal susceptibility in consumers. Arguably, this theoretical concept may act in a similar way to that of the level of self-esteem described previously, in that it may signify to a researcher much an individual feels they are capable of being influenced by others. Again, in this case, this would refer to both offline and online social group influence over music consumption and live music attendance. It can be suggested that inter-personal susceptibility may be linked to the factor of self-esteem, in that high levels of self-esteem in an individual may lead to them being less likely to be influenced by social peers due to a stronger sense of the self. In other words, the individual feels that they do not need to conform to the views or opinions of other people in their life, such as groups of social peers.

In relation to the thesis for example, it can be suggested that an individual with a high level of self-esteem may not be so inclined to listen to mainstream pop music in line with many of their fellow social peers, and may instead pursue music tastes and ideals that revolve around alternative genres such as heavy metal or punk rock. Conversely, it can be suggested that individuals with a low level of self-esteem may be more susceptible to the influences of social peers, perhaps due to them feeling a greater need to conform to similar music consumption tastes as their influential peers in order to 'fit in' with their offline or online social groups. As such, the individual would perhaps be more likely to conform to similar musical tastes, ideals, and cultural preferences as those of their offline or online social peers. In addition to the presence of factors unique to an individual that may determine levels of social influence, existing research has noted differences in levels of influence between offline and online groups on individual group members (Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008).

When bearing in mind an individual's own key characteristics such as self-esteem and inter-personal susceptibility, it was recognised that the level of group influence in either offline or online social contexts could also be dependent on other factors, such as the amount of time that an individual spends engaging and interacting with groups in each context. For example, it could be hypothesised that the level of online group influence would be higher for a 'heavy' user who spends a considerable amount of time engaged in online social networking. On the other hand, for a more casual user of online social networking the reverse may be true, due to the individual not spending as much time engaging in prolonged interactions with other online consumers. Likewise, it could also be hypothesised that in terms of the offline context, an individual who has a greater tendency to socialise with peers and other groups may be subject to a greater level of influence through increased 'physical' contact with others, and vice versa.

Crucially, however, it is apparent that for many individuals, a mixture of engagements and interactions in both offline and online social contexts may take place. It could also be suggested that some individuals may possess vastly different levels of engagement in the two different social contexts. For example, a person may interact with others in both contexts in roughly equal levels, or be heavily engaged in one context and not the other. For those individuals who do not engage in one of the social contexts very much,

there may still potentially be a significant amount of influence on a person's consumption behaviours, despite the individual not spending a considerable amount of time socialising in such a manner. However, this may not be necessarily true for all consumers, and may again rely on other factors such as individuals' personal characteristics pertaining to self-esteem and interpersonal-susceptibility. In addition, the potential mixture of offline and online social group influences may also make it difficult for researchers to measure the main source of influence effectively.

At this point, potential difficulties in conducting such a research study can already be suggested. For example, it may be difficult for a survey participant to perceive whether their offline social groups are more influential than their online social groups, or vice versa. In a general sense, it could also be considered difficult for participants to determine precisely how influential an offline or online social group is on their music consumption behaviours, as well as their live music attendance. It can also be suggested that in the modern-day music environment, consumers could in fact rely less on personal communications with members of either their offline or online social peer groups. For example, individuals could perhaps decide instead to explore the Internet themselves in order to fulfil hedonic gratification and entertainment needs by searching for information on particular artists and live music events. It can be noted that such methods of exploring the Internet for information may still involve a reliance on other consumers' reviews and recommendations, and therefore could be considered a form of social influence on an individual.

It can also be suggested that other online consumers may consist of pre-existing contacts in an offline context, as well as 'strangers' with whom no offline relationship exists. Arguably, this form of online influence could be considered as being far less personal due to two possible factors. Firstly, that such online interaction does not possess the 'face-to-face' element that symbolises much of social networking in the offline environment. This may be applied to many forms of online communication, such as personal messaging or more public discussions such as those found in online forums and chat rooms. Secondly, public online communications that include reviews by others may be perceived as being more impersonal than those provided directly to individuals by fellow consumers through such interactions as Facebook messaging and direct posts to individuals in virtual community forums that feature personal

recommendations and reviews. In either case, these types of recommendations and reviews about music, artists, or live events and festivals may differ from those produced by more commercially orientated Internet sources, which may not involve any interactions with consumers.

Therefore, in terms of music consumption, online recommendations from fellow consumers may have a notable impact. For example, recommendations from a friend or online peer of a website that sells items such as recorded music, music-related merchandise, live music event tickets, or even just information about music artists may assist in creating influence upon an individual's music consumption and live music attendance. It can be suggested that online word of mouth about music artists may also provide a form of social influence on music consumption behaviours and practices.

Hence, it can be hypothesised that data collection will yield results which indicate that participants who possess differing levels of self-esteem or inter-personal susceptibility will also perceive themselves to be under different levels of influence from online and offline social peer groups. Thus, it is also hypothesised that general levels of social influence susceptibility will also be a significant factor in determining levels of influence of online and offline social networking groups in terms of live music attendance and music consumption. In addition, the level of personal-ness that is associated with each type of social environment is also a factor that may be worthy of consideration in the research design methodology of the survey. This is due to the fact that it is theorised some individuals may find that an environment in which they can be more personal with other social group members, such as the physical or face-to-face context in which offline socialising takes place, may be more influential to them in terms of music consumption and live music attendance. On the other hand, there is still the possibility that some consumers may feel more comfortable with online social networking, and hence be more influenced by online social groups in this context; perhaps even citing that online networking can be as personable, if not more so, than offline networking.

The importance of mobile phone technologies to music consumption behaviours and practices, as well as the music industry as a whole, should also be noted. In direct relation to online social networking, these technologies can be viewed as being essential

to the growth of such networking practices. For example, as well as enabling personal communications such as mobile phone calls and text messaging services, the rise of 'smart' phones have enabled consumers to access the Internet, and hence online social networking services, at all times.

Finally, it would appear from the existing literature that both offline and online social peer groups play important roles in consumers' lives, and this extends to the field of music consumption. However, while previous studies have focused on social interactions between peer groups in offline and online contexts, there appears to be a lack of research on this topic within the field of music consumption behaviour. Yet online social interactions between peer group members that revolve around music, artists, live events, festivals, and music-related merchandise are seemingly important in consumers' subsequent music consumption behaviours, including elements of that consumption such as live music attendance. Further to this, it has been noted from a review of the existing literature that no comparative studies between offline and online groups in a music consumption-specific context have been conducted. More specifically, research has yet to be carried out on a comparison between offline and online social group influence on music consumption behaviours relating to live music attendance. Therefore, an offline 'versus' online comparison study is required to fill the perceived gap in music consumption knowledge. This presents a potential difficulty in identifying whether offline or online social group influence is more significant in the modern-day music consumption environment. For example, as well as general music consumption, group influence upon key consumption activities within the industry such as live music attendance may also be difficult to predict.

However, as established in the literature review, in recent years live music attendance in particular has become of even greater significance to the music industry. In light of live music events and festivals representing a significant area of potential profit in the face of a rapid decline in the purchasing of recorded music, as initially spearheaded by mass piracy in the first decade of the 21st Century, it was identified that further research on modern-day consumption in this field was required. More specifically, research was needed into how influential the newer online social platforms are on consumers' behaviours in relation to live music attendance. As well as studying the influence of online social networks, a comparison with the more 'traditional' offline means of social

engagement and group influence will also be required. This would enable a comparison between the two social contexts and any similarities or differences in levels of influence. It was also envisaged that such a study would greatly assist managers of record companies and other organisations within the music industry, in terms of identifying the roles that each context may play in modern-day music consumption and live music attendance.

2.6 Literature Review Summary

The literature review presented the thesis with several potential elements for inclusion in a study that is examining the concepts of self-identity, social group identity, and social influence theory.

As can be derived from the literature review, comparisons between offline and online social networking groups have not been greatly researched until this point, particularly in terms of music consumption behaviours that have been the focus of very little research. Hence, this provided a gap in knowledge that the study aimed to fill. As little previous research appeared to have been conducted on this topic, it was determined that the study would benefit from an exploratory qualitative phase. This was to be conducted prior to the main data collection stage, with research hypotheses in the main study being derived from the existing theories discussed in the literature review.

Previous research has inherently described social influence as emanating from group membership. This was a notion that was of crucial importance to the study, as it can be applied to music consumption theory by means of individuals obtaining music and attending live events to assist in the creation of their identity. This identity can then be used to encourage membership of a music-related social group. While this theory can be applied to a group located in either offline or online contexts, of particular interest to the study was the theory's application in terms of online virtual communities. This was especially in the context of not just how various individuals behave within the groups, but also how the groups affected individuals' own consumption behaviours. Therefore, it was the two-way interactions that occur in such social groups that were of primary

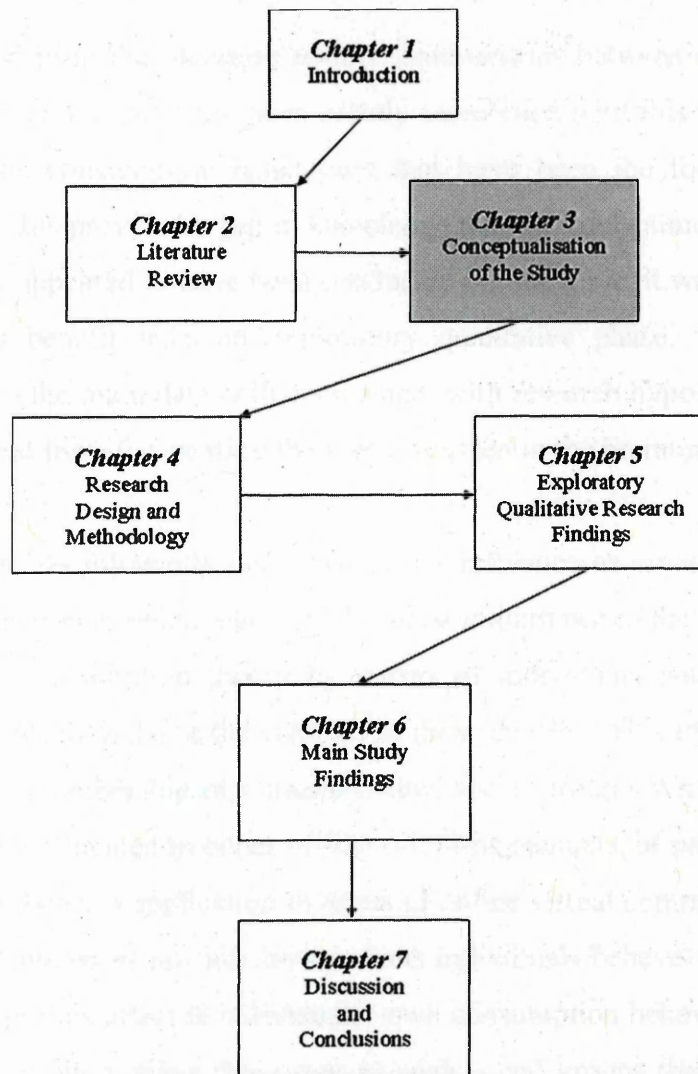
interest to the study. The rise and continued development of the Internet and social networking platforms appeared to provide a fertile ground for the exploration of issues that have previously only been researched in offline contexts.

It was with all of these factors in mind that two stages of data collection for the thesis were conceived. This will be discussed further in the next chapter that details the conceptualisation of the study.

Chapter 3: Conceptualisation of the Study

3.1 Introduction

The conceptualisation of the study was developed in line with the discussions that took place in the literature review, particularly in reference to previous studies in the field of music consumption, online social networking, self-identity, social group identity, and social influence. This chapter discusses how the conceptualisation of the study was developed, including how the research hypotheses for the study were formed.



Whilst previous studies have dealt with engagement in both offline and online social environments (Livingstone, 2008), there is currently no research that explores this topic in relation to online music consumption and identity. However, while anthropological issues concerning online identity have been examined by existing literature, it has yet to be ascertained how consumers acquire identity through the online sharing of musical interests. Therefore, this thesis seeks to contribute to theory development in relation to the links between online communities, music consumption and identity formation. The thesis also draws on the work of Larsen *et al.* (2009) by attempting to extend the situational context in which music consumption can be used to communicate symbolic meaning to that of social interactions within the online environment.

The study was conceptualised by the identification of research gaps through a literature review on the field of music consumption, in association with relevant existing theories of social networking, identity formation, and group influence. Once apparent gaps in research had been identified, it was possible to define research questions. In addition, by considering the indications of the literature review, it was possible to hypothesise the results of an investigation into the influence of online social networking on music consumption behaviours and practices.

Previous studies on music consumption and identity have indicated that music consumption behaviours and practices such as live music attendance may be important in the construction or development of self-identity and social group identity. Other studies have focused on an individual's music consumption behaviours and the potential of being affected by social influence from other consumers. However, while these aspects of previous research on music consumption behaviour have been studied separately, there appeared to be a lack of studies that attempted to combine the various strands of the existing theories together. In addition, there appeared to be little research on these factors of identity and influence in the context of online social environments, particularly in terms of music consumption behaviour. As a result, research questions and conceptual models were developed in order to provide both a basis and framework for the conceptualisation of the study. The research questions, as well as the particular features of the two proposed conceptual models and the subsequent research hypotheses, are discussed in this chapter.

It was the intention of the study to primarily concentrate on behaviours surrounding both live music attendance and the sharing of live music experiences with social group peers. This included 'one-off' live music events, an event on an artist's tour, or a dedicated music festival that may last several days. However, it was also intended that some additional questions would be asked in regards to other related behaviours and practices, such as the consumption of both music itself and related products such as merchandise. These were included with the aim of providing further points on which to compare data findings, as well as potentially highlight any further differences in social group influence on live music consumption behaviours in both offline and online contexts.

Based upon these concepts, it was felt that the main purpose of the exploratory qualitative research was to investigate to a deeper level the potential experiences, effects, and emotions that may be present in a person who is engaged in music consumption; whether it be through the use of music and related products, or attending live music events. In addition, the literature review was developed with the aim of informing both studies conducted for the thesis, in terms of content and questions. This review proved especially valuable as the first study was primarily an exploratory one aimed to establish the key critical issues which appeared to be involved in the behaviours of modern-day music consumers.

The thesis proceeded by attempting to develop new theories regarding social networking and music consumption by conducting a follow-up study. The findings of the exploratory qualitative research were thus used to inform the design of the main quantitative data collection of the thesis, as the results were also used to provide a cross-comparison of the two types of data collection. This was with the aim to provide the thesis with conclusions that may either support or complement each other. In addition to provide a complete picture of not just the types of behaviours being exhibited by consumers in this field, but also the extent to which other individuals may provide either an offline or online social group influence on a consumer.

The main study incorporated a quantitative data collection methodology, the results of which indicted the significant predictors of social group influence on individuals' perceptions of their behaviours within the realms of music consumption and live music

attendance. The literature review was subsequently used to provide both a background and a means with which to compare the findings of the main study with established theories and knowledge. Therefore the discussions surrounding the existing theories in related areas of music consumption can be deemed as being necessary and critical in comparing and validating the findings of both the data collections undertaken for the thesis, and hence also the contribution to knowledge which the thesis makes.

3.2 Research Questions

Two research questions were considered by the thesis. The first question, which formed the basis of an explorative qualitative research study, concentrated on the consumption of music and related products, services, and merchandise; as well as live music consumption in the form of attendance at events and festivals. Therefore, the research question for the initial phase of the study aimed to provide an exploratory investigation of the nature of online discussions in the areas of consumption behaviour investigated by the literature review, and was expressed as follows:

Which of the concepts identified in the literature review can be associated with online discussions surrounding music consumption?

The findings of the explorative qualitative research were used to inform the design of the main quantitative data collection of the study, as well as to provide a cross-comparison of the two types of data collection. In doing so, the thesis attempted to provide a complete picture of not just the types of behaviours exhibited by consumers in online discussions surrounding music consumption; but also the extent to which individuals are influenced by such discussions, in comparison to those taking place in offline social environments.

The main study concentrated on live music consumption behaviours, and the level of influence of fellow social group members in both offline and online capacities on

associated behavioural intentions. Therefore, the research question for the main study is expressed as follows:

Which of the concepts identified in the literature review are significant predictors for (a) intention to attend live music, and (b) intention to share experiences of live music?

Based upon this research question, conceptual models for the main study were developed. These models were constructed via an examination of the previous literature reviewed for the thesis, in conjunction with the findings of the initial exploratory data collection. The factors contained within the models are discussed in the following section.

3.3 Conceptual Model Factors

Upon consulting the existing literature regarding music consumption in relation to the Internet, as well as conducting an initial investigation into modern-day music consumption behaviours, the following factors were established for testing in the conceptual models of the study.

3.3.1 Self-identity

The literature review examined both individual and collective forms of identity, which can be associated with music consumption, hence both the conceptual models for the quantitative study and the hypotheses required the inclusion of both these forms of identity; particularly when considering the thesis' aim of investigating differences in music and social networking influence in both online and offline contexts. In order to examine music consumers' perceptions of their social groups' influence (in both offline and online contexts) upon their behaviours and practices, it was necessary to incorporate hypotheses regarding both their general levels of social influence (or their interpersonal

susceptibility) and their perceived levels of social influence in regards to aspects of music consumption. These aspects of consumption included the purchasing or obtaining music and related merchandise, as well as attendance at live music events and festivals which may form critical parts of music consumption (Shankar *et al.*, 2009).

In addition to hypotheses, which aimed to investigate self-identity and social influence through questions and scales designed to measure general interpersonal susceptibility and perceptions of social influence upon music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices, it was recognised that the nature of both the quantitative study and the overall thesis required hypotheses which further elaborated upon potential differences in online and offline social environments between the survey participants' levels of both identity with their social groups in each environment and their perceived influence upon their music consumption behaviours and live music attendance. Hence, hypotheses on both offline and online social group identity and influence were also included, in an attempt to investigate what differences may lay between the different contextual types of social groups.

As previously discussed, literature relating to these factors within the realms of music consumption behaviour and live attendance practices appears to be non-existent; with the lack of previous studies providing a gap in research, which this study attempted to fill. Therefore when conceptualising the main quantitative study, and was again based on the literature review and the findings of the exploratory qualitative data collection, the inclusion of potential factors such as these were deemed to be of necessity to the study; hence their inclusion as potential predictor variables in the conceptual models for the study.

As already established, research has been conducted on such aspects of online social networking as the use of platforms such as MySpace and Facebook (Livingstone, 2008), blogs, chat rooms, and other discussion forums (Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008; Pempek *et al.*, 2009), and the creation and use of virtual communities that surround music consumption (Salavuo, 2006). While it can be noted that there are some obvious differences between communicating in an offline (physical) social environment and an online (virtual) environment, there also appears to be a considerable amount of commonality and overlap between the theories surrounding the two contexts. In

addition, previous studies of the virtual environment have appeared to concentrate on consumers' use of online profiles, which could be used either consciously or unconsciously by consumers to reflect their notion of their 'self', or their identity. This includes the use of both online music communities and non-music specific social networking platforms and websites that have been established to facilitate and encourage online discussions revolving around music consumption, amongst a wide range of topics. As established by the literature review, it can be argued that music is one of the major entertainment products that is frequently discussed in an online capacity through the Internet, with the Internet itself often acting as a central hub for hedonic gratification, recreation, and leisure pursuits.

As such, self-identity was deemed to be an important component in the quantitative study that was being conducted for the thesis. As the concept of self-identity in the case of this particular study extended exclusively towards the field of music consumption, it was represented in the conceptualisation of the study as 'music identity' in order to reflect the use of music consumption as an extension of the self. Therefore, based upon the existing literature, the following research hypotheses for the main study were established.

H1a/b Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline/online group.

H2a/b Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline/online group.

H3a/b Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline/online group.

The music identity factor can be considered as being an 'individual' factor that examines the importance of music consumption to an individual's own perception of their self, for example in a similar way to which one may self-categorise themselves (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). In reference to the identification in the literature review of other

potentially significant concepts, these were recognised as being of a more 'collective' nature. In other words, the potential influence of other factors driven by social group identity and other forms of social influence are based on collective identity drawn from other consumers. These collective social influences and group identities are discussed below.

3.3.2 Social Influence

Existing literature has concentrated on identity and social influences on music consumption by other people such as friends, family, and fellow peer group members (Frith, 1996; Shankar, 2000; Hogg & Banister, 2001; Nuttall & Tinson, 2008). The review has also established that this is especially the case amongst younger consumers such as adolescents, teenagers, and young adults, and their interactions with other important people in their lives (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Havlena & Holak, 1991; North & Hargreaves, 1999; North *et al.*, 2000; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Schindler & Holbrook, 2003a; Nuttall & Tinson, 2008; Nuttall, 2009).

As a result, the factor of social influence can be conceptualised as an individual's tendency to rely on information and amount of time spent discussing brands with other consumers, or social peer experiences (Bearden *et al.*, 1989). This also represents a 'two-way' direction of influence and a belief in sharing knowledge (Lumpkin, 1985). In addition, social influence on consumption behaviours can be subject to opinion leadership by certain members of social groups who exert a particular influence through advanced knowledge of related products or services (Lumpkin, 1985), and particularly in music consumption, can be dominated by tastemakers who tend to introduce new music to group members (Stein-Sacks, 2006). Further to this, the importance of perceptions of other consumers has been established in terms of involvement and engagement with social groups, consciousness, and opinion leaders or tastemakers (Lastovicka & Gardner, 1979).

When examining literature regarding identity and social influence in the offline context, it was possible to explore the different theories attributed to different forms of offline communications, identity formation, and social influence. However, these factors have

not been fully examined in terms of music consumption behaviours stemming from online interactions, hence providing scope for a study that compares the significance of social influences with those of offline interactions. In addition, the mixing of offline and online social networking engagements and interactions, as enabled by mobile phone technology such as 'smart' phones that can provide a consumer with Internet access at any time in a multitude of geographical locations, also appears to be of importance to the thesis. The potential portability and convenience offered by these devices means that consumers could access the Internet and online social networking platforms whilst simultaneously engaging and interacting in offline networking. Hence, there may be a certain level of mixing or cross-over between offline and online social networking. For example, engagements and interactions may begin in one social networking context and continue in another.

Therefore, it can be suggested that these mixtures of offline and online interactions, whether they be short-term conversations or longer-term discussions, may both provide a social group influence on an individual's music consumption behaviours. As such, it was proposed that both offline and online social contexts may also provide sources of influence on consumers' live music attendance. More specifically, this includes potential influences that may be found in recommendations of recorded music, artists, and live music events. This latter category can range from recommendations about 'stand-alone' events to those about multi-day festivals, which may encourage consumers to attend similar future events. Social influences may also have the potential to affect a consumer's willingness to share their own experiences with others through narratives or stories, aspects of which may portray positive or negative experiences.

While existing research has considered the role of such influences in an offline context, previous studies do not appear to have considered the implications of online influences on music consumption, particularly in terms of effects upon live music attendance. It can also be argued that some of these notions are deemed to be even more important in the case of music consumption theories and related behaviours and practices, when considering the social and cultural impact that popular music has, and continues to make, to past and current generations of the population. Therefore, the transfer of many of the traditional aspects of being a music consumer in a given social context from the offline to the online environment would seem to imply that while the two methods of

communication with others appear to be very different in terms of a physical sense, there are in fact considerable similarities between the two contexts. Therefore, hypotheses for the offline and online elements of the study will reflect each other, in that they will all assume that significant influences will be present in all cases. This will enable a full comparison between the offline and online conceptual models for the study, and will aid in the subsequent discussions and conclusions of the thesis.

As such, social influence was deemed to be an important component in the quantitative study that was being conducted for the thesis. Therefore, based upon the existing literature, the following research hypotheses for the main study were established.

H4a/b Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline/online group.

H5a/b Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline/online group.

H6a/b Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline/online group.

3.3.3 Social Group Identity

From the literature review, it can be suggested that a study of factors such as identity and influence within the two different social contexts would produce similar outcomes in terms of behavioural intentions. It can also be suggested that there may still be significant differences between the ways in which social group identity and influence manifest themselves in either an offline or an online context. In other words, it is still possible that consumers may behave differently when engaging and interacting with social peers and other people in the different contexts; particularly as the offline environment can still possess more physical cues for social identity, such as the clothes that an individual is wearing and the records that they are seen to own. In the context of

music consumption, these may form important considerations for the construction of one's self and social identity, as well as an individual's social identity through music as viewed by other members of their peer group and other notable people in their lives. This is in line with existing literature surrounding group membership (Greene, 1999).

Some of these constructs of social group identity and influence may also be present in the online environment, due to the lack of physicality and the variance in attitudes towards online social networking that previous research has indicated (Gangadharbatla, 2008). It can be suggested that differences between consumers' perceptions of their sense of identity from and with their online social groups, as well as the influence that they feel they have from the group may still exist. While this scenario could be claimed in general terms for a multitude of goods and services from a variety of industries, it is also suggested that the processes surrounding the field of music consumption may be even more affected due to music's cultural values which may increase both consumers' need for identity and the influence of social peer groups, particularly amongst younger members of the population (Livingstone, 2008).

It can be argued that it is difficult to accurately measure the levels of social influence from online environments on music consumption behaviours, in comparison to those in offline contexts. For example, identity with online groups may differ greatly across the various types of online social platforms available to consumers, as well as online group identity potentially being of a different level to that of identity with offline social groups. In addition, there are other considerations in terms of consumers' networks of friends, peers, or other members of their social groups which may relate to their other online networks (such as through instant messaging services) and offline networks (Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2008; Pempek *et al.*, 2009). However, it is these issues that the thesis seeks to address. Therefore, identity with the group was required to be split into separate factors for offline group identity and online group identity. It was also realised that the role of group identity could also be used as a mediating factor in the conceptual models, which would provide further results with which to analyse the data and compare the findings for the different models.

As such, social group identity was deemed to be an important component in the quantitative study that was being conducted for the thesis. Therefore, based upon the

existing literature, the following research hypotheses for the main study were established.

Based upon actual attendance at live music events due to the influence of a fellow social group member with who a consumer identifies, the following hypothesis represented a behavioural intention based upon the recommendations of others.

H7a/b The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline/online group.

Based upon the likelihood of a consumer to share their live music experiences with other social group members with who they identify, the following hypothesis represented a behavioural intention based upon word of mouth with other consumers.

H8a/b The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline/online group.

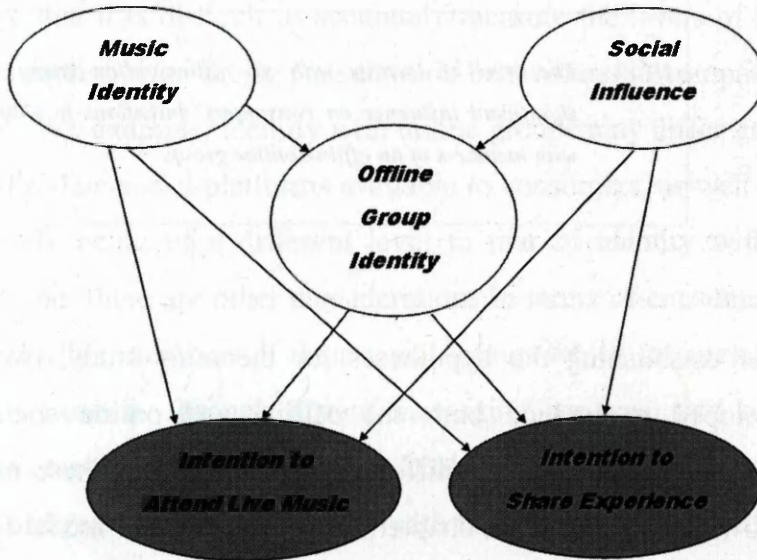
After establishing the hypotheses for the main study, two conceptual models were developed to include both the offline and online social contexts and to draw comparisons between the differing environments. These models are presented in the following sections of the chapter, beginning with the model for the offline context.

3.4 Conceptual Model: Offline Groups

The conceptual models for the main study are illustrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, beginning with a model for the offline social contexts and environments that the study examined.

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, there were three hypothesised predictors relating to offline group influence on behavioural intentions associated with live music consumption such as attendance and the sharing of live reviews offline. As derived from a review of the relevant literature in the field, these factors represented a consumer's individual sense of identity (music identity); individual's susceptibility to others in terms of music consumption (social influence); and the level at which an individual identifies with their offline groups.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual model for offline groups



As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the hypothesised predictors of influence for offline social group influence on music consumption and live music attendance consisted of four potential factors. As derived from a review of the relevant literature in the field, these factors represented a consumer's individual sense of identity, (based on social and self-identity); individual susceptibility to others in terms of music consumption and live

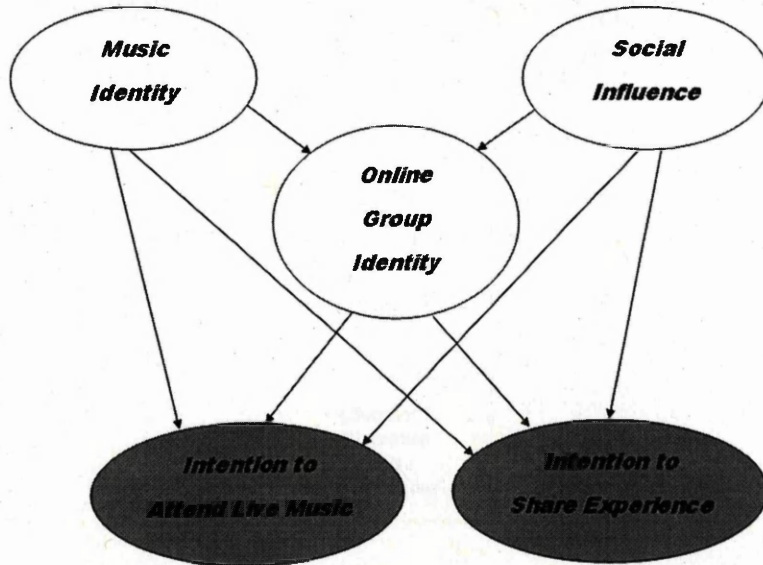
music attendance behaviours; the level at which an individual identifies with their offline social groups; and individual's perception of how much their offline groups influence them in relation to these music consumption behaviours.

3.5 Conceptual Model: Online Groups

A similar model is presented in Figure 3.2 for the online social contexts and environments examined by the study.

As can be seen in Figure 3.2, there were three hypothesised predictors relating to online group influence on behavioural intentions associated with live music consumption such as attendance and the sharing of live reviews online. As derived from a review of the relevant literature in the field, these factors represented a consumer's individual sense of identity (music identity); individual's susceptibility to others in terms of music consumption (social influence); and the level at which an individual identifies with their online groups.

Figure 3.2: Conceptual model for online groups



As can be seen in Figure 3.2, the hypothesised predictors of influence for online social group influence on music consumption and live music attendance also consisted of four potential factors. As derived from a review of the relevant literature in the field, these factors again represented a consumer's individual sense of identity, (based on social and self-identity); individual susceptibility to others in terms of music consumption and live music attendance behaviours; the level at which an individual identifies with their online social groups; and individual's perception of how much their online groups influence them in relation to these music consumption behaviours.

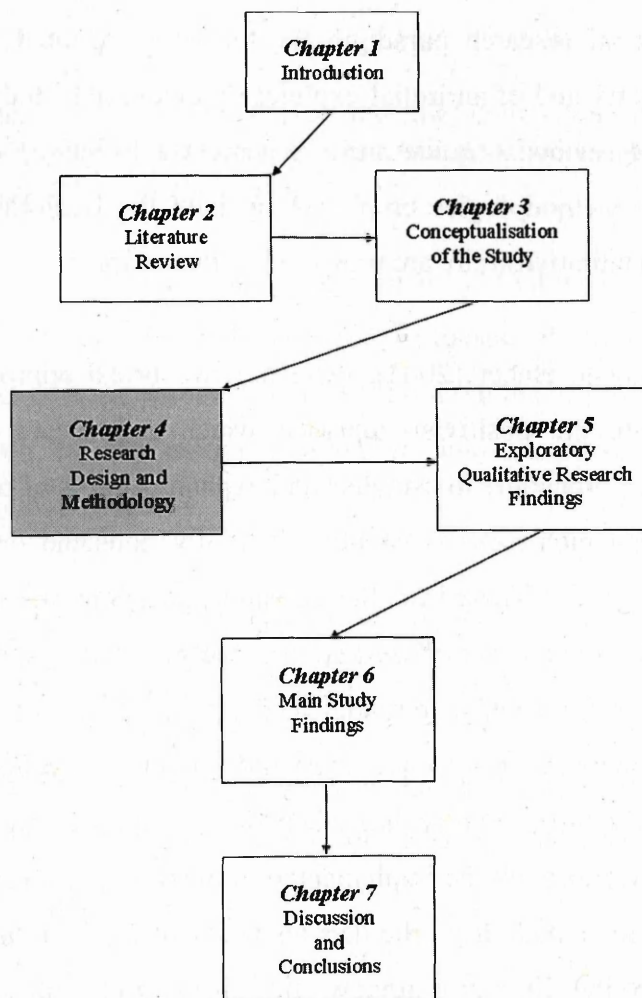
3.6 Chapter Summary

Based upon the conceptualisation of the study, and in particular the research hypotheses and preceding conceptual models, the research design was developed. The overall research paradigm and approach is discussed in the next chapter, along with the research methodology employed by the study.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research design and methodology employed by the study, including both the theoretical implications of using such methodology and the practical issues considered and encountered in carrying out the data collection.



4.2 Research Design

The research design was developed in line with the conceptualisation of the study that took place in Chapter 3, as well as the approach of the main study being informed to a degree by the findings of an initial exploratory qualitative research study. This chapter discusses how the research design of the thesis was developed, and also considers alternative approaches which may have been employed.

4.2.1 Research Paradigm

The overall research paradigm for the study adopted a 'mixed' methods approach, which consisted of an initial exploratory qualitative study used in conjunction with the literature review to guide and supplement a follow-up quantitative study. The exact research methodologies employed by both the exploratory qualitative study and the main quantitative study are presented in this chapter.

According to Baker (2003), there are two broad approaches to conducting research, which are the positivist approach which emphasises an inductive or hypothetico-deductive procedure to establish and explain patterns of behaviour, and the interpretivist approach which seeks to establish the motivations and actions that lead to these patterns of behaviour. Therefore, the research paradigm for the study was also of mixed methods in regards to these two approaches. The qualitative research phase included the use of interpretive research techniques, due to the exploratory nature of a study being conducted in a subject area that was identified by the literature review as being one where little research has taken place. Upon creating tentative theories that were established through the implementation of the initial research phase of the study and the observations made from the data analysis, in conjunction with the discussions that took place in the literature review, the main study subsequently took a hypothetico-deductive, or positivist, approach which attempted to elaborate further upon the theories. This was done by attempting to measure the effect of the various theories identified in the literature review as being potential factors in both offline and online social group influence on music consumption behaviours.

4.3 Research Approach

In consideration of the different methodological processes that could have been adopted by the study, Blaikie (2000) identified four main research methodologies; namely those of *inductive*, *deductive*, *retroductive*, and *abductive* approaches. The *inductive* research approach, as adopted by the exploratory qualitative research phase of the study, involves the meticulous and objective observation and measurement of data, along with the careful and accurate analysis of it in order to produce scientific discoveries (Blaikie, 2000). The *deductive* research approach on the other hand, as employed in the research methodology of the main quantitative study, was defined by Baker (2003, p.124) as involving:

“...the statement of a hypothesis and the conclusion drawn from it, the collection of appropriate data to test the conclusion and the rejection or corroboration of the conclusion.”

The other two methodological approaches identified by Blaikie (2000) were not deemed suitable for either of the studies conducted for the thesis. While *retroductive* research strategy also begins with an observed regularity, it attempts to discover a different type of explanation, with the explanation required in this case being defined by Blaikie (2000, p.25) as being achieved by:

“...locating the real underlying structure or mechanism that is responsible for producing the observed regularity...*Retroduction* uses creative imagination and analogy to work back from data to an explanation.”

Meanwhile, the *abductive* approach is more associated with a range of interpretivistic approaches, which are suited more particularly to the social sciences; hence the idea behind the methodological approach:

“...refers to the process used to generate social scientific accounts from social actors' accounts for deriving technical concepts and theories from lay concepts and interpretations of social life” (Blaikie, 2000, p.114).

However, in line with the nature of a mixed-methods study which intended to supplement the findings of a quantitative study with those of exploratory qualitative research, the more straight-forward methods offered by the *inductive* and *deductive* approaches were deemed more suitable for the exploratory qualitative research and the main quantitative study respectively. In particular, due to the lack of previous research in the relevant areas of music consumption behaviour, a case was made for the inclusion of an exploratory study to inform and supplement the main quantitative data collection.

4.3.1 Exploratory Qualitative Research

The use of an ethnographic approach was felt to be useful in conducting an initial exploration into the thoughts and feelings of individuals who engage in music consumption. In this case, this involved consumers who are engaged in online social networking in relation to music and associated products, as well as live music attendance. Baker (2003, p.160) referred to grounded theory when considering ethnographic studies, and felt that:

“When discussing the basic difference between a positivistic or interpretivistic (Phenomenological) approach to research, grounded theory was identified as an example of the latter with theory evolving from observation of a phenomenon. Such theorising might be limited to a specific relationship – a substantive theory – or be generalised to embrace a class of relationships through the statement of a general theory.”

As such, a webnography methodology was employed for the exploratory research, particularly as this is a form of research that can be used to examine the behaviours of individuals who are highly-involved in online discussions surrounding their music consumption behaviours and live music attendance. Baker (2003) also considered that in its purest application, grounded theory consists of a means with which to try and make completely unstructured observations in which the researcher begins the study with no pre-conceived ideas about the object or person under examination. Rather, under grounded theory, information is simply recorded as it emerges from the study, with the aim then being for theory to emerge from a systematic analysis of the data collected from the observations. As epitomised by Baker (2003, p.160):

“In essence, the grounded theory approach to analysis seeks to tease out and define underlying relationships through an inductive and intuitive interpretation of the data. In contrast the alternative approach adopts a deductive interpretation by seeking to convert qualitative data into quantified data by means of content analysis which may be regarded as an attempt to introduce objectivity into subjective data by examining the frequency with which events or facts occur and then developing and testing hypotheses about these associations. In other words, grounded theory seeks to derive structure through the analysis of non-standardised data, while surveys define a structure and collect standardised data to enable the testing of hypotheses on which the structure is founded.”

Therefore, aspects of grounded theory also formed the basis of the research strategy behind the exploratory phase of the study. However, the grounded theory used was not highly structured or systematic in nature, due to the time constraints encountered in conducting the research. As such, this approach was found to be more suited to the exploratory research phase of the study.

4.3.2 Main Quantitative Study

As stated previously, the thesis involved the combination of two studies, the findings from which were both used to inform the subsequent discussions and conclusions of the thesis. These were formed through both inductive and deductive reasoning processes, with the initial exploratory qualitative data collection using an ethnographical approach which attempted to investigate the social and symbolic areas of music consumption through consumers' discussions with each other in online environments.

Having established the groundwork of the thesis via the conduction of the literature review, the findings of the exploratory qualitative research were also used to build upon the theories contained within the review. This assisted in the creation of a deductive reasoning process for the main quantitative study. While the inductive reasoning process used in the preceding qualitative research was particularly suited to an initial exploration of the field of research in question, a deductive reasoning allows the process to reach a logical scientific conclusion. Therefore, the main study subsequently attempted to quantify the findings of the thesis by examining more closely the predictors of social group influence in both offline and online contexts.

The inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies was also important on several counts. The use of a mixed-method approach provides a more balanced approach to data collection, as well as enabling the use of the differing methodologies to compare and validate the findings from each. In the case of this particular thesis, this involved an examination of the findings from the qualitative methodology employed by the use of webnography with the quantitative data collection undertaken by an online survey. The use of both qualitative and quantitative studies in the thesis, as opposed to multiple forms of just qualitative or just quantitative research methodologies, was also deemed to be critical in establishing a true mixed-methods approach which would allow a cross-comparison of the different types of data and therefore a means of validating the findings of each study. In addition, the qualitative findings can be used to supplement the findings of the quantitative study, by providing a discussion on the actual types of music consumption behaviours that self-identity, social influence, and group identity may affect. Finally, the findings from the two types of data collection can also be compared with the literature review in order to more fully analyse the results with the theories established by previous studies.

In line with the research paradigm and approach taken, the following sections of the chapter discuss the methodology employed by both the exploratory qualitative research and the main study which quantitatively tested the conceptual models and hypotheses.

4.4 Exploratory Qualitative Research

The concept of the exploratory research was to examine social interactions, based upon music consumption and live music attendance, between online group members through a qualitative method that consisted of a webnography data collection. Some general themes were identified and distinguished from this data, and these are discussed in more depth in the discussions and conclusions of the thesis in chapter 7.

4.4.1 Research Question

The qualitative research primarily concentrated on two areas of music consumption behaviour, namely that of the consumption of music itself and related products, services, and merchandise; while the other area of study was that of live music attendance and practices. The qualitative research aimed to provide an exploratory investigation of the nature of online discussions in these areas of consumption behaviour, and a reminder of the research question for the study is presented below.

Which of the concepts identified in the literature review can be associated with online discussions surrounding music consumption?

It was with this research question in mind that the aims and objectives of the qualitative research were developed.

4.4.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this part of the study was to provide explorative qualitative research, which could be used to conduct an initial investigation into the topic, as outlined in the introductory chapter and the literature review. Therefore, the objective of the study was to make use of online research methods to directly investigate online social networking platforms and forums in relation to the fields of music consumption and live music attendance, with a view to collecting initial data on the uses of the platforms and the discussions which take place in such online environments. The study was conducted with the intention to compare the online and offline environments in which consumers' interactions with each other surrounding their music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices take place, in line with the overall aims and objectives of the thesis. In other words, the study was undertaken in order to investigate the differences between the two environments and the potential roles of social group influence in each.

The research aims and objectives of the qualitative research were as follows:

- 1) *To discover the views and opinions of modern-day music consumers in relation to their behaviours surrounding general music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices.*
- 2) *To identify the ways in which online social networking technology has facilitated consumers' discussions surrounding both general music consumption and live music attendance, with a view to developing a further quantitative study which measures the influence of such online discussions.*

4.5 Interpretive Research

As this study intended to provide exploratory findings in this field and to subsequently build theories, an interpretivist research paradigm was used which attempted to derive theory about the phenomenon of interest by observing data collection. Interpretive research assumes that the reality of social environments is not singular or objective, but rather, is shaped by both human experiences and social contexts as found in ontology (or the study of being and existence), and is therefore examined best within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants through epistemological groundings (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The philosophical assumptions of both ontology and epistemology have been identified as being fundamental in the study of social phenomena (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Ontology refers to researchers' assumptions about how they see the world, and whether the world consists mainly of social order or constant change, while epistemology concerns researchers' assumptions surrounding the best ways in which to study the world (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Epistemology in particular refers to whether social reality should be studied in an objective or subjective manner.

When conducting interpretive research, it is important to note that social reality is viewed as being embedded within, and therefore impossible to abstract from, their social settings. In other words, social reality is interpreted through a 'sense-making' process, as opposed to a hypothesis-testing process. The interpretive research paradigm can be compared to other paradigms such as those of a positivist or functionalist nature, which may assume that reality is relatively independent of context, is capable of being abstracted from their given contexts, and can be examined in a decomposable functional manner by using objective techniques, including standardised measures (Bhattacharjee, 2012). When deciding whether to engage in interpretive or positivist research, it is dependent upon the paradigmatic considerations which may relate to the nature of the phenomenon which is under consideration and the most suitable way in which it can be examined (Cova & Elliott, 2008).

While coded qualitative data can be quantitatively tabulated in terms of frequencies of codes, it has been claimed that many puritan interpretive researchers reject this form of coding approach as potentially being a futile effort to seek consensus, or even objectivity, in a social phenomenon which is essentially subjective. (Bhattacharjee, 2012). However, on the other hand, it has also been identified quantitative data may assist by providing more precision and potentially a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of interest than can be provided by qualitative data (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Methodology literature has suggested that interpretive research should involve both qualitative and quantitative data collection, which pertains to the phenomenon of interest, with this joint use of data leading to the possible generation of unique insights (Baker, 2003). Interpretive research involves the use of a theoretical sampling strategy whereby study sites, participants, cases need to be selected. These selections are based upon theoretical considerations and whether they fit in the phenomenon being examined, as well as whether the selections possess certain characteristics that make them uniquely suited for the study (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Established research methodology has also indicated that while it is generally acceptable to use both convenience sampling and small samples in interpretive research, dependent upon a fit with both the nature and purpose of the intended study, it is not acceptable to use such methods in positivist research (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The role of the researcher in the conduction of interpretive research has been established as being of critical importance. When engaging in exploratory methods associated with ethnography, action research, and participant observation, the researcher effectively becomes part of the social phenomenon being examined (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Therefore, the specific role and involvement of the researcher in the overall research process must be considered, particularly during the course of data analysis. In addition, other methods such as case research require the participating researcher must take a 'neutral' or unbiased stance during both the data collection and the subsequent analysis stage, in order to ensure that an attempt at objectivity is maintained. This can be achieved by the researcher ensuring that their personal biases or preconceptions do not taint the nature of the subjective inferences that may be extracted by the interpretive research process. However, a potential benefit of using a positive research paradigm is that the researcher would have been considered as being external to and independent of the context that is being studied, and therefore, is not presumed to be biased towards either the data collection process or the analytic procedures (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Interpretive research has also been described as being holistic and contextual, as opposed to being based upon reductionist and isolationist processes. For example, interpretive interpretations usually place an emphasis on the study of language, signs, and meanings from the perspective of research participants who are engaged in the social phenomenon being studied (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Again, this can be compared to the processes of positivistic paradigms that may rely more heavily on statistical techniques. Crucially, in establishing rigour in interpretive research, it is viewed that systematic and transparent approaches for both data collection and analysis can be used, as opposed to statistical benchmarks, which may be used to measure construct validity or significance testing (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The potential advantages and disadvantages of interpretive research have also been discussed by methodological literature. This type of approach has been described as being very suitable for the exploration of hidden reasons behind social processes, which may be complex, inter-related, or multi-faceted; particularly in situations where quantitative data collection may result in biased or inaccurate, or difficult to obtain (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Interpretive research can also be especially useful in the construction of theory in areas or situations that possess either no pre-existing theory or

very little, as well as being particularly appropriate for examining specific contexts, and unique or idiosyncratic events or processes. Finally, it has been determined that interpretive research techniques can be used to assist in uncovering further research questions and issues that may of particular interest or relevance to the study being conducted, and to provide further scope for any follow-up research (Cova & Cova, 2001; Cova & Elliott, 2008).

However, disadvantages of using an interpretive research paradigm have also been identified. These include the extended time and increase in resources that may be required by the use of such an approach, particularly in terms of data collection and subsequent analysis, when compared to positivist research. In addition, a situation that results in too little data being collected may lead to false or premature assumptions, while a sample that is too large may result in the researcher not being able to effectively process the data. It has also been suggested that interpretive techniques require researchers who are well-trained and capable of not just viewing, but also interpreting, complex social phenomenon. In particular, the phenomenon needs to be seen from the perspectives of the embedded participants in the study, with a requirement also for the reconciliation of the various perspectives while avoiding the injection of person bias or preconceptions into any inferences that are made from the data analysis. In terms of the embedded participants themselves, or the data sources, methodological literature has noted that these may not necessarily be considered as being equally credible, unbiased, or knowledgeable about the phenomenon that is being studied, or may even possess other unseen factors such as political agendas.

All of these factors may lead to misleading or false impressions, and in this instance, it is the role of the researcher to 'see through the smoke' of either hidden or biased agendas in seeking out the true nature of problems (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Crucially, the use of interpretive research methodology can also present difficulties in terms of generalising findings to the universal population. This is due to the heavily contextualised nature of such research, including the inferences made by members of the sample population. In addition, it has been found that interpretive research can sometimes fail to answer the question that is being posed by the study, or be used to accurately predict future behaviour (Bhattacharjee, 2012). However, it can be argued

that such a research approach may still be useful in conducting an exploratory qualitative study that leads to, or compliments, a further quantitative study.

4.5.1 Characteristics of Interpretive Research

Interpretive research practices tend to adhere to several common principles. As already discussed, both naturalistic enquiry in a socio-historical context and a recognition that the investigator themselves constitute a part of the research 'instrument' are critical characteristics of valid and reliable interpretive research. In other words, any observations that are made should be interpreted through the eyes of the participants who are embedded in the given social context. Principally, in the analysis of such research, the interpretation itself should also take place over two levels. Firstly, that of viewing or experiencing the phenomenon presented by the subjective perspectives of the participants in the social study, and secondly, to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences in order to provide a 'thick' description or rich narrative 'story' (Shankar, 2000). It is suggested that this story may thread its way through the phenomenon of interest, and can subsequently be used to communicate as to why participants behaved in the manner that they did.

Interpretive analysis involves the examination of expressive language that may be used by those consumers under observation. For example, when documenting both verbal and non-verbal language, the 'story' should be viewed through the eyes of a person and not a machine. Therefore, the emotions and experiences of that person should be depicted so that readers can both understand and relate to them, the use of expressive language including use of imageries, metaphors, sarcasm, and other figures of speech (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In addition, it has been recognised that interpretive research may not necessarily be used in order to try and discover specific answers to questions, but more likely to be used in situations where an understanding or 'making sense' of a dynamic social process is required. Therefore, another important characteristic of interpretive research is that it subscribes to a temporal nature. In other words, the research should be conducted over an extended period of time, as well as the immersive involvement of the researcher at the site of interest during this period in order to capture its entire evolution (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Hence, the data collection for the study took

place over a period of two months, in order to effectively capture an evolution of the phenomenon of interest. In this case, this focused on evolving online discussions surrounding various aspects of music consumption and live music attendance.

Finally, another key characteristic of valid and reliable interpretive research involves an iterative process that moves back and fore from observations, or text, to the entirety of the social phenomenon of interest, or the context. This process is conducted in order to reconcile the apparent discord between text and context, which can be used to construct theories that are consistent with diverse subjective views and experiences that may be presented by the participants who are embedded within the social context. As well as such iterations establishing understandings and meanings, this ‘hermeneutic circle’ ensures that ‘theoretical saturation’ is achieved, whereby iterations continue until the conduction of any further iterations will not yield any further insights into the phenomenon of interest (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

4.5.2 Data Collection Methodologies of Interpretive Research

Typical data collection techniques associated with interpretive research methodology include interviews, observations, and documentation techniques that examine both external and internal documents such as memos, electronic mails, annual reports, financial statements, newspaper articles, and websites in an attempt to gauge further insights or to corroborate other forms of evidence or data (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Observations include ‘direct’ observations whereby the researcher is both a neutral and passive external observer, as well as being not involved in the phenomenon being studied, and ‘participant’ observations where the researcher is an active participant in the phenomenon of interest and whose inputs, or even mere presence, may influence the phenomenon.

4.5.3 Designs of Interpretive Research

When considering the various techniques that could be used when employing an interpretive research methodology, it was also necessary to evaluate the range of

research designs that could be used to assist in the choice of data collection technique. It was identified that several potential research designs could be employed. For example, case research is a process whereby an intensive longitudinal study takes place at one or more study sites that feature the phenomenon of interest (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Such a process is conducted in order to derive inferences that may be detailed or contextualised enough to help develop an understanding of the dynamic processes that may exist underneath a particular phenomenon. Therefore, this technique potentially provides a unique research design, as it can be used in either an interpretive manner to aid in theory development or in a positivist sense to test established theories. When enacting case research, the researcher plays a neutral role in the form of direct observation in the social context being studied, rather than being engaged in an active role through participant observation. In a similar vein to other approaches of interpretive research, the process of deriving inferences from case research that are meaningful and aid the understanding of a phenomenon will depend considerably upon both the observational skills and integrative abilities of the researcher (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Action research represented another method that could have been used in conducting exploratory research. While it is a qualitative method, it possesses characteristics of a positivist research design in that it attempts to test theory, as opposed to engaging in theory construction. As such, it possesses the characteristics of an interactive design that assumes that, in fact, complex social phenomena can best be explained by introducing changes, interventions, or other actions into the phenomena and observing the subsequent outcomes that occur (Walsham, 1995). However, the method is particularly more suited to the study of organisational work practices, with the researcher usually being a consultant or an organisational member who is embedded into a particular social context such as an organisation, with actions being initiated in response to social problems and the influences of such actions being subsequently examined by the researcher. This process may also lead to the researcher learning more about any relationships that may exist between the action and the phenomenon through the generation of insights.

In a similar vein to case research, ethnography is a research method that descended from anthropology, and focuses on studying a phenomenon of interest from within the



context of the culture that surrounds it. In this instance, the researcher is required to be immersed in the applicable social culture at a deep level for an extended period of time, as well as engaging, observing, and recording the daily activities of participants in the social culture of interest within their natural setting (Kozinets, 2002; 2006). As opposed to case research, where the investigator does not actively participate in the field of study, ethnography primarily consists of participant observation. Ethnography also includes the employment of a 'sense-making' approach during the data analysis stage. The researcher is also required to make extensive notes while in the field, in addition to providing a detailed narration of their experiences of the social culture in order to provide readers with a feel for the culture that was studied. Research methodology literature has also identified that when conducting ethnographic research, the investigator needs to make use of their unique knowledge and engagement with the social culture in order to generate insights or theory, as well as to possess the ability to establish any transitional properties of the study findings to other contexts, to fellow members of the scientific community (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Phenomenology constituted another research methodology that may have been used in conducting the study. This method has been identified as emphasising the study of conscious experiences in order to assist in providing an understanding of the reality that surrounds people, and is derived largely from the ideas of Edmund Husserl, who in the early 20th Century, believed that human experience constitutes the source of all knowledge (Bhattacharjee, 2012). As such, the phenomenological process is one that is concerned with a systematic reflection and analysis of a phenomenon of interest that may be associated with conscious experiences. These experiences may include human judgement, perceptions, and actions, and the process is conducted with the aims of both appreciating and describing social reality from the diverse subjective perspectives that may be provided by study participants, as well as the goal of understanding symbolic meanings, or 'deep structure' that may underlie these subjective experiences (Bhattacharjee, 2012). As with other interpretive research designs, the process of phenomenology demands that the investigator eliminates prior assumptions or personal biases that they may possess, to empathise with participants' own individual or perhaps even unique situations, and to try and tune in to any existential dimensions of participants' situations in order to develop a full understanding of the deep structures of

the phenomenon that can drive the conscious thoughts, feelings, and associated behaviours of the participants in the study (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

However, some critical debate exists over the use of phenomenology in the conduction of qualitative research. For example, such methodology has been viewed as constituting more of a philosophy than a research method, and in response other researchers have attempted to counter such claims by developing sub-methodologies to guide such qualitative studies in both data collection and data analysis stages, such as the 'existential phenomenological research method' (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). This method involves interviewing participants to record their subjective experiences and perspectives, and then examining the interview transcripts in order to get a sense of the 'whole' and establishing 'units of significance' (such as 'felt space' and 'felt time') that may faithfully represent the subjective experiences being expressed by the participants, and can subsequently be used to document the psychological experiences that are reported (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003).

In other aspects of phenomenological investigation, the analysis should also consider the study participants' 'temporal landscape' that involves their sense of their own past, present, and future; as well as the researcher effectively transposing themselves, in an imaginary sense, into the situation occupied by the participant by temporarily living their life. It has also been proposed that it is this 'lived' experience reported back by participants that can be described in the form of narratives, or by using and reconciling emergent themes. The analysis itself can delve into themes to identify multiple layers of meaning, whilst at the same time retaining the fragility and ambiguity of subjects' lived experiences (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

4.5.4 Rigor of Interpretive Research

Academic debate surrounding the rigor of interpretive research has led to some criticism of the validity and reliability of the research method. For example, interpretive research aims to interpret social reality through subjective views offered by participants of a study who are deeply embedded in within the context in which the reality is situated, as opposed to positivist research that makes use of a 'reductionist' approach in an attempt

to simplify social reality through the creation of parsimonious theories or laws (Bhattacharjee, 2012). As such, due to the heavily-contextualised nature of the interpretations associated with the research methodology, it has also been claimed that the interpretations are naturally less generalisable to other contexts, as well as often being considered as less rigorous due to the potential subjectivity of the researcher and this type of research being potentially sensitive to the experiences and insights of the researcher who is embedded in the study site. Therefore, interpretive analysis has been considered to be less rigorous by numerous positivist, or functionalist, researchers; specifically because interpretive research is based upon a different set of ontological and epistemological assumptions that may be used when investigating social phenomena in comparison to positivist research practices, resulting in the positivist notions of rigor in interpretation not applying in a similar manner, such as the reliability, internal validity, and generalisability of the findings of the study (Lincoln, 1995).

However, also in terms of rigor in interpretive research, Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested a different set of criteria that may be applied in judging the rigor of the research. For example, when considering the dependability of such research, it can be viewed as being dependable or authentic if two researchers who are assessing the same phenomenon of interest using the same data set arrive at the same conclusions independently of each other, or if the same researcher observes the same or similar phenomenon at different time stages and again arrives at similar conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This can be compared to reliability in positivist research methods, with an agreement between two independent investigators constituting a direct comparison to the use of 'inter-rater' reliability in positivist research, as well as an agreement between two observations of the same phenomenon by the same investigator being in a similar vein to that of 'test-retest reliability' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, dependability can be further established by the researcher providing sufficient details about the phenomenon being investigated, including the social context in which the phenomenon is embedded, in order to allow readers to authenticate researchers' interpretive influences on their own independent basis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The creditability of interpretive research can also be established if the readers find the interpretive inferences made by the researchers to be believable; another concept that can be compared to that of 'internal validity' in functionalist research practices. For

example, the researcher may improve credibility by providing evidence of an extended engagement in the field of study, by applying the use of data triangulation either across subjects or across data collection techniques, and by highlighting the maintenance of meticulous management of data and analytical procedures; the latter including such factors as the verbatim transcription of data collection techniques such as interviews, keeping accurate lists of contacts and records of interviews, and creating clear notes on any theoretical and methodological decisions that are made by the researcher, all of which can allow an external party to independently scrutinise the data collection and analysis if required (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability is another way in which rigor in interpretive research may be established. The findings of a study may be referred the extent to which they can be independently confirmed by other people, that usually refers to the participants of the study themselves. Again, this process has been identified as being akin to the notion of objectivity in functionalist research, and can be illustrated in the way that interpretive research rejects the notion of a reality which is deemed to be objective, with confirmability being demonstrated in terms of 'inter-subjectivity' instead (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, the concurrence of the participants of the study with the interpretive inferences derived by the researcher can result in the findings of the study being viewed as confirmable in terms of rigor. Such general agreement of opinions may be achieved through participants' reviewing of the accompanying research paper or report of the inferred findings.

Finally, the concept of transferability may also be applied in an effort to improve the rigor of interpretive research. By judging the extent to which the findings of a particular study can be generalised to other contexts or fields, it may be possible to generate a degree of transferability which can again improve the rigor of the research being conducted. This can be achieved by the researcher engaging in the provision of rich, detailed descriptions of the research context, otherwise known as a 'thick' description, and a thorough description of the structures, assumptions, and processes revealed from the data collection, in order to allow readers to assess independently whether, and to what extent, the reported findings may be transferable to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This concept has also been likened to the concept of external validity in functionalist research.

4.6 Webnography

The exploratory qualitative data collection that took place for the thesis, in the form of a webnography study, is discussed in this section. This includes both the methodological theories behind this type of data collection and the practical aspects of carrying it out. Using an interpretivist research paradigm for the study, an inductive approach was adopted that made use of research techniques that are suited to the exploration of cultural phenomena; particularly when studying the knowledge or systems of meanings in the lives of particular cultural groups.

For this study, an inductive approach was adopted. Ethnographic research techniques are suited to the exploration of cultural phenomena, particularly when studying the knowledge or systems of meanings in the lives of particular cultural groups. This study used a form of webnography, a qualitative methodology that captures data from Internet-based platforms such as forums, chat rooms, and news boards. Webnography has been regarded as being ideal for conducting research about hi-tech products (such as iPods) among the 'leading edge consumers' and tech-savvy youth, and as word-of-mouth is prevalent in such product categories, web chat on such topics should be similar to what is being said offline (Puri, 2007). However, this may still need to be supplemented by 'traditional' research (Kozinets, 2002; 2006). In addition, typical issues surrounding the use and validity of such research techniques include the anonymity of Internet users who do not give real names, and may not be the people that they claim to be. This could be in terms of their actual demographics, or whether or not they are in fact expressing their true personalities, thoughts, opinions, and values.

However, further developments in webnography methodology have indicated that users are also now more authentic, as the rise of social networking through websites such as Facebook has led to real names being used and more accurate information being given online (Puri, 2009). The Internet has also been regarded as a safer place in which to reveal one's self to other users, as opposed to being 'part of the furniture'; cyberspace creating a public, yet anonymous, space in which users can be less protective with their privacy and far more expressive, and therefore perhaps more truthful, in their views

(Puri, 2007). Netnography can also be applied to sensitive research topics as it allows posters to 'hide' behind their online identities and to be more truthful when communicating with others – attitudes, opinions, and experiences – more freely; hence aiding the study of consumption motives, concerns, and experiences (Langer & Beckman, 2005). In addition, the transnational nature of online cultural phenomena – requirement for better understanding of online cultural phenomena through the new 'translocal' websites, such as transnational online communities and consumer networks, can open up new avenues for research on the ever-globalising and tribalising consumer culture (Rokka, 2010). This implies another positive aspect of webnography and studies that are suited to it. Based on a discussion of netnography's position in between discourse analysis, content analysis, and ethnography, it is argued for the legitimacy of covert research, including a revision of existing guidelines for research ethics with regard to informed consent when conducting netnography (Langer & Beckman, 2005).

This study focuses on the question of how and whether music consumers transfer offline social experiences of music consumption to online contexts. . Research questions included how exactly do consumers attempt to project their identity towards other members of online groups, particularly in the absence of a physical environment in which an individual may be able to communicate their music-based identity to others. Secondly, the actual content of online interactions or conversations surrounding the topic of music consumption may also prove to be significant in the transition of identity projection from traditional offline social environments to that of online social environments. In order to explore this, such content needs to be examined in an online social environment, whether it is through general online social networking platforms such as Facebook or MySpace, or online forums. Larsen et al. (2009) used a similar approach to explore the relationship between consumers' self-concept / symbolic properties of music and the consumption situation by interpreting qualitative phenomenological data. As such, this approach was followed by the thesis.

Online narratives may be examined using content analysis (Harwood & Garry, 2003). This approach was therefore deemed to be appropriate to this study, because cultural patterns (attitudes, interests, values) in music consumption practices can be explored. The use of content categories may contain homogenous data (Janis, 1965), and can be analysed not only for the number of times objects or experiences are mentioned, but

also the interpretation of narratives/storytelling. Often, designation analysis is used, where the frequencies of reference to objects, persons, things, groups, or concepts (Janis, 1965) are counted and similar content is grouped together to develop themes and thematic categories. This process can be used to determine psychological states of individuals or groups, as well as determining cultural patterns that may be comprised of attitudes, interests, and values (Harwood & Garry, 2003). The meanings of words are inferred from the context in which they have occurred relative to accompanying behaviours, and semantical content analysis can be used to analyse meanings; for example frequency of utterances used to describe a particular phenomenon, irrespective of words used (Harwood & Garry, 2003). However, this process can be influenced by researcher bias. The researcher's own life experiences may influence the selection of material and the way it is coded. Therefore, in qualitative research, usually more than one researcher would independently sort through the data and code it, and a figure derived for inter-rater reliability.

Emergent themes are combined into a 'story'. This approach to data collection and analysis assumes that telling and/or writing of stories has ontological status; i.e. the process of telling stories is an act of creation and construction, and not simply an act of remembering or retelling. There is an assumption that the stories that people tell 'come' from somewhere, and it is these 'somewheres' that represent the 'circumstances transmitted from the past'. Extracts can be used to demonstrate a consumer's self-in-process, which is the acknowledgement, acceptance, assimilation, and subsequent cultivation of an identity into an ongoing identity project (Frith, 1996), which is, amongst many other features, also expressed in an individual's music consumption. Therefore, in this research, it was considered of critical importance not just to look at what consumers' are saying but equally important, how they are saying it. Together the content and the way in which something is expressed can become defining elements in a person's online identity, that may, or may not be, different to their offline persona and behaviour.

As such, this study used webnography to focus on virtual communities in the form of message boards that deal with a wide variety of musical genres. Message boards are online communities organised around interest-specific topics. Their membership includes insiders and devotees, as well as few minglers. Boards have usually wide

exposure and influence, because they are pursued frequently by tourists who merely lurk and do not post messages (Kozinets, 1999). Very often, the topical discussion revolves around available products and services; in this case music and related products and services.

For this study, data was collected over a period of two months, from March to April 2011. General (non-genre specific) groups of music consumers were targeted via Internet search engines, using such search terms as 'music discussion groups'. Consumers of all ages were found, whereas such online forums have traditionally been considered to be dominated by young people (Livingstone, 2008). While most groups required a registration process to be completed prior to the researcher being able to join, others were available without registration and some of these messages to be posted by visitors. Large, open boards tend to be less intimate than Rings and Lists, and may therefore provide the most advantageous forum for approaching consumers without seeming to intrude (Kozinets, 1999).

Many of the groups were found to be so-called 'underground' or 'alternative' communities that appeared to exist to bring together consumers of particular music genres such as rock or heavy metal; often seemingly considering themselves to be separate from mainstream popular music, and giving a platform to those music consumers who seek alternative or niche communities in which to express and share their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. A list of the virtual communities included in the research is presented in Appendix A. The data collection was performed by observing 'naturally' occurring discussions in the forums. No actual interactions with forum users took place in order to avoid bias, and no questions were asked. The focus of the observations was the role of the Internet in music consumption, the role of online communities for identity formation, and the role of the online music community for the individual. The data retrieved from the forums was collated, categorised, and then analysed using a content analysis approach. Individual forum users were assigned labels 'R1' etc.

The use of aggregated anonymous 'participants' in the reporting and analysis of the webnography data was deemed important in protecting the anonymity of the forum posters whose views were being examined for the purposes of the study. In addition,

the assignment of participant numbers may also assist in preventing a form of sample bias that may affect the data analysis and subsequent findings, by providing a numerical representation that can be used to check whether a particular participant has been over-used to the point where the data analysis has become dominated by certain individuals; thus subjecting the analysis to bias that may potentially render any findings from the data as being non-applicable to the general population.

This study initially concentrated on two areas of music consumption behaviour, firstly, the consumption of music and related products, services, and merchandise; secondly, behaviours associated with live music attendance. The research aimed to provide an exploratory investigation of the nature of online discussions in these areas of consumption behaviours, and to make use of Internet research methods to directly investigate online social networking platforms and forums, with a view to collecting initial data on the uses of such platforms and the discussions that take place in such environments that may inform both identity and influence by other group members. The content analysis was operationalized through manual recording techniques. Data categories emerged either out of the posted 'threads' on the forums or had been previously established based on the literature review.

The sheer volume of potential data available on online forums also posed difficulties in terms of conducting a complete analysis of each forum. While an exhaustive categorisation of data is preferable to a selective analysis of data that may result in undue bias by the researcher (Harwood & Garry, 2003), data has been selected in order to support an area of particular interest by many researchers (Clarke, 1997). Content analysis is also unobtrusive, unstructured, context sensitive, and possesses the ability to cope with significant quantities of data (Krippendorff, 1980), and is of particular use for research studies undertaking observations of phenomena where influence of the process is not intended; in this case observing interactions and discussions between music consumers. This is in contrast to the potentially more intrusive methods that may be employed by interviews or questionnaires that can result in biased responses (Kinnear & Taylor, 1991).

As such, once the data categories or themes were established, the most pertinent statements for every theme were identified and selected, and this concerned both the

content and the way someone expressed them. The webnography study was conducted on various online platforms; namely online discussion groups that cater specifically for the topic of music. These were found to be essentially text-based websites or forums, which allow Internet users to communicate with one another on a topic of choice. The online forums examined for the study are included in Appendix A.

It was found from observations of websites or forums such as these that consumers' discussions tended to occur through message sections, known as threads, that enable users to either post comments or comment upon previous posts by other users that facilitate online conversations. These included topics surrounding general music discussions such as listening habits and behaviours (and also frequency of listening to music); artists, songs, albums, and other music of choice; the merits of different genres of music; music and artist recommendations to other online group users; new artist discovery; album reviews for new releases or albums deemed to be 'classics' by group members; polls for group members to vote in such categories as best albums or best artists; areas for new members' to introduce themselves to the rest of the group; and non-music related topics that group members may wish to discuss.

The examination of the data collected by the study was undertaken using a content analysis approach, that allowed the researcher to study messages and threads posted by music consumers. Subsequent themes that emerged from the data set drawn from the qualitative study were developed, and example comments representing these themes were included in the reporting of the findings in order to illustrate the style, substance, and context of the data collected. In addition, the example statements highlight typical examples of the thoughts, opinions, views, and associated behaviours of consumers who appear to be highly involved in music consumption and live music attendance practices. These themes are then discussed in the overall conclusions of the study in chapter 7.

4.6.1 Webnography Methodology

The webnography methodology concentrated largely on virtual communities established online, which primarily deal with all manner of genres of music. Many of these were so-called 'underground' or 'alternative' communities that appeared to exist to bring

together consumers of particular music genres such as rock or heavy metal; often seemingly considering themselves to be separate from mainstream pop music, and giving a platform to those music consumers who seek alternative or niche communities in which to express and share their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Therefore, it was felt that the webnography element of the research methodology would perhaps benefit more from studying these types of communities, as incorporating too many types of groups into the webnography research would have possibly left the study susceptible to becoming far too large. In addition, collecting enough necessary data on numerous types of different groups would not be possible within the time constraints of the study. Separate online sources of discussion on music festivals, such as forums and communities, were included in the study however.

The roots of webnography as an academic means of qualitative research methodology can be traced back to early forms of online research such as netnography, as established by Kozinets (2002), who described field procedures and methodological issues surrounding the use of netnography as a research technique as including the means of obtaining entry or access to online virtual communities (also known as making cultural entree), the gathering and analysis of data, the conduction of research that is ethical, and the provision of opportunities for cultural member feedback. This was in addition to Kozinets' identification of five main forums for online social communication, which are comprised of chat rooms, bulletin boards, playspace dungeons, lists, and rings of interlinked web pages. Sub-variants of these forums were also identified by the same author, hence the identification of the existence of WWW web-pages, Bitnet boards, and messenger chat rooms.

Kozinets (2002) established the central objectives of online forums such as these as being associated with and revolving around Ludic properties such as playing, gaming, sporting, and pastimes, as well as informational and social uses. These forums also vary in terms of their temporal orientations according to the same author, who cited existing natures such as synchronous, real-time versus asynchronous, and time-delayed; as well as the forums featuring interpersonal modalities, such as individual broadcasts, one-on-one interactions, group interactions, and corporate involvement. In addition, the categories discussed here appear to have the potential to mix into one another, with

much overlap also appearing to exist between these categories; which Kozinets (2002) noted was the same as to that found in all similar schemes of cultural categorisation.

From a methodological perspective, it can be argued that the identification of online sources for data collection via either netnography or webnography is of paramount importance. The need for the online communities being studied to be relevant has been emphasised by researchers such as Kozinets (2002), who stated that relevant online communities are ones which above all relate to the research question; possess more online 'traffic' of different message posters (unless the focus of the study being conducted is seeking depth of understanding, in which case richness of data is needed instead of a higher number of users); offer more detailed or descriptively rich data (which may be afforded by forums such as blogs or chat); and finally, offer more social interactions.

It has been established that there are three different types of data which may be collected through the use of netnography methodology (Kozinets, 2002), these constituting data directly copied from computer-mediated communications of online community members (which may require a level or several layers of filtering in order to collect relevant data, due to the extremely large amount of such data available on the Internet and the ease with which it can be downloaded); data collected via observations made on the online communities, their members, interactions and meanings, and participation by the researcher themselves; and data collected via approaching and conducting interviews with individuals (participants or members of the communities), commonly through the forum of E-mail, however chat and Instant Messaging (IM) services are other methods which have been deemed adequate to use. In relation to this last form of data, Kozinets (2002) also identified that text-based chat and IM methods do however bring the issue of varying types of responses, in which different communicative styles can be far more distinct and abbreviated; which may look less like traditional or conventional written texts and messages.

Kozinets (2006) also advocated that in order for a piece of research to be truly netnographic, and to differentiate a survey used as part of a netnographic study from an online survey which is not, the data collection needs to be analysed with a view to understanding the subject consumers in the online communal and cultural context in

which they are embedded; as opposed to the data analysis being conducted so that the data is effectively stripped out of the original context, which in the process renders the subject consumers or their practices as being that of a more general representation of a wider group or a more universalised phenomenon. In addition, Kozinets (2006) felt that netnography, as a form of ethnography, encompasses multiple methods, approaches and analytical techniques, and therefore netnography as a methodology should not be associated with just one particular method of collecting and analysing data, but should also include projective techniques, historical analysis, semiotic analysis, visual analysis, musical analysis, survey work, content analysis, kinesics, and any other specialised techniques. This is in addition to observational, participative, and interview techniques; as well as considering the extent to which the researcher themselves can participate in an online community.

Following on from the concept of Netnography, the term 'Webnography' was regarded by Puri (2007) as being ideal for conducting research about hi-tech products (such as iPods) among the 'leading edge consumers' and tech-savvy youth; and as word-of-mouth is prevalent in such product categories, web chat on such topics should be similar to what is being said offline. This may still need to be supplemented by 'traditional research', a feeling shared by Kozinets (2006). There is however disagreement on several aspects of the webnography methodology, which may have a great effect upon the outcome of this study. For example, the anonymity of many Internet users who do not give real names and may not be the people that they claim to be. This could be in terms of their actual demographics, or whether or not they are in fact expressing their true personalities, thoughts, opinions, and values. However, Puri (2009), in considering further developments in webnography, felt that users are also now more authentic, as the rise of social networking through websites such as Facebook has led to real names being used and more accurate information being given online.

There are also differing stances on how much the researcher should immerse themselves in the online sources from which they are attempting to draw data. Puri (2007) stated that the Internet is a safer place in which to reveal one's self to other users, as opposed to being 'part of the furniture'; this author argued that cyberspace creates a public yet anonymous space in which users can be less protective with their privacy and far more expressive (and thus perhaps more truthful) in their views. There is still a chance

though that users will object to the intrusion, and negative effects will be created that will prove detrimental to the research. Kozinets (2006) identified a spectrum of netnographic research, from purely observational to full participation, and varying mixtures of both. Ethical concerns are raised frequently, for example the knowledge of the participants about their participation in research. The question of how much participation is one that could have considerable impact on the study, by greatly affecting both the webnography and the overall qualitative data collection.

There are also questions over the use of deductive and inductive approaches, in that the examination of the relevant literature led to hypotheses being created for the thesis. Yet the webnography methodology will lead to a more inductive approach that may not ensure the data collected represents the truth. Puri (2007) also felt that there may be difficulties in obtaining a representative sample from the various online sources, and further still, doubts remain whether the data collected online can be considered as being representative of data offline as well. Puri (2007) admitted that 'leading-edge' bloggers may be somewhat different to 'Average Joes'. On the other hand, 'leading edge' consumers have traditionally led the way for mainstream consumers (e.g. innovators in peer and social groups). However, there is still no guarantee of representation.

An online survey followed the collection of the webnography data, and was incorporated into the thesis in order to collect quantitative data that was subsequently used to validate the findings of the qualitative elements of the webnography. It was intended that several of the key findings from analysis of the qualitative data were to be selected in order to develop an instrument that could be used to examine these findings further, and to draw conclusions and recommendations. It was felt that it was not possible to quantitatively test all of the findings from the qualitative data; due not only to the time constraints of the study, but also a need to ensure that the study remains focused on the core topic being addressed.

As well as using webnography methodology to collect qualitative data, it was intended that quantitative data would be collected through an online questionnaire in order to validate the findings of this study. While extensive previous research has been focused on the effects of offline social networking on music and its influence upon consumption behaviours, or in relation to the online use of social networking and music for marketing

purposes, the thesis intended to concentrate on the effects of social networking upon consumers' subsequent music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices. This is an area that has yet to be fully explored in music consumption behaviour theory, although elements of previous research have touched upon aspects of the topic. Therefore, a gap was identified in the existing research, and the knowledge gained from the thesis may prove to be of interest and use to the music industry in regards to the effects of online social networking on music consumption and live music attendance.

In addition to further developing music consumption theories in this area, the thesis may also lead to possible future considerations for record companies in terms of using online social networking and music discussion platforms to engage with consumers and encourage the purchasing of music-based goods and services; be they physical or (increasingly) digital ones. This formed the basis for the methodology employed in the data collection undertaken. Subsequently, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations were drawn in light of the effects of online social networking on music consumption and live music attendance.

4.7 Alternative Qualitative Methodology

It was recognised that the research approach to the qualitative data collection could have been performed differently. For example, a form of data collection based on deductive reasoning could have been employed in the study. In cases of ethnographic research that employs an inductive reasoning process, it was noted that this approach forms just one interpretation of reality. In other words, the observations made in the analysis of the data collected are solely drawn from the point of view of the researcher who is conducting the study. Therefore, it was important that an objective approach was undertaken by the researcher in order to try to minimise the constraints of their own limitations, such as the ability to analyse the data in an impartial manner; as well as the elimination of pre-conceived theories that may be drawn from the observer's own experiences and preferences.

It was also recognised that alternative methodologies may have been employed in the conduction of the exploratory qualitative research for the thesis. For example, a focus group could have been used to gauge the thoughts, opinions, and views of consumers on modern-day music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices. The use of interviews may also have been more appropriate in gauging consumers' behaviours in relation to music consumption and live music attendance on an individual basis.

4.8 Main Study

The general subject areas of the thesis focused on the differences in influence of online and offline social networking in relation to music consumption practices. As well as this, it was also envisaged that the research conducted would also touch upon elements of other consumer behaviours such as ethics and marketing research, in terms of the type of surveying that will be required in order to obtain reliable and insightful information. The main issue that the thesis was concerned with was that of differences in predictors of influence relating to these areas of consumption.

In addition to the potentially significant predictor variables, which were conceptualised in Chapter 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.1 (offline) and Figure 3.2 (online) models for the main study, it was also acknowledged that other factors may be present in social group influence on music consumption and live music attendance. For example, it was deemed necessary to also include in the research design factors such as the types of music formats (such as CDs, vinyl records, or MP3 downloads) that consumers obtain, as well as the frequency with which a consumer obtains the format. The rationale for the inclusion of these factors is that both may provide a different means with which to analyse the collected data; with it also being possible to theorise that the format of music which a consumer chooses to obtain may also be influenced by social group members in either online or offline capacities.

In particular, and as noted during the discussions surrounding the literature review, there may also exist differences between social group influence (both online and offline)

on consumers' obtainment of physical formats (such as CDs and vinyl records) and non-physical formats such as MP3 downloads. Also noted in the literature review, recent technological developments have resulted in changes within the music industry, especially in terms of behaviours surrounding music format consumption; with current trends indicating a greater market shift towards non-physical digital music, which may also be consumed in a more portable manner, particularly in public places, due to the introduction of technologies such as MP3 players (especially products such as Apple's iPod).

The frequency with which a consumer obtains music in a given format was deemed to be of potential importance to this study. The rationale for this was that social group influence levels in either online or the offline environments could affect, or be affected by, the number of times or frequency with which a consumer obtains music. For example, it could be theorised that an individual who regularly obtains a high level of music may be also be a person who is greatly influenced by other music consumers in either their online or offline social groups (or both). Conversely, it could be argued that a person who regularly obtains a lower level of music may be an individual who is less likely to be influenced by other music consumers.

However, while basic assumptions such as these could be made, it was also recognised that behaviours surrounding music consumption practices may be regarded as being far more complex. For example, consumers' frequency levels of obtaining music may be not in fact be related to the influence of social group members in either online or offline environments, and may instead be due to other factors, such as the result of an individual's own aspirations and ideals surrounding their identity and the construction or development of it. From another point of view, music as an entertainment 'product' may in itself provide an experience which a consumer reacts to on individual basis, such as the triggering of memories or nostalgia, or the wide range of emotions which may be felt by a person when listening to a song or a piece of music; factors which were highlighted by both discussions which took place in the literature review and apparent presence of the notable trends in modern-day music consumption behaviours which were revealed by the exploratory qualitative research.

Due to the multiple of ways in which music formats and music frequency (or frequency of music obtainment) can potentially be involved in the determination of music consumers' social group influences in both online and offline environments, especially in terms of the purchasing or obtainment of music, it was deemed necessary to include them in the research methodology design for the main quantitative data collection. However, these factors were not included in the research hypotheses for the main study, due to the multiple ways in which they may or may not be attributed as being important factors in online and offline social group influence regarding music consumption and live music attendance. The potential factors of music formats and obtainment frequencies were instead included in the design of the data collection process as another means with which to analyse the data through potential differences in participants' perceptions of social group influence upon their music consumption, dependent upon differing levels of frequency of music obtainment. In addition, it was also recognised that these factors, when analysed within the contexts of online and offline social networking environments, social group influence, and music consumption behaviours, may also provide potential avenues of further research. It was also felt that the need for clarity and a tighter focus determined that the factors of music formats and obtainment frequencies remained in the research design as additional potential factors or predictors of social group influence, as opposed to being established as concrete hypotheses in the thesis.

The design of the online survey employed by the main quantitative study will be discussed in more detail in this section. A copy of the final questionnaire design is provided in Appendix B. The main purpose of questionnaires and surveys in general is to attempt to address and ultimately prove the outcome of a hypothesis or hypotheses when tested amongst a sample of the universal population. In the case of this particular study, the survey design was based upon an exploratory nature, which was drawn from consultation of the relevant literature on the background of the music industry and its' current situation; the unique aspects of music as a consumer product; popular music consumption and self-identity; and the use of music in social networking, both offline and online.

The findings of the qualitative study also yielded data in an online context, which could subsequently be used to compare and validate the data found from proceeding

quantitative study. When considering the questions for inclusion in the online survey, the findings of the initial qualitative data collection were used in an inductive approach to discern the initial hypotheses, which were to be investigated by the online survey. In terms of the survey design itself, the first section of the questionnaire was constructed in order to find out some general information regarding the participants; in particular their views, feelings, and individuals' perceptions of their notion of their 'self', in terms of both self-esteem and in their social groups (both online and offline).

Having discovered this information, the behavioural intentions section of the questionnaire was designed in an attempt to correlate the findings with music consumers' subsequent purchase intentions surrounding music consumption and live music attendance. These were incorporated into the questionnaire in an attempt to determine whether participants will change their music-based consumption practices and live music attendance based upon recommendations from their social group peers. It was also felt important to establish questions based on both online and offline contexts, in order to be able to provide a comparison and again to highlight any notable correlations that may occur between differing perceptions of the self and behavioural intentions within each context.

In addition to the desired factors of comparison and correlation, the use of both online and offline contexts was also deemed to be important in ultimately providing conclusions and, crucially, managerial implications based upon the results of the data gathered by this study. For example, any differences in behavioural intentions, or any notable correlations with the factors considered in the more general questions asked in the first section of the questionnaire, may have important considerations for managers and companies that are involved in the marketing of music, be it for music-based products or live music events and festivals. Therefore, implications may be found for such activities as using online platforms to promote music-related goods and services, including the music itself and associated merchandise, and live music events or festivals that companies may wish to promote.

It was also hoped that the data collection associated with the online survey in particular, would yield such consumer preferences as to where they interact with music the most, be it online or offline, and especially with whom their main social interactions regarding

music take place, bearing in mind the two contexts that exist in today's modern music consumption environment. When considering the relevant literature reviewed in this thesis, the factor of where these practices now take place could have important considerations for marketing and promotion managers in terms of where they need to advertise their offerings. The behavioural intentions specifically discussed concepts that related to social peer recommendations.

4.8.1 Research Question

The study concentrated on the general consumption of music and live music attendance, and the influence of fellow social group members in both online and offline capacities on the behaviours associated with these types of consumption. A reminder of the research question for the study is shown below.

Which of the concepts identified in the literature review are significant predictors for (a) intention to attend live music, and (b) intention to share experiences of live music?

Based upon this question, the research aims and objectives were developed.

4.8.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The research aims and objectives of the main quantitative study were as follows.

- 1) To identify the significant predictors of influence on general music consumption behaviours and live music attendance for both online and offline social groups.*
- 2) To draw conclusions, based on the results and findings of the data collection, on what the changes have meant to music consumption behaviours in terms of online and offline social networking.*

Based upon the research question and the aims and objectives of the study, the conceptual models for the main study were developed. These models were again constructed via an examination of the previous literature reviewed for the thesis, in conjunction with the findings of the exploratory qualitative research.

4.9 Quantitative Methodology

This part of the chapter discusses the methodology employed in conducting the main study, beginning with the target population and sampling procedure.

4.9.1 Target Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population for the study were consumers who were highly-involved in the consumption of music and practices which are associated with live music attendance, as well as music festival attendance. In the interest of ethical considerations however, it was made explicitly clear in the design of the questionnaire for the survey that only those who were 18 years of age or over could take part in the study. In addition, the implementation of the study itself was also correlated with the target population in mind, in that the study was aimed and circulated amongst consumers who frequented online social networking websites and discussion forums. The investigation of specific music-based discussion forums was also especially instrumental in the exploratory qualitative research that was conducted.

The online survey was conducted between 20th February and 2nd April 2012, using the *Survey Monkey* software platform. A web link to the survey was created, enabling online participants to access the survey and complete their answers; with this link being distributed by the researcher in online communities, social networking websites, and other online platforms deemed appropriate to the study and the research questions being asked, particularly in terms of the relevant types of music consumers who may frequent the chosen online forums. The total number of participants to the online survey was 438, with 312 fully-completed responses being obtained and able to be used in the

analysis of the data. The online social platforms that were utilised for the data collection via the online survey are included in Appendix C. However, it should be noted that the link was not posted on all of the platforms listed in Appendix C at the beginning of the surveying period. Instead, more online platforms were added at infrequent intervals in an effort to improve survey respondent numbers. As such, it was not possible to test for any differences between 'early' and 'late' responders. It was recognised that this aspect of the data collection should be considered when designing future research studies, as important differences between the time response periods may have been found.

4.10 Alternative Quantitative Methodology

It was also recognised that alternative methods may have been employed in the conduction of the quantitative research for the thesis. For example, an offline paper questionnaire may also have been employed in the survey techniques adopted by the quantitative study for the thesis. However, an online survey was deemed more appropriate for the study; especially when considering the target population identified for the proposed data collection. In particular, it was felt that it was necessary to ensure the collection of responses by as many highly-involved music consumers as possible; as well as those who tend to frequent social networking platforms and music-based discussion forums, in line with the research questions and hypotheses posed by the study.

4.11 Questionnaire Design

This study attempted to discover answers to the questions posed in the hypothesis by conducting the following form of research, in order to facilitate of the collection of primary data. A questionnaire entitled 'Social Networking Survey' was distributed amongst the general public to find out their views on the subject of the survey. This also involved the selection of a sample of the population with which to conduct the survey.

It was recognised that this survey contained a number of potentially sensitive questions, which may involve the participant giving answers which may refer to illegal or unethical behaviour, such as the illegal downloading of songs in the MP3 format from the Internet, or the copying of CDs. Therefore the confidentiality of any and all replies given by participants was stressed at the beginning of the questionnaire, with a view to encouraging full and truthful answers from all consumers who chose to participate in the survey.

In terms of questionnaire design, multiple choice questions were used in order to feature specific categories of answer; as well as room for alternative answers that were not previously considered by the researcher, i.e. in the form of 'other' answers that contain open-ended boxes. This category can allow both alternative comments and the generation of new ideas, perhaps even ones future research studies could incorporate. There were not any questions included which were comprised of purely open-ended answers, due to the fact that while these types of questions are perhaps beneficial to research in the form of providing unique consumer comments, trying to analyse the answers to these questions in the context of the rest of the quantitative survey would be difficult.

As well as questions on the types of music format that participants obtain, and the frequency in which they obtain music and attend live music events, scales were also used to measure consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. Several questions were grouped together, under a measure, to determine particular aspects of consumer behaviour. This was done in order to make the analysis of the results clearer and easier, as the combination of questions under a certain area can assist in determining the overall behaviour in that area. This design included categorical groupings for the sections which comprised of music genres, music formats, frequencies of obtaining music and attending live music events, online social group influence, and offline social group influence.

4.12 Pre-test of the Online Survey

In order to avoid presenting the survey with questions which may be confusing, difficult to follow, unanswerable (in that participants find it hard to recall their behaviour), or are too personal (resulting in non-response), a pre-test version of the questionnaire was undertaken before that of the main study. This was performed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the questionnaire. A minimum collection level target of 450 responses was established; however due to time constraints imposed upon the study, a pre-test sample of 10 responses was deemed to be of a satisfactory level for a pilot study. In addition, all 10 participants who took part in the pilot study filled out the survey under the observation of the researcher, enabling both instant feedback and allowing the researcher to physically note any difficulties a participant may have had in completing the survey.

4.13 Scale Development

The following section will review the measurement scales that were used in the development of the questions for the online survey.

In developing the questionnaire design for the online survey, it was necessary to provide both valid and reliable means with which to measure participants' behaviours and practices in regards to not only music consumption and live music attendance, but also consumer behaviours identified by both the literature review and the initial exploratory qualitative data collection as being of potential importance to the investigations and research questions of the main quantitative study. Therefore, measurement scales whose reliability and validity had been established in the work of previous researchers from a variety of fields were also required to be taken into consideration.

As discussed in the research design methodology for the main quantitative study, the proposed online survey aimed to investigate participants' perceptions of their behaviours and values in areas such as genres of music; social networking platform use;

music consumption (including both format usage and frequencies of obtainment); individual relationships with music in terms of consumption and identity; the influence of other people on a participant's music consumption behaviours and practices (interpersonal susceptibility); social group membership in both online and offline contexts (in terms of both identity with the groups and the perceived influence of the other group members on participants' music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices; and finally, participants' demographics (albeit requested on a voluntary basis, but with a view to obtaining such information in order to be able to compare, classify, and profile the different survey participants).

Therefore, suitable measurement scales were selected from the wide range of options available in various marketing and consumer behaviour fields, as well as other academic disciplines such as psychology, which this survey was attempting to investigate. As well as examining previous research studies and existing literature on measurement scales in the related academic fields, it was also necessary to adapt the measurement scales to the investigations and research questions of this particular study. Hence this section of the methodology will discuss the established measurement scales which were used in the design of the questionnaire for use in the online survey, with each of the measurement scales also subsequently being discussed in turn. This section will also briefly discuss other established measurement scales considered for this study, but not ultimately employed in the final questionnaire design. This discussion includes both the source of the original measurement scale, and the adapted measurement scale items which were employed in the construction of the online survey.

The scales were adapted from the original measurements in most cases by substituting the product or service described in the previous study for one that related to either aspects of music consumption or live music attendance. These changes were also influenced by the exploratory qualitative data findings.

4.13.1 Construct 1: Music Identity

Music Identity: Objects Incorporated into the 'Extended Self'

The adapted measurement scale used in this section of the questionnaire was based on the original scale by Sivadas and Machleit (1994), which was also originally drawn from the work by Belk (1988). As discussed in the literature review, Belk (1988) was seminal in the existing theoretical work which established that products may be viewed as being an extension of one's self, or representing an individual's view of their own identity. As an examination of the existing literature in relation to this concept and music consumption behaviours appears to suggest, music in particular may also be viewed (along with other hedonistic products) as a determinant of one's identity or lifestyle. Hence, when examining the questions posed in the research hypotheses for the main study, it was deemed necessary to include a measurement scale in the survey design which presented an opportunity to question participants on this concept; defined in the original scale as 'Objects Incorporated into the extended self'. In other words, the scale could be used to establish how much a participant viewed the music which they have obtained, as well as associated products and services, as being an extension of their identity.

When considering this aspect of the literature review in the context of the research being undertaken for the main study, the inclusion of this measurement scale meant that it was possible to establish whether the concept of music representing an extension of an individual's notion of their own self-identity is a significant predictor of social group influence on music consumption and live music attendance. For example, it could be determined whether the level of a participant's expression of music being an extension of their identity is a positive or negative predictor of how much they are subsequently influenced by interactions with other music consumers in both online and offline environments.

This scale appeared to be suitable for the study in terms of the ways in which it can be used (through adaption) to measure such potentially significant factors as music and its' role in achieving a particular identity; as being central to an identity itself; and as being

only part of the make-up of a particular identity. In essence, all six items used in the original scale appeared conducive to the requirements for this section of the questionnaire design, and were therefore all retained and subsequently adapted for the study. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Adapted measurement scale for music identity

Original Measurement Scale (Author/s)	Number of Items	Adapted Measurement Scale
<p><i>Objects Incorporated into the 'Extended Self'</i></p> <p>(Sivadas and Machleit, 1994; cited from Belk, 1988)</p>	6	<p><i>Music helps achieve the identity I want to have.</i></p> <p><i>Music helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.</i></p> <p><i>Music is central to my identity.</i></p> <p><i>Music is part of who I am.</i></p> <p><i>If music was taken away from me I would feel as if my identity had been snatched from me.</i></p> <p><i>I derive some of my identity from music.</i></p>

4.13.2 Construct 2: Social Influence

Social Influence: Interpersonal Influence Susceptibility (Normative)

This measurement scale was adapted from the original scale by Bearden *et al.* (1989), and was included in the questionnaire design in line with the research questions which set out to establish social group influence on individual's music consumption behaviours. It was felt that in order to provide a more complete understanding of social group influence in this field, it was necessary to consider how likely a participant perceived themselves to be influenced by other people, within the context of music consumption in general. Therefore by including this measurement scale, it was possible to measure whether an individual's perceived levels of their own susceptibility to others' influence is a potential factor, which may result in either positive or negative

predictions of the effects of social group influence (both online and offline) on music consumption and live music attendance.

The measurement scale by Bearden *et al.* (1989) appeared to be highly suited towards the obtainment of data concerning participants' perceptions of their own susceptibility to the influence of other social group members, such as friends, family members, and other social peers. This particularly appeared to be the case in terms of 'friends' approval; the scale using items which questions participants on the importance they place on the views and opinions of people they know when obtaining products and services, and especially appearing to investigate individuals' perceptions of their consumption habits matching up to the expectations of peers. It was also noted that several of the items contained within the original scale also appeared to lend themselves towards the theories surrounding tribal consumption practices, as discussed in the literature review; especially the items pertaining to discover whether participants felt that they achieved a sense of belonging by purchasing products and services that others obtain.

These items would appear to suggest that consumers may identify with other people by obtaining the same products and services as them; arguably demonstrating that a sense of belonging and shared identity are two important concepts of consumer behaviour which can be linked to tribalism. It was therefore deemed appropriate to employ this particular measurement scale and adapt it to the investigations of the study; thereby transferring the apparent tribal aspects that may be present in the group consumption of products and services to the realms of social networking and music consumption, as epitomised by the focus of the study.

In essence, it was found that all eight of the items used in the original scale appeared conducive to the requirements for this section of the questionnaire design, and these were therefore all retained and subsequently adapted for the study. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Adapted measurement scale for social influence

<i>Original Measurement Scale (Author/s)</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Adapted Measurement Scale</i>
<p><i>Interpersonal Influence Susceptibility (Normative)</i></p> <p>(Bearden et al., 1989)</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><i>I rarely purchase the latest music until I am sure my friends approve of it.</i></p> <p><i>It is important that others like the music and artists I buy.</i></p> <p><i>When buying music, I generally purchase music by those artists that I think others will approve of.</i></p> <p><i>If other people can see me consuming music, I often purchase music by the artists they expect me to buy.</i></p> <p><i>I like to know what artists and music make good impressions on others.</i></p> <p><i>I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same music and artists that others purchase.</i></p> <p><i>If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy music by the same artists that they buy.</i></p> <p><i>I often identify with other people by purchasing the same music and artists they purchase.</i></p>

4.13.3 Construct 3: Group Identity

Group Identity: Self-categorisation

The measurement scale drawn from Ellemers *et al.* (1999) was just one set of items from the whole scale used in these researchers' study; this being the set of items originally labelled by these authors as representing 'self-categorisation'. The purpose of employing these items in the questionnaire design was an attempt to measure participants' perceptions of their identity with their online and offline social groups. This was intended to link back to some of the issues discussed during the literature review; particularly those issues surrounding aspects of one's identity, and especially

within the context of social influence. These particular items appeared to incorporate both identity and group membership, deemed to be pertinent to this study in terms of providing a means with which to measure how much a participant identifies with their fellow group members; thus making it possible to establish whether this is a significant predictor of social group influence on music consumption and live music attendance, for both online and offline social groups. In essence, it was found that all three of the items used in the section of the original scale for 'self-categorisation' appeared conducive to the requirements for this section of the questionnaire design, and these were therefore all retained and subsequently adapted for the study.

Other items present in the scale employed by Ellemers *et al.* (1999) were deemed to not be suitable for inclusion in this study. These other items attempt to measure factors such as 'Group self-esteem', 'Commitment to the group', 'Personal self-esteem', and 'Personal identification'; these factors being deemed as unsuitable for this particular study in terms of measuring individuals' identity *with* their social groups (be they offline or online), in addition to being beyond the scope of the literature review of the study. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Adapted measurement scale for group identity

<i>Original Measurement Scale (Author/s)</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Adapted Measurement Scale</i>
Self-categorisation (Ellemers <i>et al.</i> , 1999)	3	<p><i>I identify with other members of my offline (online) groups.</i></p> <p><i>I am like other members of my offline (online) groups.</i></p> <p><i>My offline (online) groups are an important reflection of who I am.</i></p> <p><i>Not at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Very much</i></p>

4.13.4 Construct 4: Intention to Attend Live Music

Behavioural Intention

The original measurement scale that was adapted for the sections of the questionnaire design that involved participants' perceptions of direct social group influence (both offline and online) was one developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980); which was also based upon earlier work by the same researchers Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). While the original behavioural intention scale itself was retained (that of a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'Unlikely' to 'Likely'), the items used for the scale were of an original design.

The behavioural intention sections of the survey were designed to question participants on their perceived levels of social group influence in both offline and online environments, and sought to investigate levels of influence in terms of live music attendance practices. Hence, separate sections for offline and online social groups were incorporated into the questionnaire design, and scale items were developed to primarily investigate social group influence on several aspects of live music attendance, including influence based on recommendations from fellow group members which would encourage attendance at both live music events and music festivals; the exchange of influences based on the sharing of both positive and negative experiences associated with live music events and festivals with other group members; and whether the participant regards their online social groups as being more influential than their offline social groups in terms of their live music attendance practices (and vice versa), along with another similar item which questioned whether the participant regards their online social groups as being more influential than their offline social groups in terms of their music consumption practices (and vice versa).

In total, two original items were used in this 'behavioural intention' section of the questionnaire design, which included the same items for both offline and online social group influence. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Adapted measurement scale for intention to attend live music

<i>Original Measurement Scale (Author/s)</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Adapted Measurement Scale</i>
<i>Behavioural Intention</i> (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980); Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)	2	<p><i>I would attend a live music event based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.</i></p> <p><i>I would attend a music festival based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.</i></p> <p>(N.B. Original measurement scale used in attempting to measure participants' music consumption and live music attendance behaviours.)</p> <p><i>Unlikely 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Likely</i></p>

4.13.5 Construct 5: Intention to Share Experience

Behavioural Intention

The original measurement scale that was adapted for the sections of the questionnaire design that involved participants' perceptions of direct social group influence (both offline and online) was again the one developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980); which was also based upon earlier work by the same researchers Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). While the original behavioural intention scale itself was retained (that of a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'Unlikely' to 'Likely'), the items used for the scale were of an original design.

In total, six original items were used in the 'behavioural intention' sections of the questionnaire design, which included the same items for both offline and online social group influence. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Adapted measurement scale for intention to share experience

Original Measurement Scale (Author/s)	Number of Items	Adapted Measurement Scale
<p><i>Behavioural Intention</i></p> <p>(Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980); Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)</p>	<p>6</p>	<p><i>I would share a positive live music event experience with these groups.</i></p> <p><i>I would share a negative live music event experience with these groups.</i></p> <p><i>I would share a positive music festival experience with these groups.</i></p> <p><i>I would share a negative music festival experience with these groups.</i></p> <p><i>My live music attendance practices are more influenced by these groups than they are by my offline (online) social groups.</i></p> <p><i>My music consumption practices are more influenced by these groups than they are by my offline (online) social groups.</i></p> <p>(N.B. Original measurement scale used in attempting to measure participants' music consumption and live music attendance behaviours.)</p> <p><i>Unlikely 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Likely</i></p>

4.13.6 Additional Variables and Response Forms

Unless specified otherwise, the measurement scales all used the seven-point Likert scale shown in Figure 4.1, which survey participants could use to record their replies and gauge their perceptions as to how much they agreed with the statements being presented to them in each section of the questionnaire.

Figure 4.1: Likert agreement scale

(1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Slightly disagree, (4) Neutral, (5) Slightly agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly agree

Likert agreement scales are based on a numbered-point semantic differential scale, which can be weighted by the relevant importance the participant assigns to each feature and then summated to create an overall value figure. In particular, this type of overall evaluation measure has been cited as being a good predictor of choice. (Chisnall, 1997). While Likert scales were recognised as being easy for participants to understand, due to the simple wording approach, they still need to be worded carefully in order to ensure that perceptual differences can be distinguished.

Genres of Music

This scale attempted to measure participants' preferences for the particular genres of music, which they tend to listen to during the course of their daily music consumption habits. The scale, as illustrated in Table 4.6, was an original design that was comprised of a 7-point Likert scale; ranging from 'Not at all' to 'Very frequently'. Upon selecting 3 favourite genres (in order of favourite) from the choices available on the questionnaire, the participants were required to use the scale to rate how much they tended to listen to that genre of music. Participants could also enter their own choice of music genre into their answers to this question, by entering this into a separate field and again rating the item using the 7-point Likert measurement scale. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Original measurement scale: Genres of music

<i>Original Measurement Scale</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Measurement Scale</i>
<i>Genres of Music</i> (N/A)	18	<i>Not at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Very frequently</i>

Social Networking Platforms

This scale attempted to measure participants' preferences for the particular social networking platforms, or other discussion forums, which they tend to use during the course of their daily music consumption habits; particularly in terms of using such platforms to discuss various aspects of music consumption behaviour with fellow consumers in an online environment. The scale, as illustrated in Table 4.7, was an original design that was comprised of a 7-point Likert scale; ranging from 'Not at all' to 'Very frequently'. Upon selecting 3 favourite social networking platforms or discussion forums (in order of favourite) from the choices available on the questionnaire, the participants were required to use the scale to rate how much they tended to use that particular platform. Participants could also enter their own choice of social networking platform or other discussion forum into their answers to this question, by entering this into a separate field and again rating the item using the 7-point Likert measurement scale. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Original measurement scale: Social networking platforms

<i>Original Measurement Scale</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Measurement Scale</i>
<i>Social Networking Platforms</i> (N/A)	19	<i>Not at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Very frequently</i>

Music Consumption Formats

This scale attempted to measure participants’ preferences for the particular formats of music that they tend to use during the course of their daily music consumption habits. The scale, as illustrated in Table 4.8, was an original design that was comprised of a 7-point Likert scale; ranging from ‘Never get’ to ‘Get very frequently’. The participants were required to use the scale to rate how much they tended to obtain music in each of the formats listed for the question in the survey; as well as other categories of associated products such as music-related merchandise such as posters, artist-related clothing, or accessories. Participants could also enter their own choice of format or item of music-related merchandise into their answers to this question, by entering this into a separate field and again rating the item using the 7-point Likert measurement scale. The final scale employed by the study is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Original measurement scale: Music consumption formats

<i>Original Measurement Scale</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Measurement Scale</i>
<i>Music Consumption Formats</i> (N/A)	6	<i>Never get 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Get very frequently</i>

4.13.7 Other Measurement Scales Considered for the Study

Several other measurement scales were also considered for use in this study. At various stages of the research design process (particularly that of the questionnaire for the online survey), elements of the design changed as ideas were developed and research methodology implications were taken into consideration. For example, one such consideration was that of the use of online surveys, and the necessity of limiting the length of the survey in order to engage the participant and attempt to ensure that as many fully-completed surveys were returned as part of the data collection process as possible. Hence decisions regarding which measurement scales were to be incorporated into the questionnaire design had to not only consider the reliability, validity, and appropriateness of the measurement scales, but also other factors such as the length of the questionnaire and the potential time it would take a participant to fully complete the survey. Therefore, a shorter length questionnaire was deemed appropriate, particularly in light of the data collection methodology for the quantitative study being comprised of an online survey.

Some prominent examples of other measurement scales considered for use in the study were as follows. The scale measuring ‘*Self-Esteem*’ which was developed by Rosenberg (1965) was one which was of particular interest to the study, in terms of investigating any potential correlations between individuals’ perceptions of their own

self-esteem and the levels of social influence (in relation to music consumption behaviours) that they perceive from fellow online and offline social group members. For example, hypotheses could be generated regarding whether high or low levels of self-esteem lead to high or low levels of interpersonal susceptibility, and subsequently related within the context of social group influence on music consumption behaviours; particularly those behaviours associated with obtaining music and related merchandise, and attending live music events or festivals.

Therefore, Rosenberg's (1965) scale may have presented as an alternative way of attempting to measure more 'individual' based factors, such as one's personality or characteristics, as well as other deeper psychological thought processes such as a sense of needing to belong; which it can be argued may be a potentially significant predictor of purchasing and consumption behaviours which can be associated with music and related products or events. For example, it could be suggested that a sense of needing to belong may induce an individual to being more likely to obtain music and merchandise that is being consumed by their social peers, or to attend the same types of music events or festivals. It can also be argued that, this may particularly apply to interactions with fellow social group members in either online or offline contexts, due to the close proximity with which individuals may come into contact with social peers in the offline environment, as well as the possibility of a high frequency of interactions surrounding music consumption behaviours, (such as discussions surrounding latest music releases for example) which may occur during the course of daily life in both offline and online environments.

In particular, and as discussed in the literature review for the study, this concept may especially apply in the context of tribal consumption. For example, face-to-face contact with members of a social group whom a consumer relates to, or aspires to join, may be of critical importance in subsequent obtainment of music or related merchandise such as artist-related clothing, or attendance at live music events featuring particular artists. Again the role of self-esteem, in conjunction with other predictive measurement scales, such as interpersonal susceptibility, may be of importance in determining how influenced an individual is by other music consumers in the context of tribal consumption; a context in which it can be argued that positive predictors of social group influence are more likely to occur due to a perception that tribal elements of group

membership may provide an increased exposure to influential behaviours by other group members. Therefore, when considering the additional factor of self-esteem and its' potential as a predictive value for social group influence on music consumption behaviours, another potential avenue for research is presented.

Other examples of measurement scales considered for the study included ones based on concepts such as Greene's (1999) scale for group membership; incorporating aspects of behaviour such as group criticism, sharing of qualities which are perceived by an individual as being typical of members of the group, and sharing of group successes. However it was felt that aside from limitations of space, this scale was not wholly suitable for the questionnaire design due to the more political aspects of the measurement scale, such as those items relating to media criticism and external praising or complimenting of the group, which were deemed not to fit in with the research questions being proposed. Hence while some of the items presented in this particular scale did appear to be of use to the study, overall it was felt that the whole scale did not contribute towards the ideas set out in the initial hypotheses.

A measurement scale used in Ashmore *et al.*'s (2004) study was also considered for inclusion in the design of the online survey. The scale used by these researchers was comprised of sections representing '*Self-Categorisation (Goodness of Fit/Perceived Similarity/Prototypicality)*', '*Evaluation (Private Regard/Public Regard)*', '*Importance (Explicit Importance)*', and '*Behavioural Involvement*'. As with Greene's (1999) scale, it was found that some of the items in this scale appeared to correlate with the intentions of the proposed research questions and hypotheses, while other items did not. For example, items that appeared to match the desired criteria included ones representing the typicality of group membership, the notion of group membership being an important reflection of an individual, and the participation in the cultural practices of a particular group. On the other hand, the items in the scale such as those representing others believing that an individual's social group is unworthy did not appear to be as relevant to the study, due to the perceptions of other people about individuals' membership of certain social groups not featuring as an aspect of either the research questions or the subsequent hypotheses.

However, it was again noted that one item of Ashmore *et al.*'s (2004) measurement scale could potentially be used in further research. This item rated the importance of identity on a 10-point scale from 'not important at all' to 'very important'. When considering the range of measurement scales employed in the questionnaire design, it was recognised that the section which dealt with 'individual' factors such as interpersonal susceptibility and the notion of objects being incorporated into the 'extended self', this item may have presented another potentially interesting way of testing for significant predictors of both online and offline social groups in relation to music consumption and live music attendance; particularly as identity was determined in the literature review to be a potentially important component in the consumption of music, which may include certain types of music, as well as lifestyles which may be associated with some genres of music. However, again due to the limitations of time and space that can be associated with the conduction of online survey research, this item was subsequently not included in the final questionnaire design.

Wells and Tigert's (1971) '*Information Seeker (Interpersonal)*' scale was also considered for the study, and this scale again contained items which appeared conducive to the study being conducted; items within the scale representing the seeking of advice from individuals' social peers in regards to what brands they should purchase, and the amount of time spent discussing products and brands with social peers. This scale was not included in the final questionnaire design again due to limits of space that were associated with the online survey; however implications for possible further research on this topic were again recognised, such as investigating whether factors such as the potential effects of consumers' perceptions of music-related products and services as being brands in their own right, as well as the potential for the amount of time which a consumer spends discussing music and related products or 'brands' with social peers representing a significant predictor (either positive or negative) on social group influence on music consumption behaviours in either online or offline contexts.

In addition, Bearden *et al.*'s (1989) '*Information Seeker (Interpersonal)*' measurement scale was also considered for the questionnaire design of the study. This scale makes use of a greater focus on branded products, which may still be related to the offerings provided by the music industry if one were to consider artists themselves as 'brands'. In particular, the items presented in the scale provide a deeper investigation in terms of

observing what products social peers are purchasing and using; consulting social peers over products when a lack of experience with the product is present; consulting social peers when selecting a best alternative available in a product class, and the frequency of information gathering from other people such as friends and family in relation to a product which an individual is considering purchasing. It can also be argued that these items appear to be relevant to the realm of music consumption, in terms of the products and services which the music industry offers.

While factors such as these were deemed to be outside the scope of this particular study, in terms of not being specific about influences which can be associated with either online or offline social group membership, it was once again acknowledged that implications for future research may be found in the items contained within Bearden *et al.*'s (1989) scale. For example, the items described here may provide a deeper level of analysis and understanding as to the construction of social group influence (both offline and online) in term of music consumption behaviours; in particular by extending the scope of the current study to include the level and frequency of consultation with social peers regarding the purchase of music and related products such as merchandise, as well as the concept of individuals' investigating and discussing the experiences that friends, family, and other social peers possess in terms of music and live performance events featuring particular artists.

Lumpkin's (1985) '*Opinion Leadership (Fashion)*' measurement scale was also considered for inclusion in the questionnaire design, particularly as it was recognised in the literature review that connections between the music and fashion industries appear to exist, especially in terms of cultural cross-overs and practices. However, while it was recognised that opinion leadership can amount to another form of social influence, due to the study being more primarily focused on the influence of others on an individual's consumption behaviours, this scale was not ultimately deemed a necessary inclusion in the online survey.

Nevertheless, elements of Lumpkin's scale were again recognised as posing potentially rich avenues of further research in online and offline social group influence on music consumption behaviours, particularly those items relating to an individual perceiving themselves to be opinion leaders in terms of music consumption within either their

online or offline social groups; therefore establishing an individual influence upon other members of a social group (be it online or offline), which would reflect a different direction of influence to the one that the study was primarily focused on. For example, Lumpkin's scale items could be used in an attempt to measure an individual's belief in sharing the latest music and artists with fellow group members; the enjoyment of being asked about music by other group members; the importance of sharing one's opinion about music and artists; the enjoyment an individual perceives in discussing music with others; a preference for helping other group members to make decisions regarding music purchases or to attend live music events; whether an individual perceives that their fellow group members think of them as being a knowledgeable source of information regarding music, as well as trends which can be associated with music (such as the latest popular music releases, or fashion-related trends such as the latest artist-related clothing and merchandise); whether consumers actually dislike discussing music or live music events; and finally, whether fellow social group members ask an individual for their opinion regarding topics of music consumption such as new music releases and new artists.

In relation to this, it could be hypothesised for example that the frequency with which an individual is asked by fellow group members about their opinions on aspects of consumption such as new music or artists may also represent another potential factor in the level of online social influence which a consumer both receives and transfers to others within the group, whether it be in an online or an offline environment. Therefore it was recognised that other elements of consumer behaviour, such as opinion leadership and the items in Lumpkin's scale discussed here, may also have the potential to be significant predictors of social group influence on music consumption; both in terms of the influence that a group member receives and the influence of the group as a whole.

It was felt that Lastovicka and Gardner's (1979) '*Involvement (Product Class)*' measurement scale warranted consideration for inclusion in the design of the questionnaire for the main study. It is possible that the inclusion of this scale would have provided another alternative take on possible factors or predictors of social group influence in relation to music consumption. While some similarities and cross-overs with the other measurement scales which have been discussed in this section were recognised, it was also noted that some of the items in this scale may have benefitted the

study through the provision of alternative angles which treat music as being a 'product', and applying the involvement theory indicated by Lastovicka and Gardner in their scale. For example, the scale could have been adapted for the study to question participants on their 'individual' factors such as their use of music allowing other people to see them as they wish themselves to be perceived; the concept of music allowing them to attain the type of life which they strive for; whether participants feel that they can make numerous connections or associations between experiences in their lives and music; if participants feel that they definitely have a 'wanting' for music; the use of music in assisting the definition and expression of the 'I' and 'me' for an individual; the rating that participants place on music as being of high importance to themselves in a personal capacity; whether participants determine that due to their personal values, they feel that music 'ought' to be important to them; determining whether the use of music in one's life assists an individual in behaving in the manner in which they wish to behave; and finally, questioning to what degree participants feel that due to what other people may think about them, they feel that music should be important to them.

As can be noted, self-identity appears to be especially prominent in the construction of Lastovicka and Gardner's scale and the several of the items which are contained in it; therefore appearing to provide a link with some of the other measurement scales which have been discussed in this section. Therefore while this aspect of consumer involvement with music as a product would have provided another dimension to the study, the scale by Lastovicka and Gardner was ultimately not included in the final design due to the practical limitations of conducting an online survey; in addition to a feeling that for this particular study, it was necessary to maintain the focus of the questionnaire on aspects of social group influence and a limited number of 'individual' factors. Nevertheless, implications for further research were drawn from the examination of the measurement scales by these researchers. It was recognised that further investigations of differing concepts surrounding factors of involvement with music as a product and self-identity may assist in providing rich sources of data, as well as possible theories, or predictors of social group influence in relation to music consumption behaviours, including live music attendance.

Finally, Wilkes' (1992) '*Involvement (Social)*' measurement scale may have potentially added another dimension to the questionnaire design used for the main study. This

three-item scale focuses on general socialisation factors which can be regarded as further examples of measures which may be used to test for potential predictors of social group influence. Items presented in this scale include questioning participants on their liking of being around and involving themselves with other people; whether taking part in social and community activities is of importance to an individual; and whether participants enjoy having people around them. It was recognised that this scale would have again presented a different category of questions regarding factors of the 'individual', as opposed to the social groups themselves. Social involvement in terms of product consumption (or in this case music) is not a feature of this scale, however it was recognised that the degree with which a consumer enjoys engaging themselves with other people (or fellow music consumers) may potentially be significant predictors as to the effectiveness of social group influence; whether it be in the case of music consumption and live music attendance practices, or indeed it may be hypothesised that this may be true for any product or service.

In considering the potential of Wilkes' scale, it was deemed pertinent that due to the limits of the scope of the study, as well as the time and length constraints of using an online survey-based research methodology, the scale was not included in the final design of the questionnaire. It was again acknowledged however that implications for further research may be drawn from this measurement scale, especially due to connotations of the scale which involve the questioning of consumers' thoughts on socialising, engaging with others (be it in either in general, or in groups such as those centred on music and its consumption), and joining in practices which are covered under the scope of the research questions of the study on social influence in relation to music consumption (such as attendance at live music events or festivals with friends, family members, or other social peers; along with the cultural practices which may also arise from such engagements).

Although some aspects of several of these measurement scales appeared relevant to the study, in terms of the context in which both the research questions and the hypotheses take place, it was also recognised that these measurement scales were also largely based upon existing literature which lay outside the scope of the literature review for this study. It was also recognised however that some elements of the other measurement scales which were considered for the study were actually present in some of the scales

which were used, and hence were represented in some degree in the final design of the questionnaire for the online survey.

4.13.8 Data Preparation and Cleaning

The online survey results were downloaded from the Survey Monkey platform into an excel spreadsheet in condensed numerical format and then directly imported into the SPSS 20 software package for an initial check of any missing or abnormal data.

A percentage-based summary of the survey results was also downloaded, in order to determine an initial analysis of the data and to search for any noticeable general themes.

The only values which were added to the data were those added to the dichotomous variables of 'Gender' and 'Nationality Group'; both these variables being assigned values of '1' for males and '2' for females, and '1' for British and '2' for non-British respectively. This was due to all of the other variables being created from questions in the survey which were either numerical, or were questions based upon Likert measurement scales which did not need to be assigned values.

4.13.9 Missing Responses

In terms of missing variables and the preparation of the data for analysis, any participant who had not fully completed the survey was omitted from the final participant total and study findings. Efforts were made in the design of the questionnaire to ensure that as many full responses could be collected as possible, both through the provision of an engaging survey design and a number of 'compulsory' sections of the questionnaire itself which required an answer before the participant could proceed with answering the survey (particularly those questions which related to the key research questions of the survey; namely those concerned with social group identity and influence, as well as identity and perceived influence of both offline and online social groups). However, it was found that numerous participants returned incomplete surveys with at least one

missing answer. As already discussed, due to the nature of the questionnaire design, this was only possible with the non-‘compulsory’ questions.

Therefore, all participants with missing data were those who had either missed out a question or dropped out of the survey entirely at some point in the response process. In summary, these decisions regarding the preparation of the data for analysis resulted in no missing values being included in the final data set which was analysed for the study.

4.13.10 Normality, Validity, and Reliability of Data

Issues of both reliability and validity were examined when the data set had been collected. This was to ensure that the data collected could be judged as being both reliable and valid, therefore enabling it to be compared to the results of previous studies discussed in the literature review.

In terms of using the SPSS software to test the normality, validity, and reliability of the data that was collected, it was intended that several tests would be employed in order to establish these concepts. Cronbach’s Alpha tests were employed to test the reliability of the constructs suggested by the literature and tested by the survey. This was in addition to comparing the Cronbach Alpha figures of the constructs with those of the original measurement scales, again to test for the validity of the adapted scales.

4.13.11 Descriptive Research

In regards to a suitable type of research for this particular study, it was identified that descriptive research would be the best form of research to undertake.

Descriptive research, also known as survey research, has been characterised as being a more formal research process of exploration, and is typically used for product-usage and customer-satisfaction research (Hoffman *et al.*, 2005). As well as demographic characteristics, such as age, income, or occupation, it is used to query and examine participants on their behavioural habits, usage behaviour, purchase criteria, satisfaction

levels, and future needs. Descriptive research also involves the use of sampling and surveying of the target population, in this case music consumers, using a thoroughly prepared set of questions. This form of research may also assist businesses, in this case the record companies who play a crucial role in the music industry, to further segment the market based on factors such as gender, age, and other demographics. This may also be tied in with consumers' purchasing behaviour, in that it could be used in an attempt to concentrate on tailored solutions for the target audience, and to win over a particular segment of the market. This makes descriptive research a suitable form of research to satisfy the outlined aims and objectives of this research study, in that the study is attempting to measure music consumers' habits, behaviours, practices, ethics, and knowledge relating to music consumption (including live music attendance); amongst other factors.

Descriptive research may also be considered to be cross-sectional, in that it can attempt to gauge consumers' feelings at this point in time. It can be argued that the state of the music industry as it stands today makes this an important necessity in the research, due to the industry being a fast-moving one (particularly in terms of the release of new technologies and online services that may be associated with music consumption). As numbers are required in order to determine how consumers feel about certain aspects of their music consumption and both online and offline social networking, the data collected for this study will be that of a quantitative nature.

The capacity and plethora of powerful communication tools available through the Internet were fully utilised in the online survey approach. The Survey Monkey program (www.surveymonkey.com) was used to electronically deploy the questionnaire. Web-based market research has already been recognised in recent years as becoming an important research methodology, especially for consumer preferences for new products, services, and technology. This is for a number of reasons. Hoffman *et al.* (2005) cited the Total Quality Management (TQM) effect that it has had. They particularly highlighted the increase in the quality of research due to the reduction of errors in the market research process. Direct data entry into an online questionnaire for example reduces random and systematic errors in the data and statistical analysis. It is also a method which substantially decreases the cost of surveying, as much as 20-50% according to Hoffman *et al.* (2005), as well as the speeding up of the entire research

process from weeks to days. This allows companies to drastically cut down on return time, as well as to generate and act on new ideas based on the survey results much more quickly. Although the issue of whether or not online sampling provides a true reflection of the sample of the population required (i.e. the target market, in this case music consumers) is present, studies have shown that more often than not online surveying provides a more specialised sample, if it is designed well and targeted specifically.

Strauss *et al.* (2003) also suggested numerous advantages and disadvantages of using an online surveying program; for example in terms of the advantages of online survey research. These can be derived as being fast and inexpensive, diverse (ranging from large group of Internet users worldwide to small specialized niches), the use of computer entry, which may reduce researcher data-entry errors, a perception that honest responses will be given to sensitive questions, facilities which mean that anyone-can-answer, invitation-only options and password-protection, electronic data being easier to tabulate, and a perception that there will be less interview bias. On the other hand, these researchers also identified disadvantages of the methodology, such as problems in sample selection and the subsequent generalizability of any findings based on the data collected, difficulties in measurement validity (such as different Internet browsers, computer screen sizes, and resolution settings), the potential presence of self-selection bias, participant authenticity being uncertain, frivolous or dishonest responses, duplicate submissions in data collection, and a steep learning curve for Web developers.

4.14 Structural Equation Modelling

The main study adopted structural equation modelling (SEM) to analyse the data and test the proposed hypotheses. As well as describing the process that was adopted, an introduction to the SEM techniques is provided in this section of the chapter, in addition to the reasons for SEM being chosen for use in the study.

In essence, structural equation modelling was initially known as the 'JKW model', due to its creation by Jöreskog, Keesling and Wiley who were the first to develop a model of this type (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Subsequently, it was adopted by a wide range

of disciplines that include the tourist industry (Reisinger & Turner, 1999; Gross & Brown, 2008), the field of psychology (MacCallum & Austin, 2000; Widaman & Thompson, 2003), management of the environment (La Peyre *et al.*, 2001) and in medical research (Bentler & Stein, 1992). In particular, it emerged into the consciousness of research disciplines relating to business in the 1980s, and since then has developed into a widely-used set of statistical techniques within various points in the marketing research field (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1982; Fornell & Bookstein, 1982; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000; Hellier *et al.*, 2003; Martínez-López *et al.* 2012).

The process itself consists of the development of two sub-models, which are termed the 'measurement' model and the 'structural' model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004; Byrne, 2010). The performance of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used in the development of the measurement model, and this essentially, "...shows how constructs are operationalized by sets of measured variables" (Hair *et al.*, 2010; p.690). On the other hand, the structural model developed using the techniques will, "...specify the causal relations of the constructs to one another" (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; p.411). As such, it can be held that the measurement model is used to assess inter-correlations between the measurement items contained within the survey used by the main study, and appropriately groups them so as to reduce the larger number of observed variables into what is considered to be a 'manageable' number of constructs. Subsequently, the structural model assesses relationships between these constructs. For example, the relationship between 'group identity' and 'intention to share live music experiences'. As such, this allows for the testing of the hypotheses contained within the two conceptual models for offline and online social group influence.

When considering statistical techniques for the main quantitative study, SEM was chosen for several reasons. The main advantage of SEM is that it is, "...the only analysis that allows complete and simultaneous tests of all relationships" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; p.679). As well as allowing for the simultaneous analysis of both observed and latent variable factors, SEM combines multiple regression analysis with CFA. This makes it an advanced statistical technique (Schumaker & Lomax, 2004), particularly when considering that all of the other main statistical techniques such as

factor analysis, discriminant analysis and multiple regression are held to possess the same key limitation in that they can only test a single relationship at a time (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

In addition, as the main study relied upon human responses which may be subject to measurement errors in the form of participant errors, SEM has the ability to take into account measurement errors within the observed variables. Therefore, the adoption of SEM as the statistical technique of choice resulted in an increase in the reliability of the findings generated by the study (Bagozzi, 1983; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000; Schumaker & Lomax, 2004; Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2008). It has also been suggested that SEM reduces the risk of problems associated with multicollinearity within a data set (Farrar & Glauber, 1967; Iacobucci, 2009; Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2000; Lee & Hooley, 2005). Multicollinearity has been defined as being the, "...extent to which a variable can be explained by the other variables in a data set." (Hair *et al.*, 2010; p.93). In the main study, multi-item scales were used to represent each construct. However, if a straight-forward regression analysis was conducted on the observed variables within each multi-item scale, a high level of inter-correlation would have been present; even without considering any of the other variables contained within the data set. In the event, SEM can overcome this problem by creating a measurement model in which inter-correlated observed variables are factored to create latent constructs.

In particular, SEM analysis techniques were selected for the main study due to the fact they hold significant potential for "furthering theory development" (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; p.411), meaning that SEM is considered to be a preferred quantitative method for the confirmation or disconfirmation of theories (Schumaker & Lomax, 2004). As such, it was also hoped that by adopting SEM and following closely the recommendations of previous researchers, reliable and useful findings would be obtained from the main study.

4.14.1 Computer Software Used

The analysis of the quantitative study made use of two computer software programs. These were SPSS 20 for initial checking of the data set and the presence of any missing data, and also AMOS 21 for conducting SEM. While SEM can be considered to be a set of complex techniques, powerful yet user-friendly software such as AMOS has been developed in recent years which provides wider access to the techniques involved. . This has led to a subsequent increase in the number of researchers who have adopted SEM, mainly due to the ability to conduct SEM without needing to be an advanced statistician (Babin *et al.*, 2008). The first such software program was developed in 1973 and was called LISREL (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). This led to a multitude of further SEM programs being developed and released since the mid-1980s, including AMOS, MPlus, EQS, CALIS, and SEPATH.

Each of these programs have been found to possess their own individual strengths and weaknesses, however they all have the same general application of simplifying the ways in which SEM can be performed (Hox, 1995). Originally, in the 1980s and 1990s LISREL proved to be the most popular of the SEM computer packages released. However, more recently, the AMOS software program has challenged LISREL by rapidly increasing in use due to its user-friendly nature (Babin *et al.*, 2008). In terms of approaches to SEM, both AMOS and LISREL adopted covariance-based techniques, whereby path estimates are calculated in such a way as to minimise the difference between the structure of the predicted and observed variance-covariance matrix (Hsu *et al.*, 2006). The popularity of such a technique is high within the marketing research community (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996), it has faced criticism due to the required assumption that the data set is of a multivariate normal nature (Byrne, 2010). The main study for the thesis was also a case in point, as marketing research has often been held to rely on human responses and as such, normal distribution is generally not expected (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982).

4.14.2 Structural Equation Modelling Process

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the SEM process includes the creation of two sub-models, which are the 'measurement' model and the 'structural' model. Whereas the measurement model is used to identify relationships between the observed variables and their suggested latent constructs, the structural model is used to identify relationships between the latent constructs. While a one-step approach to conducting SEM can be taken, whereby both the measurement and structural components of the model are estimated simultaneously, this approach has been criticised by research literature for the potential generation of mis-specified models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Gallagher *et al.*, 2008). As such, a two-step approach to SEM has been adopted (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), whereby the first step involves the development of the measurement model and conducting an assessment of its measurement reliability and validity. This is subsequently followed by the production of the structural model in order to explain the nature of the relationships between the constructs contained within the model.

4.14.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

AMOS was used to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on both the offline and online social environment models using the MLE technique. CFA can be used as a method for the testing and improvement of validity and reliability of the proposed measurement models. Using CFA, the number of constructs and observed variables loading onto each of the constructs has to be specified (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The drawing of the proposed measurement models into the AMOS software enabled the comprehensive testing of the validity of the models in terms of the convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity of the latent constructs, in addition to the testing of overall model fit (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). As such, the tests of reliability and validity enable the measurement models to be developed and improved in order to enable more robust conclusions to be drawn from the results (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

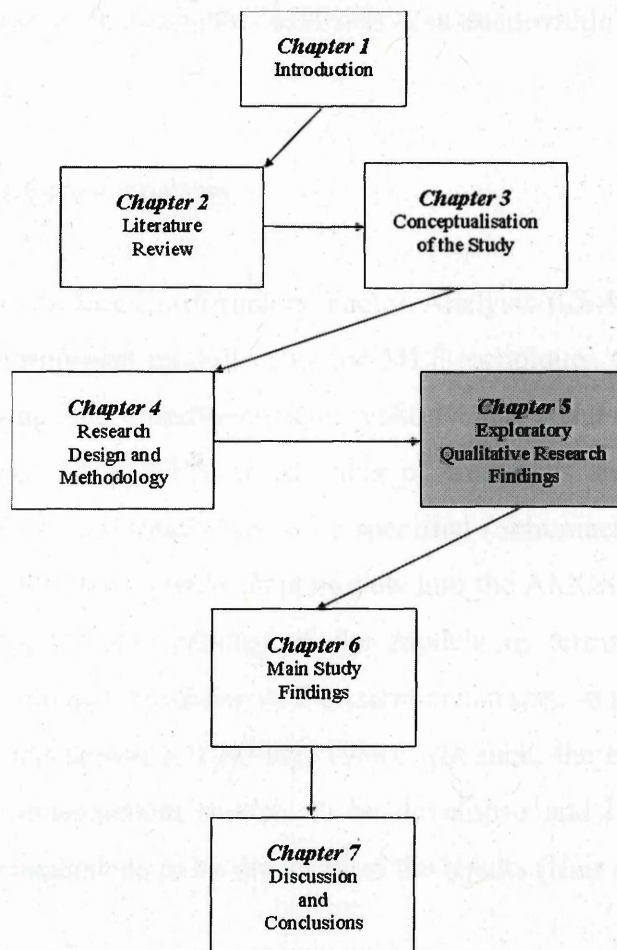
4.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodologies employed in the data collection and analyses adopted by the research. Firstly, this included a discussion on the exploratory qualitative phase of the study, followed by an explanation of the main quantitative study. In addition, the chapter discussed the main analytical techniques of structural equation modelling used in analysing the music survey. This included identification of both the strengths and potential limitations of the structural modelling techniques, as well as the statistical tests for both the reliability and the validity of the survey and the proposed conceptual models. The thesis continues in the next chapter by presenting the findings and discussion of the initial qualitative research, which was conducted with a view to providing an assessment of the relevance of the proposed conceptual model developed from previous literature in the online social environment. Subsequently, the findings of the main quantitative study are provided in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Exploratory Qualitative Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an examination of the exploratory qualitative data that was collected through the webnography study, including selections of example comments made by forum users to support the identification of any trends or observations made from the data. This subsequently leads to a discussion on the findings of the initial phase of the study.



5.2 Webnography Data Analysis

In observing the online forums, data was categorised in line with the theoretical framework established in the literature review, in order to focus the research and tie in the findings with their relevance in light of existing theories and studies surrounding music consumption, identity, and social influence. While the data was categorised according to these areas of knowledge, it was noted that examples usually included one or more elements of each. As such, there was considerable overlap between the categories with data particularly alluding to both social identity and social influence for example.

The findings begin with data concerning self-identity that was found in the context of online discussions.

5.2.1 Self-identity

Music consumption featured prominently in consumers' discussions surrounding lifestyles; especially in the context of an almost daily routine. In both the previous comments and the following example statement, illustrations of the use of music consumption to aid elements of lifestyle, such as relaxation, are present.

Participant R3

"I get up, get ready for school and as I'm going to school I listen to music with my iPod so that I can wake up. Then after school when I get home and if I have time and finished my homework I listen to music, again from the iPod (it's just something I've got used to). Also, if there is a new album release I listen to that too. Now, sometimes I listen music from MTV before I go to sleep or any other time of the day that it's free and I'm bored. Sometimes, I'm searching over the internet for new music, songs, this site also helps. So...yea I think that's all. Oh I also listen to soundtracks of course when I'm watching tv shows and tv series. I watch a lot of them :P."

In the case of this comment, it is apparent for the individual concerned that music consumption is part of their daily routine. In addition to this, it can also be suggested that this data concurs with previous studies discussed in the literature review on the increased importance of music consumption in terms of youth and identity.

It can also be noted from this statement that the data appears to provide evidence of the use of mobile MP3 devices such as *iPods* to engage in music consumption while travelling; the individual in this example also citing how this has become a normal way of life for them. This may also provide an indication that the introduction of new technology in recent years has resulted in portable MP3 players superseding the older formats of CDs and vinyl records; particularly in terms of the portability and convenience afforded by such devices. In addition to this however, it is also observed from their comments that the individual also engages in music consumption with the portable device when at home; which may be considered an indication that music consumption associated with portable devices such as MP3 players, mobile phones, can also extend to all environments, not just those traditionally associated with such devices. In other words, consumers' use of such products are not restricted to practices such as travelling or commuting through public places; hence consumption can extend to private locations, such as the home, as well.

This comment also suggests that the individual concerned makes use of both the Internet and online music discussion platforms to engage in the discovery of new music and artists. As well as being representative of other data collected by the webnography study, it appears that the concepts of the use of both the Internet and online social group networking in new music discovery also extends to the key youth segment of the music consumption markets. It can therefore be suggested that this form of music discovery may not only be practiced by important members of the music industry's target markets, but may also form a part of the process of discovering new music for consumer groups of all ages. As can also be noted from the comments by participants *R3* and *R1* (the retired consumer), this would appear to apply to consumers in different age group categories, in addition to both example statements being representative of many of the consumers' views found through the webnography data collection.

In another variation on practices associated with music listening habits, the comments appeared to provide evidence that some individuals' music consumption is centred on the concept of listening to albums, as opposed to single tracks. It can be recognised that different aspects of the benefits of portable devices appear to be of importance to consumers' perceptions of value. In addition to the previous example, it was also noted in the following comments from participant R6 that an issue of storage space was considered negatively by the consumer in question.

Participant R6

"listening to music while traveling is a great way to experience life, I mainly travel by bus to work. Sometimes when I have new music loaded on my player, I hate when colleagues/friends will eat into that time..Sometimes I wish I had more time with my music, as it's barely sufficient..There are so many artists & kinds of music I am waiting to experience. But 1 GB music player isn't enough for that, so I keep changing my tracks within 3-4 days.."

Some other observations which contributed towards the study can be drawn from this example statement, such as the consumer's perception that music consumption while travelling enhances their life; a notion which may indicate that it is possible that music-based values can become mixed with more general values of life. In addition, this particular individual appears to gain value from the ability to engage in music consumption in a very private manner; to the point where external interruption from other people is frowned upon. This may again relate to the benefits of portable music playing devices, as discussed previously in this analysis. Therefore, it can also be observed that this particular consumer finds that they experience an inability to be entirely private while consuming music in public environments.

The following selections of data refer to consumers' choice of format when the process of music consumption is being explored. The following statement from participant R5 also appeared to be representative of numerous users who frequented the online forums.

Participant R5

"I've got into trouble before on this site's predecessor for espousing the sound of vinyl. I firmly believe that vinyl out-performs any other medium that I've heard. Having said that, I've no experience with high bit-rate MP3, so perhaps I should rein in my opinions. Most of my music is on CD, and I'm still buying them regularly with no intention of changing this until I have to. Haven't bought vinyl for years despite the above due to the prohibitive costs."

As can be observed in these comments, online discussions appeared to coincide with this theme in the data seemed to centre on an individual's preference for one format over another; which can also be viewed as a reference to music quality in terms of the listening and playback of recorded music. Therefore, this could also be considered an important feature of factors associated with music consumption. There is also evidence in statements such as this one from participant R5 to show that despite a consumer perceiving that one music format may be superior in quality to another, other factors may prevent related behaviours such as purchase; including prohibitive costs (in this case vinyl records), as well as a recognition by this consumer that they do not possess a certain level of knowledge regarding a format (in this case higher quality MP3 files).

Therefore, it can be suggested that factors such as high prices and a perceived lack of knowledge on the part of the consumer may have either a positive or a negative influence upon a person's music consumption. For example, in terms of possible negative connotations upon music consumption, high prices may result in a consumer being unable to afford a music product in their preferred format, and a lack of knowledge about a particular format may hinder a consumer's use of it. This could also result in non-progression to such behaviours as purchase and further consumption. It can be argued based on these webnography examples, that factors such as price may need closer consideration; as well as the possibility of more consideration being given to educational programs, which may inform music consumers about the use of new technologies and software such as high bit-rate MP3 files.

On the other hand, some consumers in the forums stated that they prefer to mix their use of music formats, but appeared to enhance their music and artist discovery process by

embracing new platforms such as the Internet and MP3s; as can be observed in the following example.

Participant R7

“I have records and I have CDs. Quite a few. But I mostly listen to mp3s. I'm constantly on the hunt for new music. I cannot satisfy my thirst except from mp3s found out there in the ether. So it is not an issue of sound quality for me. I do look for high bit-rate mp3s, but I probably don't have the hardware to hear the difference anyways. I send the audio from iTunes through a Monster cable into my compact JVC component system. As for the CD vs. vinyl debate I've heard arguments for both sides. From what I understand a CD is capable of storing more information than a record. The format can hold more information, and therefore more detail in the sound. But it depends on how it is mastered. Some CDs are mastered as [...] describes and some take full advantage of the format. For me there are too many factors involved to give a clear winner. And because I'm not a sound engineer I really don't care!”

Based on such data, it is possible to consider that the MP3 format and the Internet in general, are now used by many consumers to sample and discover new music. In concurring with the findings of the existing literature, it can be suggested that elements of the online environment such as the ability to stream or sample music without purchase, as well as the ability to download music through both legal and illegal means, has provided consumers with considerable value in terms of new music discovery; ranging from amateur artists and bands on MySpace to established signed artists' websites and social networking groups. It is therefore recognised that such sampling of music is not possible with other formats such as CDs and vinyl records.

The comments from participant *R7* also provides an indication that sound or playback quality of music products does not appear to be an issue for some consumers, with differing reasons for this concept within music consumption. For example in the case of participant *R7*, sound quality does not appear to be an essential part of their music consumption due to a perception that they do not possess suitable playback equipment of the required quality. However, a clear division was observed between online forum users who perceived format quality in a similar manner to that described in the previous statement, and other users who appeared to consider sound quality as being an

important part of consumption; as typically described by the forum users in the following two statements.

Participant R8

“To be honest, I only use digital formats out of convenience. I like the art for CDs and vinyl more so. I think I'd be very sad to see all forms of physical music disappear... But I suppose it's inevitable. All hail the poor quality lossy MP3s!”

Participant R7

“I agree that with sound quality, CDs are the best. Well, they should be the best, but it varies. It depends on how the album was engineered and mastered. It also depends on your playback device. Sometimes a high bit-rate mp3 can sound just as good as a CD. I like all three formats for different reasons. Records are fun to collect and play, CDs (should) sound best, and mp3s are convenient (easier to come by and more portable).”

These example statements also show evidence of a different view; that of the physical music product. This also proved to be a notable theme in the data investigated, which again leads to conclusions that for many consumers, the concept of physical formats and products are still an important element of the processes associated with modern-day music consumption. This would also appear to be the case in spite of some of the digital and virtual breakthroughs in music consumption enabled by technology, as adhered to in the literature review for this study. This concept appeared to be especially prevalent when forum users were discussing the artwork that accompanies music releases in the various formats. Again, it seemed that general opinions of forum users centred on the size of the artwork enabled by the corresponding music format. For example, as explained by participant R9, disparity in the artwork between music formats can be a concern to consumers.

Participant R9

“however, when it comes to vinyl, we have to disagree im afraid! i like the sound of vinyl, always have done and always will, the new vinyl albums/singles are of higher quality than those of yesteryear and i believe there will always be a market for them, albeit collectors of an artists output(in my case). And i prefer to look at the full 12" of cover than a microscopic 6" version of a cover any day [...] one example of a great album cover that loses its effect on a cd packaging is "sgt.peppers", compare the two(vinyl and cd) and tell me which looks best, another two i saw recently were "band of joy"-robert plant & "national ransom"-elvis costello, both look great on the vinyl format, and nothing special in the cd format.”

It should be noted that in accordance with the previous literature, the concept of the use of digital music-based consumption technologies for convenience (such as the portability of MP3 players) was also evident in the findings of the webnography analysis. On the other hand, it did appear that a minority of online forum users did not share in the belief of formats such as MP3 files being convenient, as illustrated by the following example statement.

Participant R10

“[...] Also a problem with Mp3's - one glitch with your PC and it's all gone. And then you have to do it all over again. The record companies are gonna love that. Everyone will have to buy everything all over again. And Mp3 is far from convenient. Download this, copy that, backup etc. etc. CD's are far more convenient. Stick it in and it plays. Strange how in the video world everyone is going for 'bigger is better', but in the audio world everything becomes smaller. And the quality of Mp3' IS crap, no matter what bitrate you choose. It's DESIGNED to reduce file size - you always lose some quality. Forget the term 'lossless' - it's a marketing ploy. Anything to make you believe you are getting the real thing. Most young people today don't notice it because they did not grow up with audiophile quality recordings.”

It should be noted however that this was a minority finding in the online forums investigated, and the consensus according to this webnography data appeared to be one

of positive experiences surrounding the perceived convenience and portability of digital music-based technologies; particularly that of devices such as iPods and MP3 players.

The factor of nostalgia was also revealed by the webnography analysis as being a potentially important emotional factor in the modern-day consumption of music, with a considerable number of online forum users appearing to indicate their experiences of the concept in relation to their music consumption. A typical illustration of this is presented in the next example statement, where a consumer is describing how one format (vinyl records) provides an element of nostalgia despite another format (CDs) being perceived as more convenient to use.

Participant R11

“I enjoy the sound, when the snaps & crackles aren't too bad. Cds are easier to use but there is a nostalgia for me when I pull out a record. It is easier to read the lyric sheet. I also tend to commit to the whole side or whole album if I pull out the record, making listening to a record more of an event. I know I'm going to enjoy the whole thing because I intend it. I also can find so many more titles on record that have not been released on cd.”

More typically, the webnography data collection uncovered statements such as the following comments regarding values of music and nostalgia.

Participant R9

“back in 1983, i left school in the august to start my apprenticeship and that particular week 'wrapped around your finger' by the police was released, as the Police were at the top of their game virtually every radio station was playing them, what felt like every second song. anyway the opening line in the song 'you consider me a young apprentice....' caught my attention and thus whenever i hear that song now it brings back memories of long hours, crappy tasks and little pay...but in a good way”

It was observed from this example that music, particularly a certain song or piece of music, may provide value in the form of providing an individual with emotion-based constructs such as memories of certain times or places in their lives; the music essentially appearing to act as a trigger in cuing these reminders. It can be argued that these cues also provide a reminder of one's past experiences, and depending on whether the associated memories are deemed by the individual in question to be good or bad, may result in the reproduction of emotional values. Therefore, from a marketing and consumer behaviour perspective, it can be suggested that nostalgia-invoked musical cues may lead to such actions as the obtainment of music or a related product in reaction to the reminder that was received when listening to that song or piece of music.

Finally, in this particular example statement, other elements of format usage in relation to music consumption can be identified. Aside from the emotional properties of nostalgia, which appeared in numerous threads by online forum users and can therefore be considered a potentially important factor in music consumption, it is also possible to consider further elements of sound quality that may be associated with consumption. For example, the individual's experience of listening to vinyl records only appears to be an enjoyable or satisfactory one when there are minimum noises such as snapping and crackling in the playback of the record.

In addition, this forum user also expresses experiences associated with listening to a whole album. In light of technologies such as MP3 players, which allow users to 'shuffle' individual tracks by different artists during playback, the use of older formats such as vinyl records in particular (as well as CDs) may still encourage certain consumers to engage in the experience of listening to whole albums. It can be argued that the experience of listening to a whole album by an artist may be different to that of a single song or piece of music, and therefore consumers may attribute different values to both. Notably in this example, the individual concerned is describing how listening to a whole album through the vinyl record brings a sense of music consumption being an event. Arguably, this concept of listening to recorded music as an event can also be compared to attending a live music event, in that both may provide a certain type of entertainment experience for a given period.

Participant *R9* also illustrates evidence of one more aspect relating to music consumption, which is that of being able to find more music through the consumption of a particular format; in this case the availability of music on the vinyl record format which is not available on CD. Hence, value for consumers may be present in the form of searching for and obtainment of music that is only available in a specific format. Although this was not established as being a typical part of online forum discussions, it is none the less an interesting potential source of consumer value in music consumption. For example, value may be obtained from experiences associated with the search and purchase of music and related products in both online and offline contexts. In other words, the discovery of new music online may be compared with the 'physical' discovery of music in a record store or other music retailer, through the purchase of physical formats such as CDs or vinyl records, or sampling via in-store music playback.

The following selections of data refer to consumers' values of the music that they consume. Although views and opinions of the forum users appeared to be wide-ranging, it was still possible to draw out some typical views of the values of music. In this first typical example statement, participant *R12* appears to strongly concur with the identity theories discussed in the literature review; essentially appearing to suggest that the music an individual listens to identifies the type of person they are, and what their personality and characteristics may be.

Participant R12

"I personally believe it's about who you are as a person. I love bands like Modest Mouse, Coheed and Cambria, Sun Kill Moon, Spoon, etc. These are bands that the general populace don't know of, and won't listen to because it's different. Maybe its the sound of the singer's voice (Coheed and Cambria specifically for that example) or the variety of instruments or simply the lyrics. And I'm a rather odd person lol, a likeable one at that... but I'm just not one the bandwagon with the other people I'm around."

In addition, it can also be observed that this consumer appears to regard himself or herself as being 'different' or alternative to the general population, in the way that they listen to music and artists that they perceive many people "don't know of, and won't

listen to". Thus this can be considered as a notable example of the use of music consumption as a means of constructing and promoting a certain identity to other people; in the case of participant *R12*, an identity which would appear to be one of an 'alternative' personality'. Further to this, apart from citing perceived differences with the general population, it would also seem that this consumer perceives their music consumption as setting themselves apart from people closer to them, or their immediate social groups and peers. From the perspective of the thesis, it can again be envisaged that a prominent social influence factor may be present in cases such as these. However, when considering this particular example, it can also be argued that participant *R12* appears to perceive this influence to be low (or even non-existent) as they do not listen to the same music as the people that they are in close contact with.

It may also be the case that this comment by participant *R12* potentially provides evidence of a negative social influence. For example, were this consumer's fellow group members tending to consume more 'mainstream' music, it can be suggested that if this consumer wishes to maintain their 'alternative' mentality, they may actively search for music that group members are not listening to. While it can be argued that behaviour such as this may potentially support a consumer's 'alternative' social status, it may also be theorised that the consumer is still being indirectly influenced by group members, in that they are actively choosing to consume music which their fellow social peers may not be interested in listening to. Therefore, there is an indication that influence from fellow members of social and peer groups on an individual's music consumption may not always be pertinent, or even be in the form of a negative influence; ensuring that an individual's music consumption behaviours (which may include live music attendance) remain largely their own independent actions. However, the suggestion of potential external influence from fellow social group members was still apparent in the data, even if the influence may be arguably described as being indirect in nature.

In other perceived values of music, other forum users seemed to describe different values or meanings of music; with some of the comments reflecting more general meanings of music within the context of life, as can be observed in the following example post.

Participant R5

“We all love music, or we wouldn't be here, but I was thinking last night about how I'd define music. It's a bit like love, easy to know when you experience it, but not so easy to define. To me it can consist of sound, rhythm, melody, harmony and all the rest, but the real beauty of music is the expression of some sort of idea or emotion wrapped up in a creative outburst. It all shares a common language which we know as individuals to a greater or lesser extent, but different music means different things to each and every one of us. Infinite meanings, interpretations, and associations exist, so in that sense it's no different to any other art form, but music seems to have a unique universal appeal to mankind.”

It was recognised that when considering this type of comments, they are arguably more focused on emotional aspects of music consumption, which can be considered more in line with theories surrounding music psychology, rather than those of consumer behaviour. While it was found that statements such as these were congruent with many of the views expressed by forum users, it was also recognised that music psychology theory is beyond the scope of the thesis. Hence, the emotional content of music was not considered further in the methodological design of the main study. However, the potential importance of this field to further research was recognised, and this will be discussed further in the conclusions of the thesis.

As noted in the literature review, previous studies appeared to indicate that music consumption is important in the lives of young consumer groups such as adolescents and teenagers, as well as for identity construction in terms of both individual identity and collective identity. In an attempt to further investigate the values of music to younger consumer, the webnography study also examined posts by forum users who appeared to have been heavily influenced by music consumption during these earlier stages of their lives. Some typical posts are presented in the following comment.

Participant R13

“...See I live in East Texas (that's right yee haw I'm a country girl) so the most accessible type of music around here is country so that's what I grew up hearing in public venues and such and then of course there are the numerous drones out there that only listen to the "popular" music which nowadays is usually rap or hip hop of some kind. However I also grew up heavily influenced by my father's taste in music which (due to his age and raising) was classic rock. SO I am a huge classic rock fan! (Saw The Eagles in concert this fall... BEST CONCERT OF MY LIFE!) But then again, I happen to like a lot of music that those around me don't, a go for the heavy metal etc. Won't name bands because I'm rather random and listen to different stuff all the time...”

It can be observed in this example statement that music-based influence for this consumer is drawn from the locality in which they lived and grew up. In relation to the findings of this analysis so far, this provides another perception of an external influence other than that of parties such as close friends, members of social groups, and other peers. Thus in terms of the thesis, it can be considered that a geographical locality influence may be another factor present in potential external influences upon a person's music consumption. In addition, participant *R13* also suggests evidence of a parental influence on music consumption. For example, the consumer refers to her father's taste in music, which meant she herself became a fan of a particular genre (classic rock); another potential factor of external influence on music consumption behaviours can be suggested as being contributory towards this thesis.

The following selections of data refer to consumers' online discussions on aspects of technology and music consumption. As noted in the literature review, technology appears to have made considerable differences to the music industry in recent years, and observations made during the webnography data collection appeared to confirm some strong opinions by consumers on the impact technology has had on music consumption and related behaviours; be they perceptions of either positive impacts or negative ones. Positive uses of technology have already been discussed in this webnography analysis in relation to the other 'categories' of music consumption data, which were identified by this study; such as consumers' perceptions that hand-held music devices such as *iPods*

and other MP3 players offer portability and convenience, as well as the benefits of the use of the Internet for new music and artist discovery.

It was also observed that the online forums examined contained numerous posts by users who discuss perceived negative aspects of modern-day technologies in their use for music consumption, as can be observed in the following excerpt. The forum user appears to have described their feelings about their apparent perception, that newer music consumption technology has degraded the role of music albums.

Participant R14

“Maybe I mean more that single song downloads, and similar methods of obtaining music, are taking away the relevance of full albums? Either way, I just see a lack of relevance (which I think is what I'm really trying to say personally) coming on with all of this. It just isn't the same, downloading a song compared to owning the disc. So much really does make a difference, and a strong album can say a lot about a band (although, as you said, not everyone can pull together a strong album). Classic albums in whatever genre tend to stand so strong because of so many different factors. Slayer's Reign in Blood, for example (though not everybody's favorite), is strengthened because of those very aspects. Starting with Angel of Death and ending with Raining Blood, while having very short songs in between. This results in not even thirty minutes of music, yet one of the most well recognized albums in the trash metal subgenre. These new forms of obtaining music, to me, take that away. Even if the whole album is available online, I just personally wouldn't get the same kick out of it. Being able to turn the pages of that booklet, and see the art of the CD. Then being able to listen to the songs in the order they came in for the first time, while reading anything in the book (whether it be lyrics, or just tid bits of information left by the artist).”

While it can also be observed that this example statement illustrates further evidence of consumer desire of physical music products over that of digital ones, as alluded to in previous example statements in this webnography analysis, there appears to be a further implication here for consumers' music consumption in terms of albums as full products. For example, it can be considered that value may be sought from listening to a whole music album, as opposed to listening to a single song. It can therefore be argued that different experiences for consumers may revolve around listening to a single song and a full album. Further to this, the introduction of new music consumption technologies in

recent years, enables consumers to listen to a series of songs by different artists (such as through the use of the playlist 'shuffle' functions on an iPod), has potentially changed consumers' general patterns of music consumption. This concept was found to be a major theme in the data collected and analysed for the webnography. Therefore, this concept was considered as part of the research methodology design for the main quantitative study of the thesis.

The following extract is another example of discussions surrounding music consumption and technology that was analysed. young consumer who seems to have several feelings regarding this theme of the data; and in this particular case, the apparent decline in the CD format in their eyes.

Participant R14

"I think it's only necessary that I say that I was putting CD's in the same breath as albums. At 15, I didn't get to experience vinyls or any of the sort. It's mostly been CDs for me. I think they're about the same, though, in that they're becoming more obsolete. My friends no longer talk about going and buying that new CD. They'll talk about downloading it from wherever they get their music. They mention that they're releasing a new album sometime this year, but won't say they plan on actually purchasing it. And it's a shame. Like I said, I think the physical aspect is important to an album (whether it be in a CD format or otherwise)."

Several observations can be drawn from this example. Firstly, these comments appear to suggest further evidence of a consumer-driven preference for music being distributed in a physical package; particularly that of an album. It can also be considered that this consumer's comments reflect those of the example statements regarding youth and music consumption. Therefore, a link can be drawn between these two sections of the analysis; in particular, the way in which this statement refers to social group influence and young consumers. For example, participant *R14* not only described how their friends no longer purchase the CD format (especially in the case of new releases), but there appears to be a lack of social influence in that despite their behaviour, this young consumer continues to both purchase CDs and seems to place value upon the format.

This not only appears to add further evidence to the youth and music consumption theme, as another example of a perception of high levels of social group influence in relation to music consumption behaviours, but also provides an indication that consumers in younger age groups are increasingly changing the way in which they discuss music. For example, it appears from the example that young consumers (or social peers of this young individual) have changed the focus of their music consumption discussions from ones surrounding the CD format to those about the MP3 format. As noted in the literature review, the introduction of MP3 software and technology has made changes to the ways in which music is consumed in the modern-day environment; which a statement such as this seems to support. The data contained within this statement also appears to indicate that while the individual's social peers regularly discuss new music, they do not appear to purchase new music; suggesting that they may instead listen to new music via streaming methods through the Internet and on other devices such as portable players and mobile phones.

The following selections of data refer to consumers' online discussions regarding ways in which they discover new music. These example statements were used to elaborate on the concept further; particularly in the manner in which consumers perceive the digital music consumption technologies and software accessible through platforms such as websites and services offered by the Internet.

In terms of use of the Internet to discover new music and artists, the following comments proved to be typical of the statements made by online users of the forums examined for the webnography data collection. It was found that overall, opinions discussed by forum users in relation to this topic tended to be either positive or negative ones. For example, the following two statements can be considered as being positive in nature; both in terms of the potential benefits of reading and interacting with music discussion forums and subsequent new music and artist discovery (in the first example), and an apparent perception of the individual in the second example that virtual Internet-based platforms are superior to those of previous avenues of new music and artist discovery (in this case the examples of radio, newspapers, and magazines).

Participant R9

“this is the good thing about music sites like this one, we look, we read, we take note, and we sometimes venture out on our own to assess these artists.”

Participant R7

“There are worlds of great music out there. And you have a tool that makes it easy to find - the internet. If you rely on old dying media like the radio and print you'll struggle to find what you're looking for.”

However, while positive interpretations of these platforms appeared to be expressed by online forum users, it was also noted that negative consumer opinions were also present in the webnography data. For example, it can be observed that while participant *R15* in the following statement does report some success in the use of the Internet and associated technologies, they also appear to be of the opinion that these methods are not without perceived difficulties.

Participant R15

“Sometimes I think that with all these websites, spammers and large volumes of information - finding the music you really want is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Some days I want to find some throwbacks that are so old they predate my very existence 🤔. Other times I just want to listen to something new, just have a sample of what is out there before being forced to sign up or register to a website. Other times just simply downloading an MP3 just doesn't compare to holding the real authentic CD in your hand. I dunno maybe I am just difficult or fussy but either way some days it seems as if good music is hard to find. I have however found a website and it's not too bad....we'll see if it can keep me occupied long enough before I move on to the next conquest”

In this example, it can also be observed, that participant *R15*'s opinion appears to revolve around a factor of too much information being available on the Internet in terms

of music consumption opportunities. Although this was not found to be a major theme in the webnography data, it is none the less a different consideration that can be attributed to the possible advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Internet for new music and artist discovery. In the case of this particular individual, there is also evidence to show that the perceived difficulties encountered with there being too much information online are present whether the consumer is searching for either old or new music.

In addition, there appears to be another issue raised in the comments by participant *R15* surrounding aspects of music consumption. For example, the consumer in question refers to a desire to be able to sample music freely, without commitment to a website or online service in the form of a registration process. Again while not posing a major theme in the qualitative data collection, this example does appear to suggest another factor (aside from a perceived excess of information) which may adversely affect the experience that a music consumer enjoys when employing online technologies and software via the Internet to discover new music and artists.

5.2.2 Social Identity

In order to gain an appreciation of the general online discussions that popular music can provide webnography data from online forums was collected on consumers' expressions of what music does or has meant to them in their lives. Although the following selections of data focus primarily on aspects of the actual music itself, it can be argued that they also involve music in the light of being a product; including the addition of associated products or services. This was often found in the qualitative data to apply particularly in the case of a specific artist, album, or song that evoked certain memories, thoughts, or feelings; as illustrated in the following statement, where a music consumer is talking about one of their favourite albums by the band *The Smashing Pumpkins*.

Participant R1

*“Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness whether it was your favorite album from The Smashing Pumpkins has to be respected as their pinnacle and most epic work! I remember I finally caught up with my friends and got my first c.d. player around the time the Bullet With Butterfly Wings video debuted on MTV. As a huge fan of Siamese Dream I was anticipating seeing this and I was floored, mouth agape at the result. While I loved the music of Siamese Dream this was a completely different experience. I felt like SP had hit the pulse of something huge. The video and song was dirty, grimy and dark but at the same time it was stylish, glamorous and Billy definitely seemed like he was claiming rock royalty as he sat in his dark throne! No longer was SP a dreamy, fuzzy, spacy rock band! They had woken up to rock every angsty teen by with style and capture that essence like never before! After I didn't get MCAIS for christmas (and instead got *cough* Mariah Carey *cough*) I did what any young guy had to do and scrounge every dollar and piece of change they could to finally purchase what they anticipated in a fashion that only a youth understands. When I finally got this c.d. I WORSHIPPED it like nothing before or since. Like an Indian with a buffalo I used every part without waste! When I wasn't listening to the music I would just look at the lyric book and read them like they were passages from a poetry collection. I loved everything down to the little drawings corresponding with each lyric! I even loved the way the text looked. I gawked at all the bizarre drawings which I have a cool interview with the artist, Frank Olinsky, right here at this link: <http://g-ecx.images-amazon.com/image...8e646010.L.jpg>. I remember how cool these guys looked! Billy in his silver pants and best band shirt to ever be marketed IMO, the Zero shirt! James with his glossy whatever look! The bright colored flying jimmy! D' Arcy with the WTF carrot picture! To me they were my icons of cool! I have paint spots still on that booklet from bringing that booklet to Art class and painting from it. The case is busted, the pages worn and so many light scratches on each disc that I call that album old faithful since it still plays without a skip. That c.d. represents a time, a feeling and just an overall feeling for me. It also shows how whether it be a c.d., a cassette or record the experience is such a part of the enjoyment that Mp3s will never give you! Now I've barely even touched on the music itself which is next!*



In analysing this statement of webnography research, it is possible to draw out several concepts to which the data appears to represent. For example, the consumer appears to be discussing the album in question as not only providing that artist's best work (in their opinion), but also the social influence which may have come from their friends (in this case, by apparently also purchasing the album). This would therefore provide an example of an influence from members of a particular social group, in that the prior purchases of the album by friends, as discussed by participant R1 in their comments,

may have encouraged the consumer to purchase this album also. More importantly, from a consumer behaviour point of view, this consumer also appears to acknowledge the presence of a social influence, by discussing how their purchase of a CD player meant that they catch up with their friends. This would seem to imply a shared social interaction based on a particular music platform or format, in this case that of CDs.

It can also be suggested that this consumer's purchase of the album may incur discussions surrounding such facets of the album as the music or songs, the artist, or other aspects of the album such as the artwork, lyrics, and videos that accompany the musical output. For example, the consumer in this statement refers to a music video that appears to have grabbed their attention, and could thus be considered to be part of the peoples' overall consumption of music, albums, or particular artists in general. As can also perhaps be suggested by the analysis of this consumer's comments, they appear to be describing a change from the artists' previous album. Therefore, it could also be argued that music consumption behaviours may be subject to changes in an artists' musical output, or the accompanying products surrounding the music, such as videos and artwork. Thus when considering some of the theories that were discussed in the literature review, it can be argued that this webnography data suggests that peoples' music consumption is not just limited to the music or songs themselves, but may also include other factors such as artwork and videos that accompany songs and other music-related releases.

In addition to the factors surrounding music consumption that appear to be highlighted by this consumer, it can be argued that part of this statement also links to some of the theories discussed in the literature review which referred to youth and music consumption. For example, while discussing how they saved their money in order to purchase the album in question, this consumer also refers to the anticipation with which they looked forward to obtaining the product; and more importantly, appearing to describe the expectation as being one which can only be recognised by people who are in the midst of experiencing youthful stages of life. It can thus be argued that this concurs with the theories that purport to describe youth music consumption in terms of tribal behaviours and group understanding. In other words, young music consumers may recognise one another's behaviour and thus develop peer influences upon one another as individuals strive to achieve 'normal' or similar consumption behaviours that

are associated with their social peer group. Thus, this example can also be considered as an important factor in the main quantitative data collection stage for this thesis.

It can also be suggested from this analysis of the statement by participant *R1* that social influences, as already attested to in the literature review, may also be an important factor in the overall concept of music consumption; particularly in light of this consumer's comments regarding their attempt to catch up with their friends. By implication, it is possible to discern from this online discussion that a certain amount of influence from social groups may be present; in the process perhaps also suggesting that this influence may in fact continue to be a part of modern-day music consumption. In other words, activities that can be associated with, and influenced by, social groups may provide an individual with a potentially important part of both music consumption and attending live music events.

In particular, this statement also appears to illustrate a high level of influence felt by the consumer. For example, the use of "... *cough* Mariah Carey *cough*..." by this forum poster would suggest an awareness of social approval and disapproval being sought by the individual in question; possibly through the apparent downplaying of his ownership of music by that artist in order to build up his awareness and social standing in relation to the *Smashing Pumpkins*, which appears to more closely resemble the identity that he wishes to foremost project in the minds of his fellow online group members.

In addition, it can be considered that the use of online 'environments' to engage in the discovery of new music and artists may differ from that of offline contexts, such as discovering new music or an artist in a physical music retail store. For example, the interactions with other people that an individual may engage in can be considered dramatically different, in that these are 'physical' exchanges or conversations, which may take place in conjunction with topics relating to music consumption. On the other hand, in online contexts such as social networking platforms and discussion forums, interactions take place in virtual non-physical spaces, and thus the interactions themselves may differ in such factors as tone, language, and character. Therefore, it can also be hypothesised that social group influence between the two different contexts will be different. However, it is again recognised that other factors may be present in the

level of influence which an individual may perceive they are under from members of either online or offline fellow social group members, such as an individual's personality and characteristics.

The following comments again appeared to illustrate elements of music consumption, which may be associated with, and incorporated into daily routines.

Participant R5

"My listening falls into two categories:

- In the evening following dinner, we sit and have a music session before catching a bit of TV. This is dimmed lighting, focused listening with no distractions. It's only ever Vinyl or CD, and it has to be loud enough to flap trousers (That's pants, US cousins...).*
- When the weather's good, the iPod comes out whilst I sit in the garden. This is loaded with copied albums from my collection in Apple Lossless which I feel deserve a listen. Once they're listened to, they're cleared off for the next album that takes my fancy. Don't listen to individual tracks, mine is an album machine. Volume kept to more sensible levels"*

As can also be observed, the 'music session' that the individual refers to here can be considered as just one example of 'offline' social group interactions that revolve around music consumption. For example, whilst listening to the music in a social environment, it can be considered that discussions about the music itself may take place; along with related discussions such as those surrounding the artist the group is listening to, artist-related products or merchandise, or past live performances featuring the artist, which members of the social group attended. In reference to this last point, it is proposed that this may contain autobiographical accounts of attendance at performances, such as the episodes of narrative storytelling that were discussed previously in this analysis of the webnography data. Hence, it can be argued that scenarios such as these provide further evidence of offline social engagements continuing to play a potentially important role in music consumption and associated behaviours, despite the influx of numerous technologies in recent years, which appear to have evolved music consumption practices to an online context or environment. It can also be considered that offline social

interactions such as these reflect a more 'public' approach to music consumption, as opposed to what could be viewed as being more 'private' consumption of music, such as listening to MP3 players whilst commuting or travelling.

As also discussed by participant R5, music format appears to be an important factor of the consumption behaviours, and was representative of other online users' statements of the use of formats such as CDs and records to enhance their music consumption practices. However, this statement again appeared to demonstrate that modern-day consumption is shared across several formats; seemingly dependent on the situations and ways in which an individual wishes to engage in music consumption. For example, this statement from participant R5 appears to reflect how they use CDs and vinyl records for indoor consumption, and the MP3 format when engaging in outdoor music consumption. Hence, it can be argued that music consumption practices can vary across different formats, in addition to a variance in the associated behaviours that appear to be dependent upon whether the consumption is taking place in either a public or a private environment.

Further to this, participant R13 also provides reference to a perception of herself not being a consumer of popular (or mainstream) music, and therefore suggesting an 'alternative' identity; a finding that concurs with data already discussed during this analysis. This was also reflected in other forum posts by young consumers, such as the following typical example.

Participant R14

"As a teenager, I'd like to say that I don't find much "modern" music appealing. My interests tend to stick with the 70s and 80s, and the most modern songs I listen to are from bands who have stuck around since then. Iron Maiden would be a great example for that. I love Led Zeppelin, I'm getting into a lot of Pink Floyd, and I also love instrumental stuff. From guitarists mostly, like Satriani and Malmsteen. But I'd agree that on a wide scale, teenagers go for the heavily marketed music out there -- no offense to any others who don't follow the 'norm'."

In terms of consumers in younger age groups such as adolescents and teenagers, it can be considered that the increased importance of identity at such ages (as established in the literature review) may lead to younger consumers who perceive themselves as possessing an alternative identity being more likely to promote this identity when engaging in discussions surrounding music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices. In addition, it can be noted in the comments regarding youth music consumption from participant *R14* that the individual concerned appeared to feel strongly that they consume alternative music to that of their immediate social groups, or the people that surround them in their daily lives. As this was a typical finding in the data that was examined by the webnography part of the study, it can be suggested that consumers in younger age groups may in fact be less susceptible to social and peer influences than the existing literature would appear to suggest. On the other hand, as shown in the previous comments by participant *R13*, individuals may also recognise the source of their music consumption influences; in this case, the consumer seemingly citing both a social influence (her classical rock persuasion from her father) and a non-social influence (her listening to music that is expected by her geographical location when growing up; in this case country music in Texas).

It was also recognised that the data examined may not be representative of the general population; in which case there exists the possibility that the types of young music consumers who engage in music-related conversations through online social networking platforms such as discussion forums may be ones who are more likely to consider themselves as possessing 'alternative' identities, in comparison to other members of their social groups, in either online or offline capacities. This suggested that when designing the research methodology for the main study, there was again the need to consider factors such as general interpersonal susceptibility and self-esteem.

While the data presented here refers to the online environment, it can also be hypothesised that the same may be the case in the offline context. In consideration of this however, it can also be suggested that the offline environment may provide further considerations for identity promotion associated with music consumption; for example, the wearing of artist-related clothing or use of other music-related products and services. Whereas in the online context, it can be argued that the promotion of such an identity (or indeed any music-based identity) can only be achieved through the

exchange of text-based messages, photos, and videos, and not actual physical cues or indications of identity which may be associated with music consumption; particularly that of alternative identities which can be associated with alternative music consumption (as perceived by the individual in question).

Therefore, it can again be suggested that differences may lie between the online and offline environments in which social group influence on music consumption and related behaviours may take place, due to the ways in which identity (music-based or otherwise) can be communicated. While it is also suggested that this may apply to any consumer who engages in music-based discussions in both online and offline capacities, it can be argued that these differences may be even more prevalent for consumers in younger age groups, due to previous studies' evidence of their increased reliance on music and related products in the construction of social identity.

It can also be noted that in the case of participant *R14*, it can be perceived that their peers' influence upon their music consumption behaviours would appear to be relatively low, due to a non-conformation with the behaviours exhibited by their social groups. This suggests that while low levels of peer influence do exist, the general trend amongst youth consumption would appear to be one of high peer influence in this field. However, the question remains as to whether this concept may extend to other age groups of music consumers, and thus the general population; or whether such a phenomenon is more restricted to the field of youth music consumption.

In addition, this webnography finding appears to reflect an increased consumer use of digital music consumption technologies such as portable MP3 players and Internet-based platforms (especially streaming services such as *Spotify* and music purchasing websites such as *iTunes*). This again indicates that a cross-comparison of the qualitative data results in the validation of some of the findings; in this case in support of some of the changes caused by new technology in relation to music consumption, as purported to in the literature review.

5.2.3 Social Influence

In addition, it may also be derived from the data that consumers' values of music appear to be greatly connected to social influence. The forums examined by the study suggested a major trend of group members appearing to discuss their values of music in social contexts; such as the consumption of music with friends and family, or the ways in which music consumption is prominent in daily social interactions. It can be argued that this indicates a connection between music consumption and individuals' perceptions of their own social identities; particularly when reviewing their values of the music they are seen to be consuming by others. However, it was also recognised that it was not possible to discern the actual extent (or level) of influence from other members of these types of social groups on individuals' music consumption behaviours and practices.

It was also recognised that the determinants of the level of influence might partially lie with the individual concerned and their own characteristics and personality type. For example, it can be suggested that a consumer who wishes to maintain a much more independent identity from that of others, in terms of both music consumption and general life, would be less subjected to influence by members of their social groups, whether it be in the online or the offline contexts. It can be envisaged that a factor such as the general impact of influence from others on an individual, or interpersonal susceptibility, may have an impact on the levels of influence in relation to music consumption behaviours. Likewise it can also be hypothesised that when considering a factor such as self-esteem, consumers with higher perceived levels of self-esteem may be less influenced by other consumers in their social groups (in terms of both general consumption and that which is associated with music and related products and services); while those with lower perceived levels perhaps being more likely to be influenced by others in their consumption behaviours. Hence, it was again recognised that a means with which to test individual factors such as interpersonal susceptibility and self-esteem should be considered for the main study of the thesis.

A case can therefore be made from the webnography data collection section of the study which suggests that when designing the main quantitative data collection stage for the

thesis, the potentially important aspects of social groups and an individual's perception of the groups' influences upon their own music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices may be crucial in determining the factors which can be associated with both. Therefore, these factors may warrant further investigation.

Building on this, and drawing from the literature review on modern-day music consumption, the market, and the industry, it is also possible to hypothesise that the changes in recent years may have produced two primary outlets for social group influence; namely that of online and offline channels. In other words, the increasing shift of the consumption of music-based products and services to the online environment, as alluded to in the literature review, could be considered an indicator of a newer source of social group influence; as opposed to the traditional one that has been present since the beginning of popular music. In relation to the thesis, it could be assumed that social group influences in either an online or an offline capacity may affect aspects of an individual's music consumption such as their purchasing behaviours and live music attendance. In addition to this however, it is also possible to consider that the two sources of social group influence, or the environments in which they take place, may have differing levels of influence and thus different implications for some of the theories surrounding music consumption behaviour. It is therefore felt that this issue warrants further examination in the conceptual design for the quantitative study.

In other themes noticeable in the analysis of this online post, it is also possible to ascertain that in the case of this particular consumer, a perceived connection may exist between them and the artist. More specifically, this appears to be a seemingly emotional connection; in the way that the consumer describes this album and artist as representing a certain stage or time in their life, and a feeling. In regards to the thesis therefore, it can be considered that this finding from the exploratory data collection suggests the presence of an emotional connection between consumers and music artists, which it can be argued may subsequently affect individuals' overall consumption of popular music.

The data contained within these comments also appears to concur with another thematic finding, which is that of the format through which the music is being consumed featuring as a part of the enjoyment of the music consumption. For example, this

consumer refers in particular to how their enjoyment of their music consumption is enhanced by the format being a physical one, i.e. a CD, cassette or vinyl record, as opposed to a non-physical format such as MP3s which are either computer-based or used on hand-held devices such as iPods or mobile phones. Therefore, by comparing the data collected from the examples found in the webnography study, it is possible to determine that there is evidence to show that the format in which music is consumed may have an impact upon the overall consumption that a consumer enjoys. In addition to this, the findings of the study would appear to suggest that this may be the case whether the music format is either a physical one or a non-physical one. For example, forum members alluded to their perceived benefits surrounding the use of both physical formats, and non-physical formats.

Therefore, it can be suggested that individuals' behaviours surrounding their music consumption may be influenced by their format choice; whether it be physical, non-physical, or a combination of both. This would especially appear to be the case when considering the notion of enjoyment when using a particular music format that may become positively associated with the overall process of music consumption. Further to this, this statement also illustrates that in this case, the consumer appears to believe that the use of physical formats is superior to that of a non-physical format, and hence a difference is presented in the way various music formats are perceived by an individual, which may also have connotations for the overall process of consuming music. In regards to the thesis, this finding would thus suggest that when considering the design of the main quantitative data collection, questions on music formats may be warranted in assisting with the aim of building a complete picture of the processes surrounding music consumption.

Further evidence of similar themes to the ones discussed in this section of the analysis was found in the analysis of the other data collected for the webnography study. The following online statements regarding forum users' discussions surrounding aspects of their music consumption and live music attendance indicated several such themes. Each of these statements will be analysed in turn, with particular reference to the discussions in the context of this study.

The following selections of data refer to consumers and their general listening habits. As already discussed, a number of themes were apparent in the analysis of the webnography study which was undertaken for the thesis, and these were found to encumber numerous aspects of music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices. In particular, these thematic notions appeared to correlate greatly with aspects of an individual's lifestyle. For example in the following comments by participant R2, the consumer describes how music is used as a core component of their leisure time. It is also apparent from the consumer's statement that music consumption has injected a sense of routine into their daily life; although it should be noted that in the case of this individual, they are retired, and therefore this would not represent typical music consumption patterns.

Participant R2

"I'm retired so I have the leisure time some may not have. Always in the mornings as I am an early riser, 4 am. After/during my morning injection of caffeine/nicotine and an update of the news, I am under the headphones listening to my precious vinyl. Afterwards it's on to the computer for a few hours, where I start out at this cool site I came across called Music Discussion, by posting the album I have just listened to, and also seeing if any youtube video clips are available for that album. I dvr the late night talk shows, mostly just for the band(s) that may have been on, so then I'm watching them. I then look for whatever you guys have been listening to, and if I haven't heard them, I seek them out and give a listen. This is one way you have an impact on my listening and during the short time I have been a member, I have already found new stuff I like. I thank you. Unfortunately I have also found new stuff I don't like. I thank you for that too. I also listen to new albums as they come out, when I can find them available online. I also post those here. Other than that, my only other listening is when I am outside relaxing, I am usually reading and listening to my cd's under the earphones. I'd say 90% of my listening is under either the headphones or earphones. I don't like distractions."

However, this example statement does illustrate an example of another strong theme that appeared to flow throughout the online discussion forums that were examined by this study; that of the use of online discussion groups to engage in social interactions concerning music consumption with other forum users. In particular, in the example statement above this appears to have become a regular daily routine for the consumer in

question, and this proved to be representative of many users who frequented the online forums investigated by this study. As shown in this example, such uses of online music discussion forums appear to revolve around posting about albums or music that an individual has recently listened to, as well as visiting forums in order to discover what albums or music fellow users have listened to and posted about. This was again representative of other comments by forum users, and therefore it can be suggested, that music discussion forums can actively promote consumers' music discovery processes.

This would therefore appear to concur with the existing literature on the use of the Internet for new music and artist discovery. In addition, these comments also appear to provide evidence of other facets of Internet-based new music and artist discovery that consumers can access in the modern environment; for example that of using video website services such as YouTube to investigate clips of artists that a consumer has not previously discovered. Therefore there is also evidence in this statement to suggest that the Internet can be used to discover new music (such as the latest album by an artist) if that music is made available online. As well as providing further examples of consumer use of the Internet for music discovery, it can be argued that new music should be made available officially available to listen to in an online capacity in order to aid the process of consumers' new music and artist discovery, with a view to purchase or legal obtainment. In addition, the consumer in this example also discusses how their social interactions with other members of the forum group have resulted in both positive and negative recommendations.

It can be suggested that this observation, which was found to be typically reflective of other entries by online forum users, may indicate evidence to show that other online social group members may provide an influence on individual music consumers in the form of a recommendation, which may result in either a positive or negative connotations for that person. For example, they may discover new music or an artist that they like; resulting in positive music consumption behaviours such as purchasing or obtaining further music by a particular artist. On the other hand, a recommendation may also result in a consumer discovering new music or an artist that they dislike; which may result in negative music consumption behaviours such as providing other consumers with negative recommendations regarding music or a particular artist. These other consumers may include members of their social or peer groups, in either online or

'offline' environments. These issues related to new music and artist discovery would thus appear to concur with some of the existing theories discussed in the literature review.

Further to this however, and from the perspective of the live music attendance aspect of consumption, it may be that these positive or negative recommendations from social group members may influence an individual's behaviours and practices. For example, it can be hypothesised that positive recommendations from a fellow social group member (either in the online or offline context) will result in an individual being more likely to attend a live performance by a particular music artist. Conversely, it can also be hypothesised that negative recommendations from fellow social group members (online or offline) will result in an individual being less likely to attend a live performance by a particular music artist. These recommendations may therefore essentially be viewed as consumer-driven word-of-mouth interactions that may affect the success of a music-based product, live event, or festival; in terms of measurable economic factors such as product or ticket sales.

More generally, aside from attending a live event featuring a particular artist, consideration should also be given that the same social group influence may extend to an individual's general level of live music attendance, whether the source of the influence is, again from either an online or an offline capacity. For example, in terms of the online environment, it can be hypothesised that general levels of live music attendance by an individual may be increased if they engage in a higher frequency of discussions regarding music consumption through social networking platforms such as forums and message boards. Likewise, it may also be hypothesised that general levels of live music attendance by an individual may be increased if they engage in a higher frequency of discussions regarding music consumption through offline interactions such as socialising with friends, in the workplace, and with other groups such as sports or hobby clubs.

When considering the theories surrounding music consumption and identity that were noted in the literature review, particularly in the way that individuals can use their music consumption to indicate a certain type of identity to other people, a discussion also took place concerning the tribal aspects of music consumption. When considering

these tribal groupings, it could be hypothesised that social group influence may be stronger in themed tribal groups surrounding specific genres of music; heavy metal is an example of tribal groupings which are associated with music consumption behaviours, as established in the literature review. Hence, a case may also be made that either social group influence in the online or offline context may be greater when considering particular genres of music described in existing literature as being more susceptible to tribal-based consumption behaviours.

It was also recognised from analysis of the webnography data that online social networking platforms and discussion forums may also provide other elements of an individual's music consumption and live music attendance. When considering live music attendance in particular, the webnography data appeared to suggest that consumers' pre and post attendance at a live music event could be affected by their online interactions with other users. For example, when discussing their upcoming attendance in anticipation of an event, or providing other forum users with a review after the event has taken place; the latter also appearing not being just limited to recommendations to attend a live event featuring a particular artist, but also including the telling of stories that appear to have in some way influenced the individual's experience at an event. It can be argued that these episodes of storytelling can be regarded as being similar in nature to previous researchers who made use of autobiographical storytelling in developing theories surrounding music consumption behaviours (Holbrook, 1986; Shankar, 2000). In other words, the stories about live music events that consumers subsequently describe to others through an online forum may be seen as personal narratives, and not just recommendations, which may influence others to attend an artist's performance. When considering tribal group behaviours, it can be suggested that influence may be greater for members of social groups who are involved in the consumption of a music genre, which may be more susceptible to aspects of tribal behaviour, such as heavy metal.

Further to this, it was again recognised that an online social group environment may differ dramatically from that of one in the offline context. This may again prompt the need to draw comparisons between the two environments, and thus necessitate a representation in the design of the research methodology for the main quantitative data collection of the thesis. It can be hypothesised that social group influence revolving

around recommendations, which include autobiographical narratives of live music event attendance may, more importantly differ between online and offline environments, as the way in which the narratives are communicated is in a different format. For example, the offline environment may be dominated by more physical contact, whereas the online environment implies a virtual form of communication. The level of influence that individuals perceive that they may be under may therefore differ considerably; particularly as some individuals may perceive a greater level of influence in relation to music consumption and live music attendance through physical contact, virtual contact, or a combination of both. It is also suggested that the levels of influence may also depend upon a person's characteristics or personality, and other potential factors such as their social circumstances, technology acceptance and use. Hence, consideration was also given to some of these issues in the design of the main study.

Further to the previous concepts, while some consumers appeared to recognise and support the use of the Internet as a tool for discovering new music and artists, other users of the online forums seemed to feel this was still not their preferred way of engaging in such activities. An example of this is shown in the following statement.

Participant R16

"The internet is even a hard source... I mean to really appreciate good music especially from the influences you are looking at we have to search properly and I think the best way is through a local record store and the such because they do happen to know a lot about music, especially good local music."

In relation to this study, there appear to be several connotations of consumers' opinions such as these; particularly when considering the role of physical music store and the influence of other people in both online and offline capacities. While it should be noted that people who frequent environments such as a record store (for example, other customers and staff) do not necessarily play the same role as fellow social group members, these external parties may still possess a level of influence over music consumption behaviours and practices; as well as a potential ability to influence live music event attendance. For example, engagements or interactions with staff members,

as well as other customers, may influence the purchase of a music-based product. This can be considered much the same as an individual receiving a recommendation in an online capacity, for example through a social networking platform, discussion forum, or chat room.

In addition, it should also be considered that physical record stores may also have the potential to provide a higher level of influence from social group members or peers. For example, if members of a person's social group were to accompany an individual to a physical music store, there may be a greater level of influence as it can be suggested that a greater level of music-based discussions may occur when consumers are viewing music and music-related products together. In terms of the theories surrounding identity construction, as discussed in the literature review, it may be envisaged that this is especially the case. It was also determined from an examination of the literature and previous studies regarding young consumers that music consumption is particularly important in developing a notion of one's self and identity; hence viewing and purchasing music and music-based products may be subject to greater levels of influence from social group members or peers when young consumers visit physical music stores together.

While several online posts from other forum users were identified as concurring with the comments of the previous example statement, it is possible to note that little evidence regarding this concept was found in the other posts. However, due to the presence of such potential social group influence factors in the webnography data, it was deemed that these were of particular relevance to the methodological design of the main study.

5.2.4 Live Music

The following selections of data refer to consumers' online discussions on aspects of live music; incorporating aspects of artists' performances at live music events or festivals. This theme of the webnography data collection appeared to indicate factors that may influence the live music attendance aspect of the study, as well as the whole thesis.

In the first example, a typical post is shown regarding consumers' perceived differences between live and recorded music. It is possible to observe that these may result or translate into important differences in the experiences that can be associated with music consumption.

Participant R17

"if you hear something live it has an entirely different sound to the recording. plus you have the ability to see where the music is coming from. most of the time live music is a commune amongst like-minded people and you have the experience of place to add to it too."

In this statement, it can be observed that a visual factor of experiencing music appears to be implied by the individual concerned. In other words, the element of being able to see an artist or band (playing the music which can otherwise be heard in recorded format) may add a new dimension to the experience of the music itself.

In addition, this consumer also appears to provide evidence of value to be gained in the communal nature of live music; notably through describing attending events with people who this individual perceived to be like-minded. The statement of a 'commune' at live music events can also be linked to the theories of tribal behaviours which were discussed in the literature review, and as a typical example of other views posted by online forum users, it can therefore be considered that this provides qualitative evidence of the behaviours described by previous researchers such as Nuttall *et al.* (2011).

The next statement from participant *R18* demonstrates another typical example of a forum user who is explaining their experiences of attending live music events to other group members online.

Participant R18

"I saw Slipknot at a gig in Birmingham, with Machinehead and Children of Bodom supporting, it was absolutely fantastic, the atmosphere was electric!! It was possibly the best thing ever."

This statement would appear to suggest an element or factor of live music attendance being associated with 'external' parties, i.e. other people who are also attending the event or festival. For example, in this statement the consumer seemingly described the atmosphere of the event as being a positive one, which it is assumed can therefore add a positive element to the individual's experience. However, it also appears from the data that elements of the experience, such as the audience atmosphere, are an illustration of a possible outer layer of potential relationships with 'external' parties who are also attending live music events; relationships which appear to extend primarily to an identification with other attendees.

Hence, it can be ascertained that attendance of live music events and festivals may be influenced by a factor that incorporates tribal group identities, concepts and behaviours. For example, it may be hypothesised that individuals or groups may be influenced to attend live music events through a desire to consume music with people they perceive as being of their own kind. In addition, it may be possible the experience an individual enjoys at a live music event may be influenced, in either a positive or negative manner, by other consumers attending the event; with it being possible to hypothesise that the presence of other individuals who a person perceives to be like themselves, or to possess reflective identities, may lead to positive connotations for the person's overall attendance of that event. Conversely, it can also be hypothesised that a lack of other perceived like-minded consumers in the audience may produce negative factors in the attending of a live music event.

The concepts discussed in this section of the analysis so far can be considered as alternative theories as to possible influence factors on consumers' attendance of live music events. Further elaborations on the above theme also appeared to be evident in the online forums studied, as can be observed in the following consumer's comments.

Participant R19

“Being live at a stadium is the ultimate experience. If I was listening to it on CD I must say I prefer the 'live' versions of songs. I agree that tweaking the music is a bit of a cheat and takes away that 'human error touch'. I also LOVE to hear the audience's reactions within the song.”

It can also be considered that the views of participant *R19* represents further factors that can be associated with music consumption. For example, the potential mistakes or differences in playing the music live when compared to recorded versions, which may again add to the experience of the live performance. Most notable however is the individual's description of enjoying audience reactions, which may again suggest the influence of other attendees on an individual's experience of a live music event. This was found to be a typical comment of numerous contributors in the online forums that were investigated; as seemingly epitomised by participant *R19*, who also described aspects of the live performances by artists, which may differ from the recorded music available through the various formats discussed in this thesis previously. In particular, participant *R20* also appears to gain value from another aspect of the live music performances, which is that of hearing music played live that is not available through an artist's recorded output; for example, the extended 'jams' which the individual in question refers to in the following statement.

Participant R20

“I prefer the magic of the live performance - nothing beats hearing a room of 400 sweaty fans screaming out the lyrics to their favorite song. Or a stadium of several thousand, if that's what you prefer. Improv is also an important factor. By nature, studio albums can't really be improvised. Tweaks and last-minute things are possible, but after the record is pressed, the little things become fact. Nowhere but the stage can a band jam for 45 minutes on a single chord progression.”

Despite this, the possibility of hearing music played live by an artist that is not available in a recorded format was not found to be a major theme in the data collected from the webnography, and therefore this concept was not considered an important factor of influence in attendance at live music events.

However, as can be observed from both the previous examples and this one from participant R21, other audience perceptions such as feeling 'at one' with other attendees were found to be a major theme of the webnography data which was collected.

Participant R21

"The live show is always the most special for me. I like feeling at one with the band and the crowd. At that moment, we are all on the same page sharing the same passion. And it's real. Vocals and what-not have not been "dressed up." But looking at recordings, both live and studio, I typically prefer the studio. Maybe it's a bad thing that I'm more inclined to listen to a song that flows a bit more smoothly? However, there are a few select songs that carry ten times the power when recorded live. Sometimes hearing how utterly raw a song is makes it that much better."

While the last excerpt does also discuss a perceived negative aspect of live performances, in that it appears that the individual's expectations of live music do not always match up to recorded music, this comment does in fact state other opinions which were also found to be typical of those views voiced by other forum users. The notion of feeling 'at one' with the audience can be linked again to the theories surrounding tribal consumption, particularly those surrounding music consumption behaviours. Therefore, when considering the implications of this webnography analysis for the research methodology of the main quantitative study, the apparent collectiveness of individuals with other people who attend live music events has featured as a major theme in the data. It can therefore be suggested that this indicates this concept as being a potentially important factor in consumers' attendance at live music events and festivals.

Having analysed and discussed the webnography data collection, the next section will summarise the findings of the exploratory phase of the study. This will provide conclusions regarding the discussions surrounding the qualitative data, as well as summarising the implications for the design of the main study.

5.3 Summary of Findings

This exploratory research set out to investigate the effects of online social networking on music consumption and identity. Webnography analysis established several main themes that contribute to extending the current theories surrounding identity to online environments, and can be used to provide practical guidance to music organisations.

Firstly, online social networking is extensively used to expand music experience. Forum users go online to look for what others are listening to and to share their own musical experiences. They browse the Internet for new tracks and artists, and pass on their preferences and experiences. MP3 technology has revolutionised the ability of music listeners to experience new music, but also to pass on their experiences as recommended tracks can be easily shared. Secondly, online social networking in a music consumption context is used by those who want to share their experiences with like-minded individuals. This links clearly to the social side of identity, as we develop an identity in a social contact that is evaluated by us and others (Goulding & Shankar, 2004). An implication here is that for those artists who perceive themselves as being less 'mainstream', a less overtly commercial approach to their web presence is advantageous, which allows for fan discussions and free trial downloads. This approach has already been adopted by artists such as Radiohead. Both of the points suggest that there is room and scope for both general and genre-specific discussion platforms for music experiences. More general platforms provide information on artists and music an individual may never have thought about, and provide genuinely new experiences. More genre-specific forums allow better identification with a particular style of music, and the development of online relationships with like-minded people across the world.

Music consumers who frequented the forums and social networking platforms examined by the study also appeared to engage in discussions surrounding the meaning of music and the associated values that music brings. In addition, consumers appeared to be more engaged when using these forums to discuss aspects of popular music, particularly in terms of the depth in which they discussed their personal values of music. Thirdly, online social networking can also play an important part in the promotion of live music events. Fans share their experiences and opinions online, and with these part of their identity. This means that for the reader, these comments are much more authentic and convincing than any 'official' promotion. Artists, the music industry, and event organisers should facilitate such user exchanges, in the knowledge that at times not all comments will be positive – but that too raises authenticity.

Consumers used online communities to express their music consumption habits and practices, as well as communicate with other like-minded individuals about their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a whole range of areas in the sphere of music consumption. These expressions, as well as being a rich source of data for market researchers, can be considered invaluable in the development of the same online communities. This is especially relevant when music consumption behaviour within the communities is discussed, or loyalty to music artists and groups; or purchasing behaviour of merchandise.

The acquisition of goods and services above that of a consumer's personal need in order to create an impression upon other online social group members may constitute another interesting aspect of music consumption behaviour. As already confirmed by the existing literature, this may especially be the case in the development of identity through music consumption. Therefore, it can be argued that this study has strongly confirmed existing literature, and therefore online social communities and networks may be considered as being integral in the concept of identity formation through music consumption behaviours. In addition, when considering music-based consumer social groupings, this study has indicated that unique cultures, fashions, and differentiations that are associated with each genre of music may be of importance. This can include individuals' choice of lifestyles, tastes, and attitudes towards various types of music. It is also proposed that these elements may be transferred to a social group setting, which

could affect not just one person's identity within that group, but also the group's identity as a whole.

Furthermore, it can be suggested that consumers' use of online profiles through social networking platforms may be classed as a distinct form of self-identification, particularly as many young people appear to rely on the Internet to live a form of virtual social life using online social networking and self-representation. The use of blogs in particular may indicate a sense of narrative communication and storytelling. In addition, the use of the Internet in general is often to meet new people who may possess similar traits or tribal characteristics, as well as to connect with 'real' people with whom a social relationship already exists. In conclusion, it can be argued that Marshall McLuhan's prediction in 1970 that 'cool' and inclusive 'electric media' would 'retribalize' human society into clusters of affiliation (Kozinets, 1999) may also be extended to the virtual domains frequented by consumers of the music industry.

Other implications and conclusions drawn from the exploratory qualitative research were as follows. In light of the observations made by the analysis of the data, the potential differences in influence from other social group members in both online and offline environments were again considered in terms of how any perceived influence by others may also affect an individual's overall music consumption. Referring back to the literature review for example, it is possible that when considering the existing theories surrounding the importance of music consumption to notions of the self and identity construction, a link may be present between satisfactory social projection of identity through music consumption behaviours and an individual's overall consumption of popular music and related products.

As noted by the webnography qualitative data collection, identity appeared to be a major theme surrounding music consumption behaviours; a finding that concurred considerably with previous studies investigated in the literature review, and especially in the case of youth music consumption. To a certain degree, the qualitative findings did appear to restrict the concept of music consumption being important to identity for consumers in younger age groups such as adolescents and teenagers. However, this is not to say that the concept appeared to be excluded from older age groups.

In combination with the concept of music consumption behaviours being associated with identity development, another major finding that appeared to be pertinent in the qualitative data study was that of external influences from social groups and peers on consumers' attendance at live music events and festivals. In other words, it was established that value may be perceived by individuals who attend live music events, and that the nature of their experiences (either positive or negative) may be affected by the fellow attendance of social groups such as friends, family members, or other peers.

In accordance with these qualitative study findings, of particular interest to this thesis was the potential factor of social group influence in both the aspects of general music consumption and live music attendance. In other words, the webnography indicated consumer awareness, or perceptions, of how their social groups may influence them into making decisions regarding both their music consumption behaviours and live attendance practices. Therefore, when considering the state of the modern-day music consumption markets and industry, these exploratory qualitative findings can lead to hypotheses regarding some of the recent changes in the industry, which can be linked to the emergence of new technologies.

It is apparent from the analysis of the webnography data that music consumers who frequent the forums and social networking platforms examined in the study also seem to engage in discussions with each other surrounding the meaning of music to them, as well as the associated values that music and associated products bring. In addition, consumers appear to be more engaging when using these forums to discuss such aspects of popular music; particularly in terms of the depth in which consumers discuss their values of music. It can also be suggested that in the case of this particular data set, it was noted that a majority of forum posters, when describing what music meant to them, expressed opinions surrounding the use of music for daily routine activities. These routines also appear to be supplemented by hobbies and sports, in addition to other recreational activities that take place in leisure or relaxation time outside of jobs and employment.

The webnography data also provides evidence of consumers' values of music being centred on its' use within the contexts of leisure and recreation, or in the hedonic

aspects of peoples' lives. It can also be argued that the deeper discussions that take place on consumers' meanings and values of music through online social platforms may in fact be regarded as the expressions of individuals who are more highly involved in terms of music consumption than the general population. If this did prove to be the case, there may be subsequent difficulty in transfer the findings of this study into the realm of the general population, especially in terms of any recommendations that may emerge from this thesis which purport to assist in the marketing of music in the modern-day environment.

In other findings of the exploratory qualitative research, it was recognised that music consumption does not appear to always be as closely associated with one's identity as the existing literature appears to suggest, at least according to some of the webnography data that was examined. This may imply that even when studying individuals who are more highly-involved in music consumption and live music attendance practices, an apparent lack of recognition by individuals' of their music consumption being associated with their notion of their self-identity, or their social identity, is present in this data collection. When considering this finding however, it was also recognised that the act of acknowledging music as being an extension of one's identity, in line with the ideas and theories of Belk (1988) may not necessarily be a conscious recognition on the part of the consumer. This means that it may still be the case that music consumption by individuals involved in the qualitative data collection aspect of the thesis can be linked to their self-identity and social identity. It can be theorised that this would also include consumers' uses of music and associated products, including their attendance at live music events and festivals, as an extension of their identity to others within either online or offline social environments; albeit in a sub-conscious manner.

However, it was also recognised from the findings of the data that it was not possible to discern the actual extent or level of influence from other members of these types of social groups on individuals' music consumption behaviours and practices, thus providing a scope for a further quantitative study. Therefore, when considering discussions surrounding music consumption in the online context, it was possible to ascertain that the extent or level of influence to which one is exposed to in such social environments had yet to be ascertained by previous research. While the webnography data collection went some way towards descriptive notions of what constitutes modern-

day music consumerism, and established a number of behaviours and practices that were relevant to the study in terms of what music consumers do, it was envisaged that further data collection in the form of a quantitative survey would be required in order to explore the findings from the study more closely. Essentially, it was recognised that a follow-up survey would enable a broader examination of why music consumers behave in the way that they do. It was felt that this may prove to be critical in establishing behavioural intentions and possible explanations for their occurrence. This led to the development of the quantitative data collection undertaken by the main study.

As well as considering the implications for both offline and online social group influences, a comparison between the two different contexts was also necessary in order to fully analyse the data collected. For example, while significant findings may be found in the results of a study that investigates the two separate environments, it is possible that a comparative analysis between any significant findings will lead to further research-based theories and hence marketing recommendations of the overall thesis. Further to this, no previous studies were found that attempted to draw comparisons between offline and online social networking, or social group influence, in relation to music consumption or live music attendance. Hence, this was recognised as having design implications for the main study, in that a comparison between offline and online environments would not only be necessary in assisting to develop different models for analysis, but also provide an original contribution to existing theories surrounding music consumption by attempting to fill a current gap in knowledge.

Therefore, as a result of these issues being highlighted by the analysis of the webnography, the design of the research methodology for the main study took these factors into consideration. In addition, it was recognised that the methodology should include some means with which to test a participant's personal characteristics. For example, through the use of question's which may attempt to measure factors such as a participant's self-esteem level, or their general susceptibility to influence (in relation to music consumption) on an individual basis. The measurement scales and questions that were used in the quantitative survey were included in the discussion of the research methodologies adopted by the main study, as presented in Chapter 4.

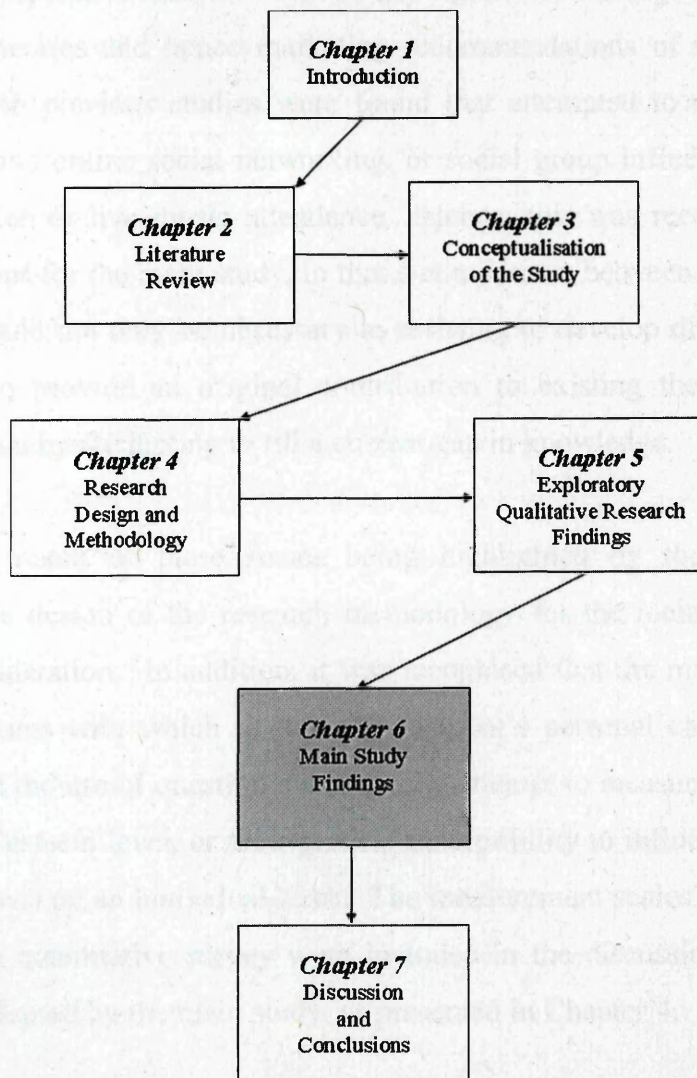
5.4 Chapter Summary

Having analysed and discussed the findings of the exploratory qualitative research, the next chapter will present the findings of the main quantitative study.

Chapter 6: Main Study Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will report the findings of the analysis of the online survey conducted for the main study. This included the use of descriptive statistical techniques, performing Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA), and the development of two structural equation models (SEM) for offline and online social networking. This process enabled testing of the hypotheses developed in Chapter 3.



6.2 Pre-test of the Online Survey

General feedback from the pilot study participants appeared to be very positive, and several participants noted that the questionnaire was both interesting and possessed a sound structure. However, two questions were found to be slightly confusing by the majority of the pilot study participants, which were the questions attempting to investigate participants' favourite genres of music and social networking platforms. Therefore, these questions were re-phrased for the main stage of the study.

After the pre-test process was completed and appropriate changes made to the survey, the main study was conducted. A demographic profile of the participants who took part in the study was formed and tested for sample validity by comparing participant profiles with those of previous research in the field. A descriptive analysis of the responses was then performed prior to conducting CFA to test the measurement items in terms of the reliability, validity, and suitability for SEM.

6.3 Preliminary Data Analysis

The survey results were entered into a Microsoft SPSS 20 computer software package database for analysis. This was performed with the intention of illustrating survey participants' views in relation to their perceptions of their offline and online social group influences. Therefore, along with the features of SEM, this would prove to be useful to this particular survey of music consumers in both analysing and presenting the data in a critical framework.

Prior to performing the two step approach to SEM, preliminary data analysis was undertaken in terms of assessing response rates, missing and outlying data, and sample validity. Descriptive statistical analysis was also conducted to gain a better understanding of who the participants were. Starting with response rates, this section will describe the results from the analysis conducted.

6.3.1 Response Rate

The total number of participants to the online survey was 438. This included 377 responses that were deemed 'usable' as participants had completed the minimum requirement of fully-completing the sections of the survey relating to music identity and social influence. As 320 fully-completed responses were also obtained, the remaining 57 responses had missing data 'filled in' by the AMOS software used to conduct the CFA and SEM. In addition, the sample of 377 responses was compared with the sample of 320 fully-completed responses, and model comparisons were used to determine how well the data matched. This will be discussed later in the chapter for both offline and online models.

Although this was overall a low response rate, online surveys often achieve lower rates of response (Ilieva *et al.*, 2002), often due to their impersonal nature (Manfreda *et al.*, 2008). However, attempts were made to directly address this in the data collection method adopted for the study by including information in the survey design about the research and its purpose. After posting the survey link on various forums and online social networking websites, several messages of positive feedback from forum members were received by the researcher, making it clear that some members did seem interested in the topic and were enthusiastic in helping with the research.

6.3.2 Missing Cases

In terms of missing variables and the preparation of the data for analysis, any participant who had not completed at least both the self-identity and social influence sections of the survey were omitted from the final sample. This reduced the number of responses from 438 to 377. Efforts were made in the design of the questionnaire to ensure that as many full responses could be collected as possible, both through the provision of an engaging survey design and a number of 'compulsory' sections of the questionnaire that required an answer before the participant could proceed with answering the remaining questions. This particularly applied to those questions related to the key research questions of the survey, namely those concerned with self-identity, social influence, and offline/online

social group identity. However, it was found that 61 participants returned ‘incomplete’ surveys. As previously discussed, due to the nature of the questionnaire design, this was only possible with the non-compulsory questions. Therefore, all participants removed from the final sample were those who had dropped out of the survey before completing the minimum ‘compulsory’ sections. As such, the preparation of the data for analysis resulted in no missing values being included in either the self-identity or social influence sections of the data set.

6.3.3 Sample Validity and Sample Size

A profile of the sample was created by looking at the gender and age of the participants. The sample consisted of 238 males (63.13%) and 110 females (29.18%), with the gender of the other 29 participants (7.69%) being unknown. In terms of age, 33 participants (including 3 males and 2 females; 8.75%) did not provide their age. Therefore, 28 participants (7.43%) provided neither their gender nor their age. Table 6.1 summarises the frequencies and percentages of participants in each given category.

Table 6.1: Sample of participants who took part in the study (n=377)

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	238	63.13
<i>Female</i>	110	29.18
<i>Unknown</i>	29	7.69
Age Group		
<i>18-24</i>	165	43.77
<i>25-34</i>	115	30.50
<i>35 and over</i>	64	16.98
<i>Unknown</i>	33	8.75

6.3.4 Descriptive Analysis

After preparing the data set, and with no concerns over the sample of responses being identified, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the overall results of the survey (Hair *et al.*, 2010). This analysis examined the individual variables in the survey for each of the constructs in the two proposed conceptual models for offline and online social groups.

Table 6.2 breaks down each of the 'Music Identity' variables by indicating the mean scores for each, as well as the percentage of participants who 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'slightly disagree', 'neutral', 'slightly agree', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' with each aspect. The table shows 'music part' achieved the highest mean score (5.86) out of all of the variables, with 43.49% of participants indicating they 'strongly agree' that music is a part of who they are. The majority of the other variables also achieved mean scores greater than 5, indicating that on average participants 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' with these statements.

'Achieve identity', and 'narrow gap' both achieved mean scores between 4 and 5, indicating participants were generally 'neutral' to 'slightly agree' with these two statements. The 'narrow gap' variable received the lowest average score of 4.06 out of 7. However, only 28.91% of participants said they 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', or 'slightly disagree' with 'narrow gap'. Similarly, although the 'achieve identity' variable achieved a lower mean score (4.73), 16.67% of participants indicated 'neutral' feelings towards this element of music identity and only a few more participants (20.06%) chose to either 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', or 'slightly disagree' with the statement.

Table 6.2: Responses for 'Music Identity' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean Score
Achieve Identity	5.73%	9.38%	4.95%	16.67%	26.04%	24.22%	13.02%	4.73
Narrow Gap	10.42%	12.24%	6.25%	30.73%	18.75%	15.89%	5.73%	4.06
Central Identity	4.69%	4.95%	6.25%	13.54%	22.66%	22.40%	25.52%	5.14
Music Part	3.13%	1.82%	2.08%	6.25%	16.15%	27.08%	43.49%	5.86
Snatch Identity	7.03%	9.64%	5.99%	12.76%	15.36%	21.61%	27.60%	4.95
Derive Identity	4.95%	6.25%	5.47%	14.06%	25.52%	28.39%	15.36%	4.96

The analysis indicated the overall level of music identity for the participants was moderately high, and collectively the six 'Music Identity' variables achieved an average response of 29.70 out of the total possible score of 42.

Table 6.3 breaks down each of the 'Social Influence' variables by indicating the mean scores for each, as well as the percentage of participants who 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'slightly disagree', 'neutral', 'slightly agree', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' with each aspect. The table shows 'others identity' achieved the highest mean score (2.60) out of all of the variables, with 44.83% of participants indicating they 'strongly disagree' that they often identity with other people by purchasing the same music and artists they purchase. Similarly, 'others impression', and 'sense belong' both achieved mean scores between 2 and 3, indicating participants would generally 'disagree' to 'slightly disagree' with these two statements.

The majority of the other variables also achieved mean scores of less than 2, indicating that on average participants ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘disagree’ with these statements. The ‘others expect’ variable received the lowest average score of 1.51 out of 7, with 70.56% of participants saying they ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement.

Table 6.3: Responses for ‘Social Influence’ variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean Score
Friend Approve	70.82%	17.77%	4.51%	3.18%	1.86%	1.33%	0.53%	1.54
Others Like	62.07%	22.55%	5.31%	4.51%	3.71%	1.33%	0.53%	1.71
Others Approve	68.44%	20.69%	4.51%	3.18%	2.39%	0.53%	0.27%	1.53
Others Expect	70.56%	18.57%	5.57%	1.86%	2.39%	0.00%	1.06%	1.51
Others Impression	43.77%	16.45%	7.96%	11.14%	11.94%	8.49%	0.27%	2.58
Sense Belong	53.05%	15.12%	11.14%	6.10%	10.34%	3.71%	0.53%	2.19
Others Same	64.72%	17.51%	3.98%	7.16%	3.71%	2.12%	0.80%	1.77
Others Identity	44.83%	14.59%	9.55%	9.28%	12.47%	7.43%	1.86%	2.60

The analysis indicated the overall level of social influence for the participants was very low, and collectively the eight ‘Social Influence’ variables achieved an average response of just 15.43 out of the total possible score of 56.

Table 6.3 shows the average responses given for each of the ‘Social Influence’ variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they strongly disagreed, and a score of 7 indicating they strongly

agreed. As seen in Table 6.3, mean intensity scores for questions based on social influence ranged between 1.51 and 2.60, with participants feeling that they identify with other people by obtaining the same music as them achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 2.60. It can be noted that this represents a much lower overall mean score than that of the 'Music Identity' scale. It can be suggested this illustrates that the sample did not generally rely on the identity of others when considering their own music-based identity and consumption behaviours.

Table 6.4 breaks down each of the 'Offline Group Identity' variables by indicating the mean scores for each, as well as the percentage of answers from participants that ranged on a seven-point scale from 'not at all' to 'very much' with each aspect. The table shows 'offline group identity' achieved the highest mean score (4.59) out of all of the variables, with just 14.25% of participants indicating they identified with their offline social groups 'very much'. However, 58.39% of participants did rate their 'offline group identity' as being at least 5 out of 7.

The other variables also achieved mean scores between 4 and 5 on the scale, with the 'offline group reflect' variable receiving the lowest average score of 4.08 out of 7. However, only 37.71% of participants rated their 'offline group identity' as being less than an average rating of 4 out of 7. For this variable, 44.14% of participants did rate their 'offline group reflect' as being at least 5 out of 7. Similarly, although the 'offline group like' variable also achieved a relatively low mean score (4.17), only 32.96% of participants indicated a rating lower than 4 out of 7 towards this element of offline group identity.

Table 6.4: Responses for 'Offline Group Identity' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Not at all						Very much	Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Offline Group Identity	6.15%	8.10%	11.73%	15.64%	25.42%	18.72%	14.25%	4.59
Offline Group Like	6.98%	11.73%	14.25%	22.07%	20.67%	17.60%	6.70%	4.17
Offline Group Reflect	12.01%	12.01%	13.69%	18.16%	17.88%	14.53%	11.73%	4.08

The analysis indicated the overall level of offline group identity for the participants was slightly higher than neutral, and collectively the three 'Offline Group Identity' variables achieved an average response of 12.84 out of the total possible score of 21.

Table 6.4 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Offline Group Identity' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they did not identify with their offline social groups at all, and a score of 7 indicating they identified with their offline groups very much. As seen in Table 6.4, mean intensity scores for questions based on offline group identity ranged between 4.08 and 4.59, with participants feeling that they identify with their groups achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 4.59.

The behavioural intentions of participants to attend live music based on recommendations from offline social group members were generally positive. A mean score for the construct of 9.14 out of the total possible score of 14 (equivalent of 4.57 out of 7), indicated that on the whole participants rated their intentions to participate in positive behaviours between 4 and 5 on the scale out of 7. Table 6.5 illustrates the

mean responses given for each of the 'offline intention to attend live music' variables, ranging between 4.50 and 4.64. The bar chart shows that all mean scores were all high, with those scores greater than 4 indicating that participants had 'likely' to 'very likely' intentions to participate in the given behaviours.

Table 6.5: Responses for 'Offline Intention to Attend Live Music' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Percentage of Responses							Mean Score
	Unlikely 1	2	3	4	5	6	Likely 7	
Offline Recommend Event	8.83%	5.98%	11.68%	13.96%	23.36%	17.95%	18.23%	4.64
Offline Recommend Festival	10.26%	7.12%	11.11%	14.81%	24.22%	15.95%	16.52%	4.50

Table 6.5 shows that the variable concerned with the recommendation of music events marginally achieved the greatest mean score, with 'offline recommend event' achieving the slightly higher mean score of 4.64 out of the total possible of 7. However, only 26.49% of participants rated their 'offline recommend event' as being less than an average rating of 4 out of 7. For this variable, 59.54% of participants rated their intentions to attend live music events as being at least 5 out of 7. Therefore, the results were generally positive.

As shown in Table 6.5, participants were also asked whether they would be more likely to visit a music festival based on a recommendation from members of their offline social groups. Similarly, although the 'offline recommend festival' variable also achieved a relatively low mean score (4.50), only a slightly larger percentage of participants indicated a rating lower than 4 out of 7 towards the festival element of live music attendance (28.49%). For this variable, 59.54% of participants rated their intentions to attend live music festivals as being at least 5 out of 7.

Table 6.5 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Offline Intention to Attend Live Music' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they would be unlikely to behave in such a way, and a score of 7 indicating they were very likely to behave in such a way. As seen in Table 6.5, mean intensity scores for questions based on behavioural intention ranged between 4.50 and 4.64, with participants feeling that they would be likely to attend a live music event based on a recommendation from an offline group member achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 4.64.

As well as behavioural intentions towards attending live music based on recommendations from other consumers in the offline context, participants were also asked about their intentions towards providing other members of their offline social groups with positive or negative reviews of live music that they attended. The results were generally positive, with a mean score for the construct of 20.59 out of the total possible score of 28 (equivalent of 5.15 out of 7). This indicated that on the whole, participants rated their intentions to participate in positive behaviours between 5 and 6 on the scale out of 7. Table 6.6 illustrates the mean responses given for each of the 'offline intention to share live music experience' variables, ranging between 4.88 and 5.41. The bar chart shows that all mean scores were all high, with those scores greater than 4 indicating that participants had 'likely' to 'very likely' intentions to participate in the given behaviours.

Table 6.6: Responses for 'Offline Intention to Share Live Music Experience' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Unlikely 1	2	3	4	5	6	Likely 7	Mean Score
Offline Positive Event	3.42%	2.85%	6.84%	9.69%	23.65%	20.23%	33.33%	5.41
Offline Negative Event	7.41%	6.27%	8.26%	11.97%	21.08%	16.81%	28.21%	4.96
Offline Positive Festival	4.56%	3.70%	6.27%	9.69%	23.08%	20.23%	32.48%	5.34
Offline Negative Festival	9.40%	5.41%	7.98%	13.96%	19.66%	15.10%	28.49%	4.88

With a highest mean score of 5.41, participants indicated on average they were 'likely' to share positive reviews of experiences at live music events with fellow offline social group members, with a very high proportion of participants (77.21%) rating their intentions at least 5 out of 7 on the scale. A further 9.69% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share positive reviews (13.11%). Similarly, 66.1% of participants said they were 'likely' to share negative reviews of experiences at live music events, albeit with a lower mean score of 4.96. A further 11.97% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share such reviews (21.94%).

In terms of the festival category, with a mean score of 5.34, participants indicated on average they were 'likely' to share positive reviews of experiences at live music festivals with fellow offline social group members. This again included a very high

proportion of participants (75.79%) rating their intentions at least 5 out of 7 on the scale. A further 9.69% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share positive reviews (14.53%). Similarly, 63.25% of participants said they were 'likely' to share negative reviews of experiences at live music festivals, albeit with a lower mean score of 4.88. A further 13.96% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share such reviews (22.79%).

Table 6.6 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Offline Intention to Share Live Music Experience' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they would be unlikely to behave in such a way, and a score of 7 indicating they were very likely to behave in such a way. As seen in Table 6.6, mean intensity scores for questions based on behavioural intention ranged between 4.88 and 5.41, with participants feeling that they would be likely to share positive reviews about a live music event with members of these groups achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 5.41.

Table 6.7 breaks down each of the 'Online Group Identity' variables by indicating the mean scores for each, as well as the percentage of answers from participants that ranged on a seven-point scale from 'not at all' to 'very much' with each aspect. The table shows 'online group identity' achieved the highest mean score (3.96) out of all of the variables, with only 6.78% of participants indicating they identified with their online social groups 'very much'. For this variable, 41.74% of participants rated their 'online group identity' as being at least 5 out of 7.

The 'online group reflect' variable received the lowest average score of 2.88 out of 7. For this variable, 66.12% of participants rated their 'online group identity' as being less than an average rating of 4 out of 7. Similarly, the 'online group like' variable also achieved a low mean score (3.67), with 45.80% of participants indicating a rating lower than 4 out of 7 towards this element of online group identity.

Table 6.7: Responses for 'Online Group Identity' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Not at all						Very Much	Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Online Group Identity	11.11%	11.11%	14.91%	21.14%	23.31%	11.65%	6.78%	3.96
Online Group Like	11.11%	14.09%	20.60%	22.22%	19.51%	8.13%	4.34%	3.67
Online Group Reflect	27.37%	21.95%	16.80%	14.91%	10.30%	5.42%	3.25%	2.88

The analysis indicated the overall level of online group identity for the participants was slightly lower than neutral, and collectively the three 'Online Group Identity' variables achieved an average response of 10.51 out of the total possible score of 21.

Table 6.7 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Online Group Identity' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they did not identify with their online social groups at all, and a score of 7 indicating they identified with their online groups very much. As seen in Table 6.7, mean intensity scores for questions based on online group identity ranged between 2.88 and 3.96, with participants feeling that they identify with their groups achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 3.96. It can again be noted, that the overall mean for online group identity was lower than that for identity with offline social groups. Therefore, it can be suggested that overall, the sample identified more with those members of their offline social groups than they did their online groups.

The behavioural intentions of participants to attend live music based on recommendations from online social group members were only slightly positive, unlike

that of the offline social context. A mean score for the construct of 8.34 out of the total possible score of 14 (equivalent of 4.17 out of 7), indicated that on the whole, participants rated their intentions to participate in positive behaviours between 4 and 5 on the scale out of 7. Table 6.8 illustrates the mean responses given for each of the 'online intention to attend live music' variables, ranging between 4.00 and 4.34. The bar chart shows that all mean scores were all high, with those scores greater than 4 indicating that participants had 'likely' to 'very likely' intentions to participate in the given behaviours.

Table 6.8: Responses for 'Online Intention to Attend Live Music' variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Unlikely 1	2	3	4	5	6	Likely 7	Mean Score
Online Recommend Event	7.50%	10.83%	11.39%	18.61%	26.39%	12.78%	12.50%	4.34
Online Recommend Festival	10.83%	12.78%	15.00%	19.72%	21.11%	10.00%	10.56%	4.00

Table 6.8 shows that the variable concerned with the recommendation of music events again marginally achieved the greatest mean score, with 'online recommend event' achieving the slightly higher mean score of 4.34 out of the total possible of 7. However, only 29.72% of participants rated their 'online recommend event' as being less than an average rating of 4 out of 7. For this variable, 51.67% of participants did rate their intentions to attend live music events as being at least 5 out of 7. Therefore, the results were generally positive, but less than that of the offline social context.

As shown in Table 6.8, participants were also asked, whether they would be more likely to visit a music festival based on a recommendation from members of their online social groups. Similarly, although the 'online recommend festival' variable also achieved an average mean score of 4.00, only a slightly larger percentage of participants indicated a

rating lower than 4 out of 7 towards the festival element of live music attendance (38.61%). However, for this variable, only 41.67% of participants rated their intentions to attend live music festivals as being at least 5 out of 7.

Table 6.8 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Offline Intention to Attend Live Music' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they would be unlikely to behave in such a way, and a score of 7 indicating they were very likely to behave in such a way. As seen in Table 6.8, mean intensity scores for questions based on behavioural intention ranged between 4.50 and 4.64, with participants feeling that they would be likely to attend a live music event based on a recommendation from an offline group member achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 4.64.

As well as behavioural intentions towards attending live music based on recommendations from other consumers in the online context, participants were also asked about their intentions towards providing other members of their online social groups with positive or negative reviews of live music that they have attended. The results were again generally positive, with a mean score for the construct of 19.53 out of the total possible score of 28 (equivalent of 4.88 out of 7). This indicated that on the whole, participants rated their intentions to participate in positive behaviours between 4 and 5 on the scale out of 7, which was lower than that for the offline social context. Table 6.9 illustrates the mean responses given for each of the 'online intention to share live music experience' variables, ranging between 4.54 and 5.28. The bar chart shows that all mean scores were all high, with those scores greater than 4 indicating that participants had 'likely' to 'very likely' intentions to participate in the given behaviours.

Table 6.9: Responses for ‘Online Intention to Share Live Music Experience’ variables

Percentage of Responses

Scale Variable	Unlikely 1	2	3	4	5	6	Likely 7	Mean Score
Online Positive Event	4.17%	3.33%	7.22%	11.39%	23.33%	20.56%	30.00%	5.28
Online Negative Event	10.83%	8.06%	9.17%	16.39%	17.50%	18.33%	19.72%	4.56
Online Positive Festival	7.22%	3.33%	4.72%	14.17%	21.67%	20.00%	28.89%	5.15
Online Negative Festival	11.39%	8.33%	7.50%	17.78%	18.33%	15.56%	21.11%	4.54

With a highest mean score of 5.28, participants indicated on average they were ‘likely’ to share positive reviews of experiences at live music events with fellow online social group members, with a very high proportion of participants (73.89%) rating their intentions at least 5 out of 7 on the scale. A further 11.39% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share positive reviews (14.72%). However, a lower number of participants said they were ‘likely’ to share negative reviews of experiences at live music events (55.55%), with the variable returning a lower mean score of 4.56. A further 16.39% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share such reviews (28.06%).

In terms of the festival category, with a mean score of 5.15, participants indicated on average they were ‘likely’ to share positive reviews of experiences at live music

festivals with fellow online social group members. This again included a high proportion of participants (70.56%) rating their intentions at least 5 out of 7 on the scale. A further 14.17% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a marginally higher number of participants having negative intentions to share positive reviews (15.27%). On the other hand, exactly 55% of participants said they were 'likely' to share negative reviews of experiences at live music festivals, with a lower mean score of 4.54. A further 17.78% of participants gave a neutral response for this question, leaving a slightly higher number of participants having negative intentions to share such reviews (27.22%).

Table 6.9 shows the average responses given for each of the 'Online Intention to Share Live Music Experience' variables. Participants rated the intensity to which they agreed with the statements, with a score of 1 indicating they would be unlikely to behave in such a way, and a score of 7 indicating they were very likely to behave in such a way. As seen in Table 6.9, mean intensity scores for questions based on behavioural intention ranged between 4.54 and 5.28, with participants feeling that they would be likely to share positive reviews about a live music event with members of these groups achieving the greatest mean intensity score of 5.28.

6.3.5 Measurement Validation

The preliminary data analysis prepared the data set and confirmed the validity of the sample. The descriptive analysis provided a better understanding of the response profile. However, in order to address the research aims, a two-step structural equation modelling process was performed on the data set. This was comprised of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) for both the offline and online influence models, as well as the subsequent development of structural models in step two. These would confirm the validity of the conceptual models and test the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3. The first step of this process involved developing the measurement models.

6.3.6 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Prior to conducting the CFA, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on the data set using SPSS 20. As opposed to a CFA, where variables are set to a certain number of constructs, an EFA represents more of an exploratory technique.

The EFA was generally found to be successful in directly transferring the scales on the questionnaire that were intended to be used to test the different hypotheses into relevant or appropriate factored variables. However, while most of the transitions from hypothesis to loaded factor proved to be relatively straight forward, there did prove to be some complications when running the EFA in relation to some of the hypotheses that were being tested. For example, in the case of the hypotheses surrounding online social group influence, two factored variables emerged from the EFA which did not represent the scales as they were included in the questionnaire design. In addition, the hypotheses relating to offline group identity and the influence of offline groups on behavioural intentions were joined together into one factored variable when running an EFA. Therefore, the intended hypotheses for the study could not be tested using this method.

6.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Offline Model

CFA was performed on the proposed measurement model using AMOS 21 software. The offline measurement model consisted of the factors and variables discussed in the methodology of the study in Chapter 4. However, standard terminology used in SEM is adopted from this point of the chapter, with factors becoming 'latent constructs' and variables being described as 'observed variables'. As discussed previously, the sample consisted of 377 responses.

6.4.1 Reliability of Factors

Prior to conducting the two-step analysis for the offline model, the testing of reliability took place through SPSS software to determine the Cronbach's Alpha figure for each applicable factor that was theoretically determined by the literature review and the conceptualisation of the study. This was in addition to comparing the Cronbach's Alpha figures of the factors with those of the original measurement scales, again to test for the reliability of the adapted scales.

Table 6.10: Reliability of factors

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Music Identity</i>	<i>.895</i>
<i>Social Influence</i>	<i>.877</i>
<i>Offline Group Identity</i>	<i>.896</i>
<i>Offline Intention to Attend Live Music</i>	<i>.923</i>
<i>Offline Intention to Share Live Music Experience</i>	<i>.927</i>

As can be seen in Table 6.10 all five of the factors registered high Cronbach's Alpha scores. This indicated a high level of reliability, with a minimum score for reliability of a practical significance to be achieved being at least 0.5 according to Hair *et al.* (2006). In addition, all of the factors achieved Cronbach's Alpha scores close to, or surpassed, the Alpha scores from the original measurement scales. This indicated that the adapted scales performed significantly well in terms of reliability from the original scales from which they were derived.

The next stage of the analysis involved conducting CFA on the offline model. This presented a more complex method of testing for reliability and validity of the factors included in the model, as well as their observed variables. Composite reliabilities (CR) were computed during the CFA process to confirm the reliability of the constructs

within the measurement model, prior to developing the structural model for the social context.

The analysis of the offline model began with the identification of the model that was created using the CFA method.

6.4.2 Model Identification

The proposed measurement model was first assessed in terms of model identification. It was found to possess a chi-square value (X^2) of 475.268 and 195 degrees of freedom ($p = .000$). It was confirmed that the model was over-identified and therefore capable of producing multiple solutions. In addition, the model was 'recursive', with no feedback loops existing within the model, allowing further analysis to be conducted.

6.4.3 Model Fit

In order to establish the goodness of fit of the model, both the goodness of fit (GOF) and badness of fit (BOF) indices were assessed, as described in Chapter 4. The X^2/df value of 2.44 was below the cut-off value of 3 and was therefore deemed acceptable (Kline, 1998). The BOF index (RMSEA) was below 0.07, with a value of 0.06 demonstrating 'good fit' had been achieved (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In addition, the incremental fit indices were above the desired minimum values of 0.90 (Bentler, 1990), with the CFI reaching 0.95 and the TLI at 0.94. Parsimonious fit indices similarly achieved values well in excess of the required 0.50, with PCFI reaching 0.74 and PNFI having a value of 0.71.

6.4.4 Construct Validity

Three elements of construct validity were assessed. These were convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity. These aspects looked at each of the individual constructs within the overall model, identifying any latent constructs or

observed variables that may be causing problems. Convergent validity was assessed by establishing whether all of the observed variables within each of the latent constructs were significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Once significance had been established for all of the observed variables, the factor loadings and the average variances extracted (AVE) were examined. The factor loadings were analysed and no observed variables with values less than 0.50 were found, as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). However, upon calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) of the latent constructs in the proposed model, the 'Social Influence' construct was found to return an AVE of less than 0.50, again as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). Therefore, the 'Friend Approve' item from the 'Social Influence' construct, which possessed a notably lower factor loading than the other observed variables in the construct, was removed from the construct. This resulted in the construct achieving the 0.5 AVE benchmark after recalculations, with 7 of the 8 items originally intended for the construct being retained. This also meant that all of the hypothesised constructs were retained in the measurement model, including 22 of the originally-intended 23 items. Table 6.11 highlights the observed variable that was removed in order to achieve convergent validity of all the latent constructs.

Table 6.11: Observed variables removed during CFA (n=377)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Item removed</i>	<i>Reason item removed</i>
Social Influence	<i>I rarely purchase the latest music until I am sure my friends approve of it. (Friend Approve)</i>	Construct AVE < 0.50

Convergent validity for all constructs was then confirmed, with AVE values for all constructs ranging between 0.52 and 0.86, as shown in Table 6.12. After establishing convergent validity, the reliability of the constructs was assessed by calculating the CR score from the sum of error variances and the squared sum of the factor loadings (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Table 6.12 shows the results of the calculations, with all constructs achieving a CR value in excess of 0.70, therefore confirming reliability of all the latent constructs. Table 6.12 also shows which of the remaining 22 observed variables loaded onto each of the constructs, and also provides their individual standardised estimates (factor loadings).

Table 6.12: Construct structure and factor loadings after CFA (n=377)

Item	Construct	Estimate	AVE	CR
Offline_group_like	GI	0.90		
Offline_group_reflect	GI	0.81		
Offline_group_identity	GI	0.87	0.75	0.87
Offline_recommend_event	IA	0.94		
Offline_recommend_festival	IA	0.90	0.86	0.91
Offline_positive_event	ISE	0.91		
Offline_negative_event	ISE	0.67		
Offline_negative_festival	ISE	0.75		
Offline_positive_festival	ISE	0.98	0.70	0.87
Achieve_identity	MI	0.68		
Central_identity	MI	0.87		
Music_part	MI	0.79		
Snatch_identity	MI	0.82		
Derive_identity	MI	0.74		
Narrow_gap	MI	0.61	0.58	0.83
Others_approve	SI	0.70		
Others_expect	SI	0.66		
Others_impression	SI	0.69		
Sense_belong	SI	0.77		
Others_same	SI	0.84		
Others_identity	SI	0.70		
Others_like	SI	0.64	0.52	0.80

The results from Table 6.12 were also used to determine discriminant validity by ensuring that all constructs had an AVE greater than any corresponding squared inter-construct correlations (SIC). With the SIC values ranging from 0.00 to 0.53 and the AVE values ranging from 0.52 to 0.86, all of the constructs were found to achieve discriminant validity. This is illustrated in Table 6.13, which also shows that 8 of the inter-construct correlations were significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed), and 1 was significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 6.13: Results for construct validity (n=377)

Measurement Parameter Estimates	No. of Items	CR	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Music Identity	6	0.83	0.58	0.01	0.07	0.06	0.08
(2) Social Influence	7	0.80	0.12*	0.52	0.09	0.05	0.00
(3) Offline Group Identity	3	0.87	0.26**	0.31**	0.75	0.50	0.28
(4) Offline Intention to Attend Live Music	2	0.91	0.25**	0.22**	0.71**	0.86	0.53
(5) Offline Intention to Share Live Music Experience	4	0.87	0.29**	0.08	0.53**	0.73**	0.70

Diagonal represents the average variance extracted (AVE) for the constructs. Below the diagonal shows the inter-construct correlation (IC). Above the diagonal shows the squared inter-construct correlations (SIC).

** Indicates significant IC at $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

* Indicates significant IC at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

After examining these correlations and confirming they made practical sense, nomological validity was also confirmed by examining the significant inter-construct correlations and verifying they were theoretically justified. Therefore, in this model, the items contained within each factor have been successfully shown to represent the construct to which they have been assigned based upon prior theoretical assumptions. In turn, the behavioural intentions are reflected in the model as output factors, and therefore show the level at which offline group identity leads to subsequent behaviours which may be associated with live music attendance and the willingness to share live music reviews and experiences in the offline social environment.

6.4.5 Common Method Variance

Although the analysis demonstrated that all constructs were both reliable and valid, it was also necessary to test for common method biases. By performing Harman's single factor test by performing PCA on all of the variables in the data set associated with the model, it was confirmed that the variance could not be explained by a single factor. Five factors emerged in total, with no single factor explaining anywhere near 50% of the total variance, therefore indicating that common method bias was not of a concern for this model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

6.4.6 Final Measurement Model

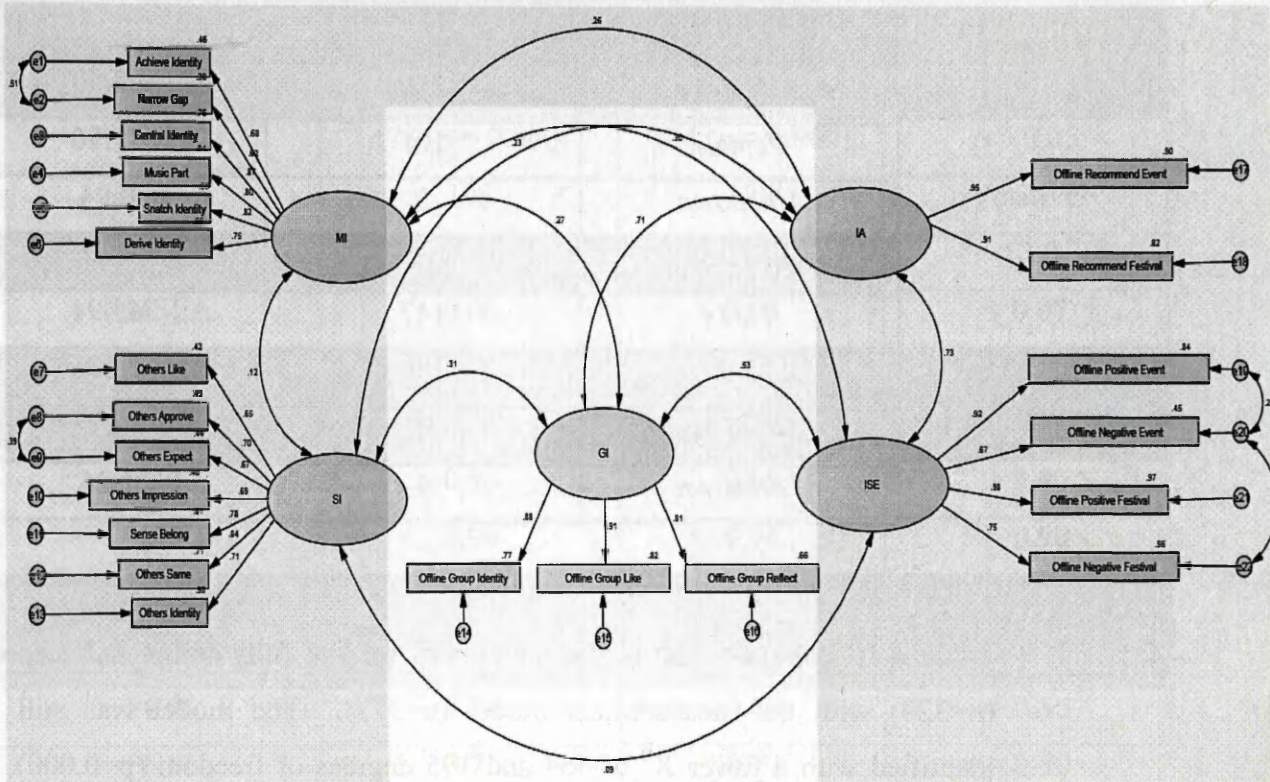
Following recommendations made by Hair *et al.* (2010), the modification indices (MI) output was also assessed to establish whether the freeing of any additional paths would improve the model fit. After adding paths for all MIs with a value greater than 15, no further modifications were made to the measurement model. The final measurement model fit indices are presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14: Model fit indices for final measurement model

	Measurement Model Fit	'Good Fit' Indication
Absolute Fit Indices		
χ^2	475 ($p = 0.000$)	$p > 0.05$
df	195	Positive
χ^2/df	2.44	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices		
CFI	0.95	> 0.90
TLI	0.94	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices		
PCFI	0.74	> 0.50
PNFI	0.71	> 0.50

The final measurement model, as it appeared in AMOS, is shown in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Final measurement model



6.4.7 Testing the Measurement Model with the Fully-completed Sample (n=320)

The data set consisting of fully-completed responses included 216 males (67.50%) and 101 females (31.56%), with the gender of the other 3 participants (0.94%) being unknown. In terms of age, 4 participants (2 males and 2 females; 1.25%) did not provide their age. Therefore, 2 participants (0.63%) provided neither their gender nor their age. Table 6.15 summarises the frequencies and percentages of participants in each given category.

Table 6.15: Gender and age of participants who fully completed the survey (n=320)

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	216	67.50
<i>Female</i>	101	31.56
<i>Unknown</i>	3	0.94
Age Group		
<i>18-24</i>	147	45.94
<i>25-34</i>	109	33.75
<i>35 and over</i>	58	18.13
<i>Unknown</i>	4	1.25

Table 6.16 compares the model fit indices for the fully-completed response sample (n=320) with the measurement model (n=377). The model was still sufficiently identified with a lower X^2 of 454 and 195 degrees of freedom ($p=0.000$). The X^2/df ratio decreased to 2.33 and was therefore acceptable. All of the other model fit indices demonstrated that testing the measurement model with the fully-completed response sample resulted in slightly higher levels of the overall goodness of fit. While the CFI, TLI, and RMSEA indices remained the same, both of the parsimonious fit indices increased slightly, with PCFI increasing from 0.74 to 0.80, and PNFI increasing from 0.71 to 0.77. Therefore, all minimum levels for both goodness and badness of fit were achieved. The comparison of model fits indicated that the findings of the lower number of participants who fully-completed the survey (n=320) could be generalised to the higher sample who did not fully complete the survey but had missing data 'filled in' by the structural equation modelling process (n=377).

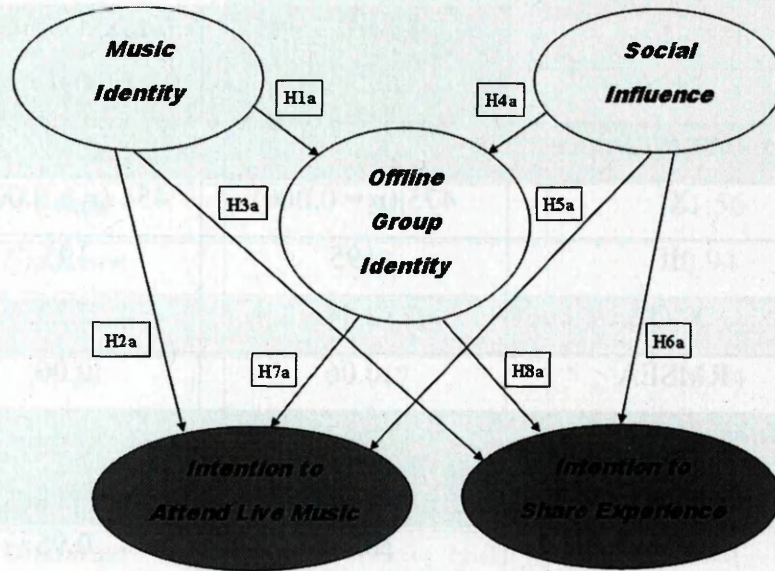
Table 6.16: Model identification and fit comparison with the fully-completed response sample

	<i>Measurement Model Fit</i>	<i>Fully-completed Model Fit</i>	<i>'Good Fit' Indication</i>
<i>Absolute Fit Indices</i>			
X ²	475 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	454 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
df	195	195	Positive
X ² /df	2.44	2.33	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	0.06	< 0.07
<i>Incremental Fit Indices</i>			
CFI	0.95	0.95	> 0.90
TLI	0.94	0.94	> 0.90
<i>Parsimonious Fit Indices</i>			
PCFI	0.74	0.80	> 0.50
PNFI	0.71	0.77	> 0.50

6.4.8 Hypotheses Testing

The measurement model fully developed by the CFA, and the results confirmed to be representative of the different groups of participants, it was possible to develop the structural model in order to test the hypotheses developed from the conceptual model in Chapter 3. The structural model tested the significance, strength, and direction of the inter-construct correlations within the model, confirming nomological validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Due to all of the latent constructs remaining in the measurement model, it was possible to test all of the proposed hypotheses. As a reminder, the hypothesised structural model for the offline context is illustrated in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Hypothesised structural model



Each of the 8 hypotheses are represented by a structural path in the hypothesised structural model, as illustrated in Figure 6.2. The paths are labelled according to the hypotheses they represent. For example, the path between 'Offline Group Identity' and 'Intention to Attend Live Music' is labelled H7a. In order to simplify the illustration, both the observed variables and error terms have been excluded from the diagram. The observed variables for each of the latent constructs can however be seen previously in Table 6.12.

6.4.9 Hypothesised Structural Model Fit

Prior to accepting or rejecting the individual hypotheses, it was important to assess the overall identification and fit of the hypothesised structural model. The model was found to possess a X^2 of 479.575, 196 degrees of freedom ($p = .000$) and of 'recursive' status. Therefore, the model was confirmed to be 'over-identified' and suitable for further analysis. In addition, the goodness of fit indices shown in Table 6.17 also confirmed the model was of 'good fit'. The X^2/df was slightly higher for the structural model than it had been for the measurement model, but still remained below the recommended level of 3. Further to this, all of the other indices indicated that the

hypothesised structural model was of ‘good fit’. Both the incremental fit indices were above 0.90, the parsimonious indices were above 0.50, and the RMSEA index was below 0.07, as required. The squared multiple correlation (R^2) value of .510 for the ‘Intention to Attend’ construct, as well as .312 for the ‘Intention to Share Experience’ construct also indicated that the model successfully predicted 51% and 31% of the variance respectively. This confirmed that ‘Music Identity’ and ‘Social Influence’, as well as participants’ level of identity with their social groups (‘Offline Group Identity’) were very good predictors of the behavioural intentions (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 6.17: Model fit indices for structural model

	Structural Model Fit	‘Good Fit’ Indication
Absolute Fit Indices		
X^2	479 ($p = 0.000$)	$p > 0.05$
df	196	Positive
X^2/df	2.45	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices		
CFI	0.95	> 0.90
TLI	0.94	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices		
PCFI	0.74	> 0.50
PNFI	0.72	> 0.50

Due to all of the fit indices confirming the model was of ‘good fit’, and with a high variance being extracted by the model, the individual hypotheses within the model were subsequently examined. The next section highlights the results of the analysis of the individual structural paths, and confirms whether the hypotheses were supported or not.

6.4.10 Hypotheses Results

In total, 8 structural paths were included in the offline analysis, representing 8 of the 16 originally proposed hypotheses. Table 6.18 shows the path estimates (inter-construct correlations), as well as the significance levels formed as a result of the hypotheses testing, and indicates which of the hypotheses could be accepted from the analysis. The path estimates show the strength, as well as the direction of the relationships between the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The model identified five of these structural paths as being significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Out of these significant paths, all were identified as being positive relationships. In total 5 of the 8 hypotheses were statistically significant and therefore supported by the study.

The results of whether or not each hypothesis was supported by the data analysis for the offline model are presented in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18: Results of hypotheses testing

No.	Hypothesis	Applicable Path	Path Estimate	Sig. Level	Hypothesis Support
H1a	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline group.	MI → GI	.23	<.000	Supported
H2a	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline group.	MI → IA	.07	.116	Not Supported
H3a	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline group.	MI → ISE	.17	.001	Supported
H4a	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline group.	SI → GI	.29	<.000	Supported
H5a	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline group.	SI → IA	.00	.950	Not Supported
H6a	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline group.	SI → ISE	-.09	.083	Not Supported
H7a	The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an offline group.	GI → IA	.69	<.000	Supported
H8a	The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an offline group.	GI → ISE	.51	<.000	Supported

Table 6.18 shows a significant positive relationship ($\beta = .237, p = < .000$) between participants' music (or self) identity and their identity with an offline social group, therefore supporting H1a. While the level of self-identity of a participant was not found to significantly influence intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .074, p = .116$), therefore resulting in H2a not being supported, self-identity was found to have a significant positive effect ($\beta = .170, p = .001$) on the intention to share live music experiences (H3a).

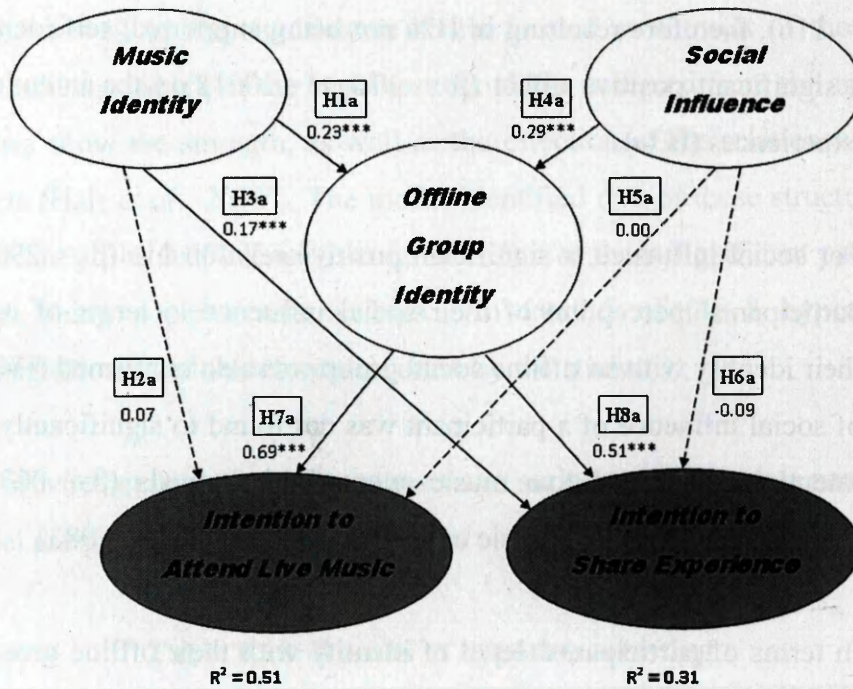
For social influence, a significant positive relationship ($\beta = .290, p = < .000$) between participants' perception of their social influence in terms of music consumption and their identity with an offline social group was also confirmed (H4a). However, the level of social influence of a participant was not found to significantly influence either (H5a) intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .003, p = .950$) or (H6a) intentions to share live music experiences ($\beta = -.092, p = .083$).

In terms of participants' level of identity with their offline groups, positive significant influences on both (H7a) intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .692, p = < .000$) and (H8a) intentions to share live music experiences ($\beta = .511, p = < .000$), therefore both hypotheses were accepted.

In total, three of the eight hypotheses conceptualised were found to directly predict the behavioural intentions associated with the model. Out of the remaining hypotheses, two were found to indirectly predict the associated behavioural intentions. These were the positive significant relationships between both self-identity and social influence and the participants' level of identity with offline groups (H1a and H4a respectively).

The results are summarised in Figure 6.3, which incorporates the conceptual model originally envisaged with the individual hypotheses assessments.

Figure 6.3: Supported hypotheses



*** indicates significant relationships at the 0.001 level (two-tailed),
Dashed arrow depicts non-significant path.

After examining the individual structural paths that confirmed whether the hypotheses could be accepted or rejected, the next section will highlight the results of the mediation analysis using the offline group identity factor.

6.4.11 Mediation Analysis

To examine the role of group identity within the hypothesized model, a competing model that did not include 'Offline Group Identity' as a mediating factor was created. The goodness of fit statistics, as shown in Table 6.19, indicated that the competing model represented a slightly poorer fit to the data than that of the hypothesised model.

Table 6.19: Model fit indices for alternative structural model

	Structural Model Fit	Alternative Model Fit	'Good Fit' Indication
Absolute Fit Indices			
X ²	479 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	525 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
df	196	198	Positive
X ² /df	2.45	2.66	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	0.06	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices			
CFI	0.95	0.95	> 0.90
TLI	0.94	0.93	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices			
PCFI	0.74	0.74	> 0.50
PNFI	0.72	0.72	> 0.50

Further to this, the Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987), which is frequently employed in comparing two competing models and suggests that smaller values represent a better fit of the hypothesized model (Hu & Bentler, 1995), was also assessed. The AIC value for the hypothesised model was 637.575, which was smaller than 679.969 for the competing model. This confirmed a better fit for the hypothesised model including group identity as a mediating variable.

In accordance with the procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating role of group identity in the relationships between self-identity and social influence and the behavioural intentions was assessed in more detail. Firstly, in the competing model without group identity acting as a mediator, direct effects from self-identity and social influence in predicting the behavioural intentions were tested. Both of the paths from self-identity to intention to attend live music ($\beta = .092, p = .049$) and self-identity to intention to share live music experience ($\beta = .184, p < .000$) proved to be significant.

However, neither of the paths from social influence proved to be significant. Secondly, the model was tested with group identity as a mediator. In that model, the only significant path was again that of the effect of self-identity on intention to share live music experience, with an estimated direct effect of $\beta = .170$, $p = .001$ when mediated by group identity. As the path was still significant, albeit with a loss of strength, it can be concluded that group identity partially mediates the relationship between self-identity and intention to share live music experience. Meanwhile, the direct effect of the group identity factor acting as a mediator indicated that the relationship between self-identity and intention to attend live music was now shown to be non-significant ($B=.074$, $p = .116$), confirming full mediation. Therefore, offline group identity does mediate the effects of self-identity on behavioural intentions. None of the other estimated direct effect paths proved to be significant when mediated by group identity.

The mediation analyses show that self-identity exerts direct influences on both intention to attend live music and intention to share live music experience, with offline group identity fully and partially mediating the effects respectively. In contrast, social influence was found to have no direct effect on either intention to attend live music or intention to share live music experience, whether mediated by offline group identity or not. The evaluation of the direct effects using the offline group identity variable as a mediator are shown in Table 6.20.

Table 6.20: Evaluation of direct effects

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Direct effect without mediation</i>	<i>Direct effect with mediation</i>	<i>Mediation effect</i>
MI - IA	.092 ($p = .049$)	.074 ($p = .116$)	Full
MI - ISE	.184 ($p < .000$)	.170 ($p = .001$)	Partial
SI - IA	.025 ($p = .601$)	.003 ($p = .950$)	None
SI - ISE	-.076 ($p = .141$)	-.092 ($p = .083$)	None

The results of the SEM summarised in Figure 6.3 are discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Here the results for each of the individual hypotheses, as well as the analysis using the

offline group identity factor, are examined in relation to the original conceptualisation and theoretical support suggested by the existing literature.

6.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Online Model

CFA was performed on the proposed measurement model using AMOS 21 software. The online measurement model consisted of the factors and variables discussed in the methodology of the study in Chapter 4. As discussed previously, the sample consisted of 377 responses.

6.5.1 Reliability of Factors

Prior to conducting the two-step analysis for the online model, the testing of reliability took place through SPSS software to determine the Cronbach's Alpha figure for each applicable factor that was theoretically determined by the literature review and the conceptualisation of the study. This was in addition to comparing the Cronbach's Alpha figures of the factors with those of the original measurement scales, again to test for the reliability of the adapted scales.

Table 6.21: Reliability of factors

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Music Identity</i>	<i>.895</i>
<i>Social Influence</i>	<i>.877</i>
<i>Online Group Identity</i>	<i>.855</i>
<i>Online Intention to Attend Live Music</i>	<i>.922</i>
<i>Online Intention to Share Live Music Experience</i>	<i>.903</i>

As can be seen in Table 6.21 relating to the Cronbach's Alpha figures, all five of the factors registered high Cronbach's Alpha scores. This indicated a high level of reliability, with a minimum score for reliability of a practical significance to be achieved being at least 0.5 according to Hair *et al.* (2006). In addition, all of the factors achieved Cronbach's Alpha scores that were close to, or surpassed, the Alpha scores from the original measurement scales. This indicated that the adapted scales performed significantly well in terms of reliability from the original scales from which they were derived.

The next stage of the analysis involved conducting CFA on the online model. This presented a more complex method of testing for reliability and validity of the factors included in the model, as well as their observed variables. CR were computed during the CFA process to confirm the reliability of the constructs within the measurement model, prior to developing the structural model for the social context.

The analysis of the online model began with the identification of the model that was created using the maximum likelihood CFA method.

6.5.2 Model Identification

The proposed measurement model was first assessed in terms of model identification. It was found to possess a chi-square value (X^2) of 483.061 and 194 degrees of freedom ($p = .000$). It was confirmed that the model was over-identified and therefore capable of producing multiple solutions. In addition, the model was 'recursive', with no feedback loops existing within the model, allowing further analysis to be conducted.

6.5.3 Model Fit

In order to establish the goodness of fit of the model, both the GOF and BOF indices were assessed, as described in Chapter 6. The X^2/df value of 2.49 was below the cut-off value of 3 and was therefore deemed acceptable (Kline, 1998). The BOF index (RMSEA) was below 0.07, with a value of 0.06 demonstrating 'good fit' had been

achieved (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In addition, the incremental fit indices were above the desired minimum values of 0.90 (Bentler, 1990), with the CFI reaching 0.95 and the TLI at 0.93. Parsimonious fit indices similarly achieved values well in excess of the required 0.50, with PCFI reaching 0.73 and PNFI having a value of 0.70.

6.5.4 Construct Validity

Three elements of construct validity were assessed. These were convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity. These aspects looked at each of the individual constructs within the overall model, identifying any latent constructs or observed variables that may be causing problems.

Convergent validity was assessed by establishing whether all of the observed variables within each of the latent constructs were significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Once significance had been established for all of the observed variables, the factor loadings and AVE were examined. The factor loadings were analysed and no observed variables with values less than 0.50 were found, as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). However, upon calculating the AVE of the latent constructs in the proposed model, the 'Social Influence' construct was found to return an AVE of less than 0.50, again as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). Therefore, the 'Friend Approve' item from the 'Social Influence' construct, which possessed a notably lower factor loading than the other observed variables in the construct, was removed from the construct. This resulted in the construct achieving the 0.5 AVE benchmark after recalculations, with 7 of the 8 items originally intended for the construct being retained. This also meant that all of the hypothesised constructs were retained in the measurement model, including 22 of the originally-intended 23 items. Table 6.22 highlights the observed variable that was removed in order to achieve convergent validity of all the latent constructs.

Table 6.22: Observed variables removed during CFA (n=377)

Construct	Item removed	Reason item removed
Social Influence	<i>I rarely purchase the latest music until I am sure my friends approve of it. (Friend Approve)</i>	Construct AVE < 0.50

Convergent validity for all constructs was then confirmed, with AVE values for all constructs ranging between 0.52 and 0.86, as shown in Table 6.23. After establishing convergent validity, the reliability of the constructs was assessed by calculating the CR score from the sum of error variances and the squared sum of the factor loadings (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Table 6.23 shows the results of the calculations, with all constructs achieving a CR value in excess of 0.70, therefore confirming reliability of all the latent constructs. Table 6.23 also shows which of the remaining 22 observed variables loaded onto each of the constructs, and also provides their individual standardised estimates (factor loadings).

Table 6.23: Construct structure and factor loadings after CFA (n=377)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>CR</i>
Online_group_like	GI	0.85		
Online_group_reflect	GI	0.74		
Online_group_identity	GI	0.86	0.67	0.80
Online_recommend_event	IA	0.96		
Online_recommend_festival	IA	0.88	0.86	0.91
Online_positive_event	ISE	0.67		
Online_negative_event	ISE	0.95		
Online_negative_festival	ISE	0.91		
Online_positive_festival	ISE	0.59	0.64	0.82
Achieve_identity	MI	0.70		
Central_identity	MI	0.82		
Music_part	MI	0.73		
Snatch_identity	MI	0.85		
Derive_identity	MI	0.76		
Narrow_gap	MI	0.64	0.57	0.82
Others_approve	SI	0.70		
Others_expect	SI	0.66		
Others_impression	SI	0.69		
Sense_belong	SI	0.78		
Others_same	SI	0.84		
Others_identity	SI	0.70		
Others_like	SI	0.64	0.52	0.80

The results from Table 6.23 were also used to determine discriminant validity by ensuring that all constructs had an AVE greater than any corresponding squared inter-construct correlations (SIC). With the SIC values ranging from 0.02 to 0.31 and the AVE values ranging from 0.52 to 0.86, all of the constructs were found to achieve discriminant validity. This is illustrated in Table 6.24, which also shows that 8 of the inter-construct correlations were significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed), and 2 were significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 6.24: Results for construct validity (n=377)

Measurement Parameter Estimates	No. of Items	CR	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Music Identity	6	0.83	0.58	0.02	0.13	0.12	0.08
(2) Social Influence	7	0.80	0.14*	0.52	0.09	0.04	0.02
(3) Online Group Identity	3	0.87	0.36**	0.30**	0.75	0.31	0.14
(4) Online Intention to Attend Live Music	2	0.91	0.35**	0.21**	0.56**	0.86	0.18
(5) Online Intention to Share Live Music Experience	4	0.87	0.28**	0.14*	0.38**	0.42**	0.70

Diagonal represents the average variance extracted (AVE) for the constructs. Below the diagonal shows the inter-construct correlation (IC). Above the diagonal shows the squared inter-construct correlations (SIC).

** Indicates significant IC at $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

* Indicates significant IC at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

After examining these correlations and confirming they made practical sense, nomological validity was confirmed by examining the significant inter-construct correlations and verifying they were theoretically justified. Therefore, in this model, the items contained within each factor have again successfully shown to represent the construct to which they have been assigned based upon prior theoretical assumptions. In turn, the behavioural intentions are reflected in the model as output factors, and therefore show the level at which online group identity leads to subsequent behaviours which may be associated with live music attendance and the willingness to share live music reviews and experiences in the online social environment.

6.5.5 Common Method Variance

Although the analysis demonstrated that all constructs were both reliable and valid, it was also necessary to test for common method biases. By conducting Harman's single

factor test by performing PCA on all of the variables in the data set associated with the model, it was confirmed that the variance could not be explained by a single factor. Five factors emerged in total, with no single factor explaining anywhere near 50% of the total variance, therefore indicating that common method bias was not a concern for this model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

6.5.6 Final Measurement Model

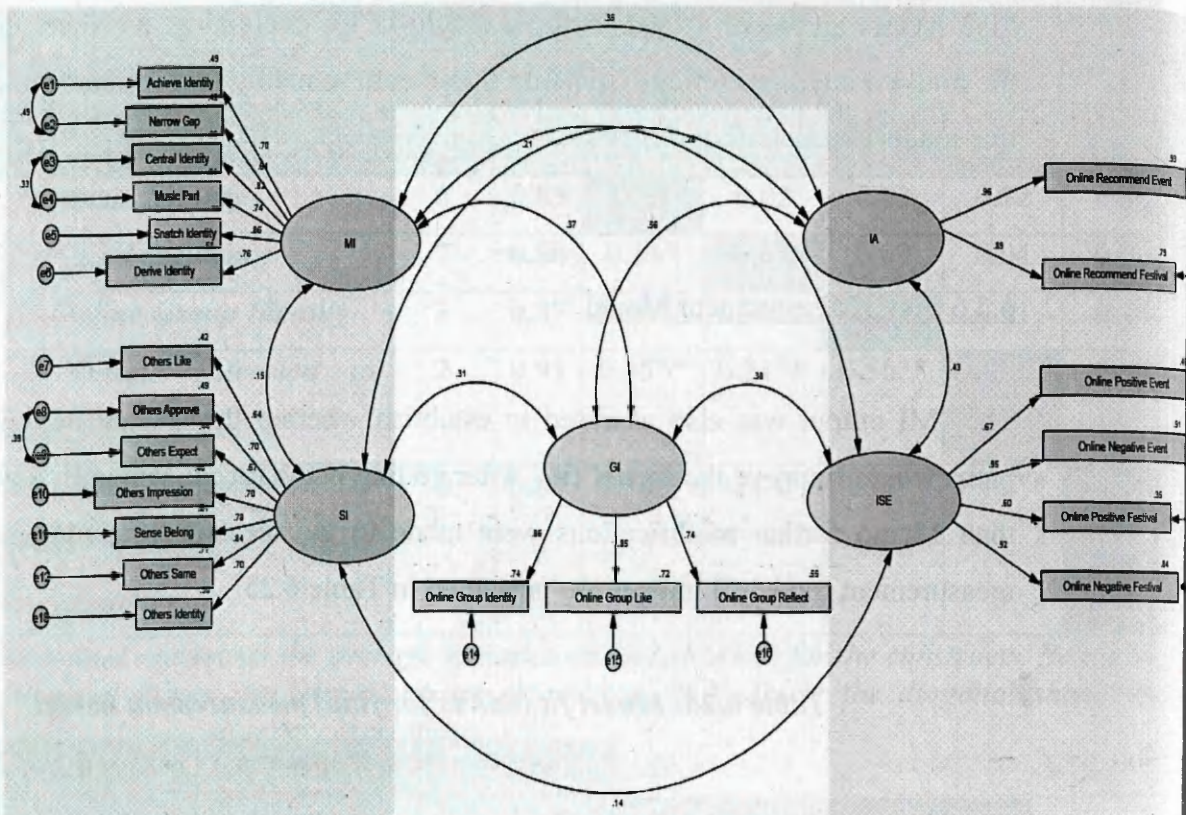
The MI output was also assessed to establish whether the freeing of any additional paths would improve the model fit. After adding paths for all MIs with a value greater than 15, no further modifications were made to the measurement model. The final measurement model fit indices are presented in Table 6.25.

Table 6.25: Model fit indices for final measurement model

	Measurement Model Fit	'Good Fit' Indication
Absolute Fit Indices		
X ²	483 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
df	194	Positive
X ² /df	2.49	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices		
CFI	0.95	> 0.90
TLI	0.93	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices		
PCFI	0.73	> 0.50
PNFI	0.70	> 0.50

The final measurement model, as it appeared in AMOS, is shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Final Measurement Model



6.5.7 Testing the Measurement Model with the Fully-completed Sample (n=320)

Table 6.26 compares the model fit indices for the fully-completed response sample (n=320) with the measurement model (n=377). The model was still sufficiently identified with a lower X^2 of 415 and 194 degrees of freedom ($p=0.000$). The X^2/df ratio decreased to 2.14 and was therefore acceptable. All of the other model fit indices demonstrated that testing the measurement model with the fully-completed response sample resulted in slightly higher levels of the overall goodness of fit. While the CFI, TLI, and RMSEA indices remained practically the same, both of the parsimonious fit indices increased slightly, with PCFI increasing from 0.73 to 0.79, and PNFI increasing from 0.70 to 0.76. Therefore, all minimum levels for both goodness and badness of fit were achieved. The comparison of model fits indicated that the findings of the lower number of participants who fully-completed the survey (n=320) could be generalised to the higher sample who did not fully complete the survey but had missing data 'filled in' by the structural equation modelling process (n=377).

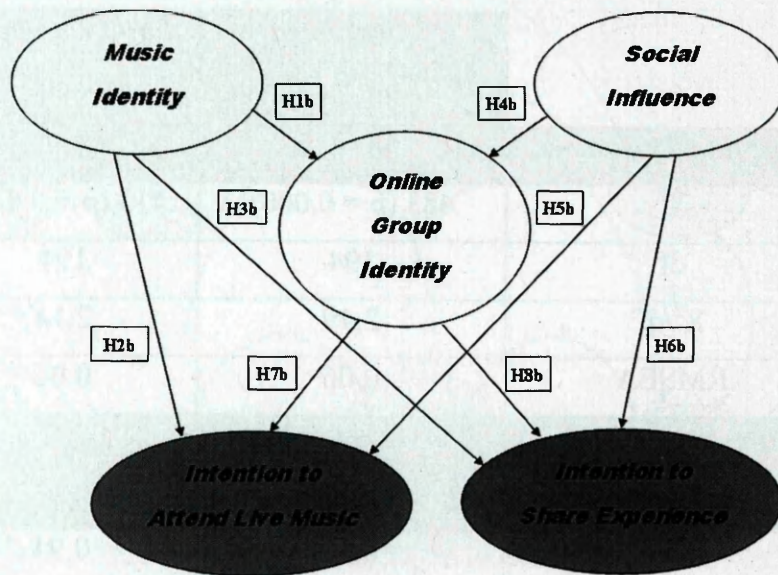
Table 6.26: Model identification and fit comparison with the fully-completed response sample

	<i>Measurement Model Fit</i>	<i>Fully-completed Model Fit</i>	<i>'Good Fit' Indication</i>
<i>Absolute Fit Indices</i>			
X ²	483 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	415 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
df	194	194	Positive
X ² /df	2.49	2.14	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	0.06	< 0.07
<i>Incremental Fit Indices</i>			
CFI	0.95	0.94	> 0.90
TLI	0.93	0.93	> 0.90
<i>Parsimonious Fit Indices</i>			
PCFI	0.73	0.79	> 0.50
PNFI	0.70	0.76	> 0.50

6.5.8 Hypotheses Testing

The measurement model fully developed by the CFA, and the results confirmed to be representative of the different groups of participants, it was possible to develop the structural model in order to test the hypotheses developed from the conceptual model in Chapter 3. The structural model tested the significance, strength, and direction of the inter-construct correlations within the model, confirming nomological validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Due to all of the latent constructs remaining in the measurement model, it was possible to test all of the proposed hypotheses. As a reminder, the hypothesised structural model for the online context is illustrated in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5: Hypothesised structural model



Each of the 8 hypotheses are represented by a structural path in the hypothesised structural model, as illustrated in Figure 6.5. The paths are labelled according to the hypotheses they represent. For example, the path between 'Online Group Identity' and 'Intention to Attend Live Music' is labelled H7b. In order to simplify the illustration, both the observed variables and error terms have been excluded from the diagram. The observed variables for each of the latent constructs can however be seen previously in Table 6.23.

6.5.9 Hypothesised Structural Model Fit

Prior to accepting or rejecting the individual hypotheses, it was important to assess the overall identification and fit of the hypothesised structural model. The model was found to possess a X^2 of 510.717, 196 degrees of freedom ($p = .000$) and of 'recursive' status. Therefore, the model was confirmed to be 'over-identified' and suitable for further analysis. In addition, the goodness of fit indices shown in Table 6.27 also confirmed the model was of 'good fit'. The X^2/df was slightly higher for the structural model than it had been for the measurement model, but still remained below the recommended level of 3. Further to this, all of the other indices indicated that the

hypothesised structural model was of ‘good fit’. Both the incremental fit indices were above 0.90, the parsimonious indices were above 0.50, and the RMSEA index was below 0.07, as required. The squared multiple correlation (R^2) value of .332 for the ‘Intention to Attend’ construct, as well as .166 for the ‘Intention to Share Experience’ construct also indicated that the model successfully predicted 33% and 17% of the variance respectively. This confirmed that ‘Music Identity’ and ‘Social Influence’, as well as participants’ level of identity with their social groups (‘Online Group Identity’) were good predictors of the behavioural intentions (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 6.27: Model fit indices for structural model

	Structural Model Fit	‘Good Fit’ Indication
Absolute Fit Indices		
X ²	510 ($p = 0.000$)	$p > 0.05$
df	196	Positive
X ² /df	2.61	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices		
CFI	0.94	> 0.90
TLI	0.92	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices		
PCFI	0.73	> 0.50
PNFI	0.70	> 0.50

Due to all of the fit indices confirming the model was of ‘good fit’, and with a high variance being extracted by the model, the individual hypotheses within the model were subsequently examined. The next section highlights the results of the analysis of the individual structural paths, and confirms whether the hypotheses were supported or not.

6.5.10 Hypotheses Results

In total, 8 structural paths were included in the online analysis, representing 8 of the 16 originally proposed hypotheses. Table 6.28 shows the path estimates (inter-construct correlations), as well as the significance levels formed as a result of the hypotheses testing, and indicates which of the hypotheses could be accepted from the analysis. The path estimates show the strength, as well as the direction of the relationships between the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The model identified four of these structural paths as being significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed), and a further two paths being significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). Out of these significant paths, all were identified as being positive relationships. In total 6 of the 8 hypotheses were statistically significant and therefore supported by the study. The results of whether or not each hypothesis was supported by the data analysis for the online model are presented in Table 6.28.

Table 6.28: Results of hypotheses testing

No.	Hypothesis	Applicable Path	Path Estimate	Sig. Level	Hypothesis Support
H1b	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an online group.	MI → GI	.32	<.000	Supported
H2b	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an online group.	MI → IA	.16	.003	Supported
H3b	Music Identity will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an online group.	MI → ISE	.16	.005	Supported
H4b	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an online group.	SI → GI	.27	<.000	Supported
H5b	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an online group.	SI → IA	.04	.423	Not Supported
H6b	Social Influence will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an online group.	SI → ISE	.02	.626	Not Supported
H7b	The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music based on a recommendation by a member of an online group.	GI → IA	.49	<.000	Supported
H8b	The level of identity with an offline/online group will have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to share live music reviews with members of an online group.	GI → ISE	.31	<.000	Supported

Table 6.28 shows a significant positive relationship ($\beta = .325, p = < .000$) between participants' music (or self) identity and their identity with an online social group, therefore supporting H1b. The findings of positive significant influences of self-identity on both (H2b) intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .160, p = .003$) and (H3b) intentions to share live music experiences ($\beta = .165, p = .005$) also meant that both hypotheses were accepted.

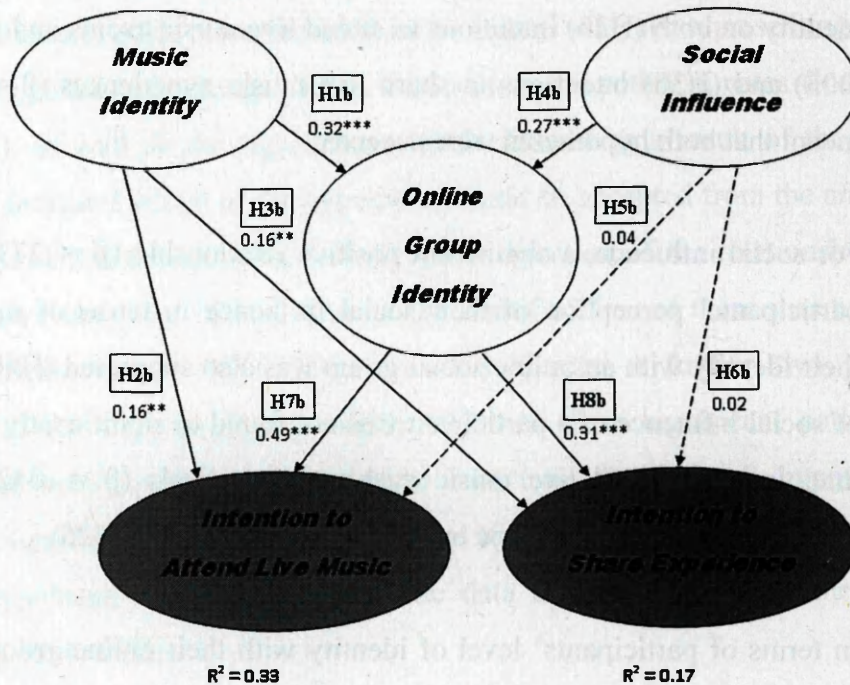
For social influence, a significant positive relationship ($\beta = .273, p = < .000$) between participants' perception of their social influence in terms of music consumption and their identity with an online social group was also supported (H4b). However, the level of social influence of a participant was not found to significantly influence either (H5b) intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .042, p = .423$) or (H6b) intentions to share live music experiences ($\beta = .028, p = .626$).

In terms of participants' level of identity with their online groups, positive significant influences on both (H7b) intentions to attend live music events and festivals ($\beta = .492, p = < .000$) and (H8b) intentions to share live music experiences ($\beta = .315, p = < .000$) were confirmed. Therefore, both hypotheses were accepted.

In total, four of the eight hypotheses conceptualised were found to directly predict the behavioural intentions associated with the model. Out of the remaining hypotheses, two of these were found to indirectly predict the associated behavioural intentions. These were the positive significant relationships between both self-identity and social influence and the participants' level of identity with online groups (H1b and H4b respectively).

The results are summarised in Figure 6.6, which incorporates the conceptual model originally envisaged with the individual hypotheses assessments.

Figure 6.6: Supported hypotheses



*** indicates significant relationships at the 0.001 level (two-tailed),
 ** indicates significant relationships at the 0.01 level (two-tailed),
 Dashed arrow depicts non-significant path.

After examining the individual structural paths that confirmed whether the hypotheses could be accepted or rejected, the next section will highlight the results of the mediation analysis using the online group identity factor.

6.5.11 Mediation Analysis

To examine the role of group identity within the hypothesized model, a competing model that did not include ‘Online Group Identity’ as a mediating factor was created. The goodness of fit statistics, as shown in Table 6.29, indicated that the competing model represented a slightly poorer fit to the data than that of the hypothesised model.

Table 6.29: Model fit indices for alternative structural model

	Structural Model Fit	Alternative Model Fit	'Good Fit' Indication
Absolute Fit Indices			
X ²	510 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	570 (<i>p</i> = 0.000)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
df	196	198	Positive
X ² /df	2.61	2.88	< 3.0
RMSEA	0.06	0.07	< 0.07
Incremental Fit Indices			
CFI	0.94	0.93	> 0.90
TLI	0.92	0.91	> 0.90
Parsimonious Fit Indices			
PCFI	0.73	0.73	> 0.50
PNFI	0.70	0.70	> 0.50

Further to this, the Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987), which is frequently employed in comparing two competing models and suggests that smaller values represent a better fit of the hypothesized model (Hu & Bentler, 1995), was also assessed. The AIC value for the hypothesised model was 668.717, which was smaller than 724.933 for the competing model. This confirmed a better fit for the hypothesised model including group identity as a mediating variable.

In accordance with the procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating role of group identity in the relationships between self-identity and social influence and the behavioural intentions was again assessed for the model. Firstly, in the competing model without group identity acting as a mediator, direct effects from self-identity and social influence in predicting the behavioural intentions were tested. Both of the paths from self-identity to intention to attend live music ($\beta = .187, p = < .000$) and self-identity to intention to share live music experience ($\beta = .181, p = .002$) proved to be

significant. However, neither of the paths from social influence proved to be significant. Secondly, the model was tested with group identity as a mediator. In that model, the only two significant paths were again that of the effect of self-identity on intention to attend live music ($\beta = .160, p = .003$) and intention to share live music experience ($\beta = .165, p = .005$), when mediated by group identity. As the paths were still significant, albeit with a loss of strength, it can be concluded that group identity partially mediates the relationships between self-identity and both intention to attend live music and intention to share live music experience. Therefore, online group identity does mediate the effects of self-identity on behavioural intentions. None of the other estimated direct effect paths proved to be significant when mediated by group identity.

The mediation analyses show that self-identity exerts direct influences on both intention to attend live music and intention to share live music experience, with online group identity partially mediating both effects on behavioural intentions. In contrast, social influence was found to have no direct effect on either intention to attend live music or intention to share live music experience, whether mediated by online group identity or not. The evaluation of the direct effects using the online group identity variable as a mediator are shown in Table 6.30.

Table 6.30: Evaluation of direct effects

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Direct effect without mediation</i>	<i>Direct effect with mediation</i>	<i>Mediation effect</i>
MI - IA	.187 ($p < .000$)	.160 ($p = .003$)	Partial
MI - ISE	.181 ($p = .002$)	.165 ($p = .005$)	Partial
SI - IA	.063 ($p = .233$)	.042 ($p = .423$)	None
SI - ISE	.040 ($p = .478$)	.028 ($p = .626$)	None

The results of the SEM summarised in Figure 6.6 are examined in detail in Chapter 7. Here the results for each of the individual hypotheses, as well as the analysis using the

online group identity factor, are examined in relation to the original conceptualisation and theoretical support suggested by the existing literature.

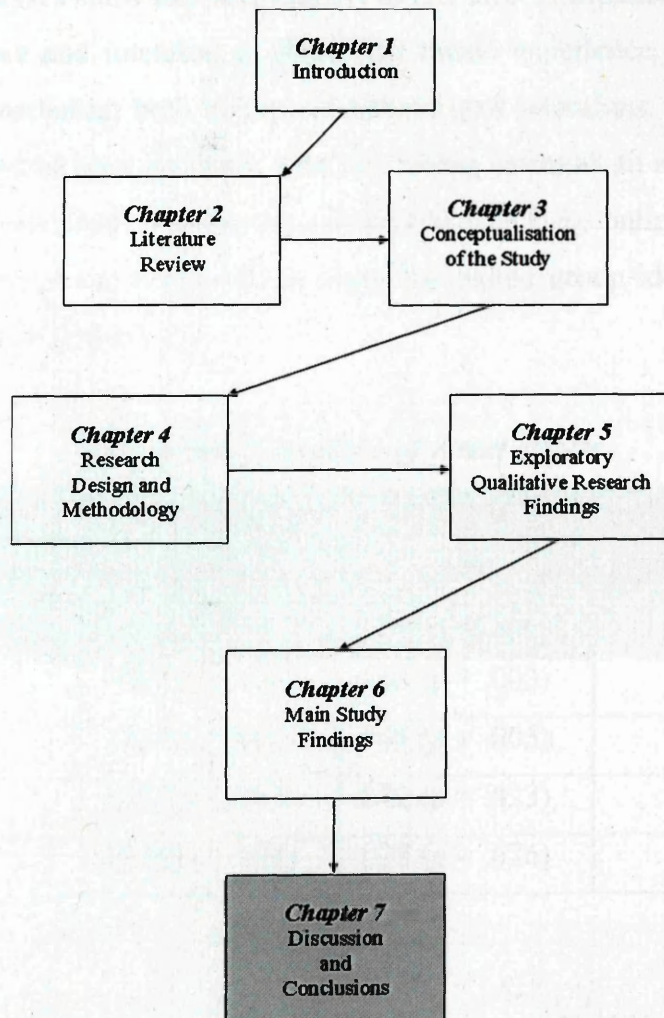
6.6 Chapter Summary

The results of the main study for both the offline and the online models have been reported in this chapter. In the next chapter, the results of the research hypotheses will be discussed in relation to the original conceptualisation and theoretical support suggested by the existing literature. Academic contributions and managerial implications of the whole study are also established.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the overall findings of the study. In addition, this chapter also presents marketing recommendations for the music industry generated from this discussion, as well as a review of the processes involved in the completion of the thesis.



7.2 Discussion

When considering music-based consumer groupings, it can be argued from the analysis of the exploratory qualitative research that the unique cultures, fashions, and differentiations associated with each genre of music are of importance in a group setting. As discussed in the literature review, this may include individuals' choice of lifestyles, tastes, and attitudes towards various types of music. It is possible that these elements could again be transferred to a social group setting, and may affect not just one person's identity within that group, but also the group's identity as a whole.

The qualitative research also appeared to highlight a notable trend of social implications throughout the behaviours and practices of today's music consumers. Whether it be consuming the music itself or related products and merchandise, the idolisation of music artists and groups, or the attendance of live music events, the concept of socialisation with other people through consumption was found to be a profound trend. Even in the discussion of the benefits of the multitude of available music formats, socialisation through consumption appeared to be a major theme. This was found despite some newer technologies such as iPods and MP3 players allowing for a private separation from the public place through the creation of a consumption 'bubble' in which one can indulge in their favourite music and artists whilst in the public arena. In the case of live music events, the forums investigated again appeared to illustrate a dominant socialisation trend, which impacted upon both the attendance and experience of events. In addition, the qualitative research indicated that discussions may also take place on aspects of the offering other than that of the music itself, and the accompanying artwork may be one related topic of conversation.

The implications of the results of the main study are discussed in this chapter, which attempts to draw on the observations of both significant and non-significant predictor variables, as well as the potential impact of these results on theories surrounding live music attendance. In addition, the conceptual models for offline and online social networking that were developed as a result of the data analysis will be compared. The

implications of these findings will also be discussed, particularly in light of the conceptual models for the study and the accompanying hypotheses.

In order to draw conclusions from the main study, the constructs included in the initial conceptual models of the thesis, which were derived from both the discussions that took place in the literature review and the findings of the exploratory qualitative research, were examined through data analysis. This analysis was conducted in order to discover whether or not they proved to be significant predictors within the study's scope of social group influence on live music attendance practices. The representation of the hypotheses as constructs in the two conceptual models created by the study for offline and online social group influence are also discussed in this section.

7.2.1 Self-identity

Self-identity is represented in the model as the construct labelled *Music Identity*. It was hypothesised that in terms of offline groups, self-identity would have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline group (H1a), which was proven to be supported by the data and therefore concurred with the existing literature. However, in terms of behavioural intentions, while self-identity was shown to have a positive significant influence on the sharing of live music reviews by consumers with other members of offline groups (H3a), this was not the case for influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music (H2a).

It was hypothesised that in terms of online groups, self-identity would have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an online group (H1b), which was proven to be supported by the data. However, unlike the case of offline groups, in terms of behavioural intentions self-identity was shown to have a positive significant influence on both consumers' intentions to attend live music (H2b) and on the sharing of live music reviews by consumers with other members of online groups (H3b).

The hypothesis of the study proven to be unsupported in this area was that of self-identity significantly predicting the level of influence from an offline social group in terms of intentions to attend live music. It is possible to draw several conclusions from

this. For example, in the case of attending live music events and festivals, this finding represents the possibility that individuals' general levels of identity with music may not be related to offline social group influence. It could be argued that this may in fact be due to the unique contexts in which offline social interactions may take place, in terms of the wide range of offline environments in which social interactions may take place. This is as opposition to the homogenous environments that tend to be offered in online social environments, such as similarly structured online forums and familiar social networking websites such as Facebook. In another consideration, the various personalities and characteristics of key social contacts such as friends, family members, and other social peers may be less important in offline influence in relation to modern-day music consumption, including aspects of live music attendance, than they are when interacting with social peers in an online capacity.

On the other hand, as the equivalent self-identity hypotheses for online social environments were shown to be supported, this finding of the study may highlight an important difference between offline and online social group influence on different aspects of live music consumption. In particular, differences between identifying with music and related products, and a different susceptibility to the influence of fellow group members in offline and online social environments that may affect attendance at live music events. Therefore, it can be considered that in modern-day music consumption, the differing elements of offline and online social networking in relation to group influence on music consumption behaviours may be of critical importance. It is suggested that this may provide another potentially fruitful avenue for further research, especially when attempting to distinguish ways in which online social networking may differ from the 'traditional' aspects of social group influence on music consumption behaviours in the offline environment. For example, it can be argued that this finding of the study is an indication that online social groups are more influential in determining the attendance of live music events and festivals.

When considering social environments and the construction of identity, all of the hypotheses of the main study relating to individuals' notions of their music consumption forming an important or integral part of their identity proved to be correct in the online context, where they were shown to represent significant predictors of social group influence. In other words, the conceptual model for online social group

influence appears to show clear evidence of a significant individual influence input factor for live music attendance. This would suggest that the incorporation of objects into the extended self, as epitomised by Belk (1988) and Sivadas & Machleit (1994), will have an impact upon the extent of an individual's online social group influence in relation to music consumption behaviours. Therefore, it can be perceived from the analysis of the findings that the extent to which a consumer incorporates music-based products into their lives will determine a higher level of online social group influence.

However, this was not entirely found to be the case in the offline social group context in terms of influence upon live music attendance and therefore appears to contradict the findings of existing literature. For example, when considering the work of Belk (1988) which pointed towards products becoming an extension of an individual's self, the results of the main study appear to suggest that in the case of music as a 'product', the sample population indicted that music may not necessarily be regarded as strictly conforming to theories of consumer behaviour such as these. However, previous research has shown the apparent importance of music in providing an extension or representation of one's self (or their self-identity) to other people in various social contexts (Shankar, 2000). Therefore, it can be concluded from this finding that in terms of live music attendance, the amount of identity formation achieved through music consumption that an individual has partaken in will not be a determining factor in the level of influence that they receive from their social groups in offline environments. However, several other possible conclusions could also be drawn from this finding on online social group influence and music consumption. It could be determined that this finding may merely be a representation of this particular sample of the population, and therefore may not be applicable to the general population. In terms of music consumption, it could be viewed that music does not represent traditional products, and may therefore not be subject to theories such as Belk's.

7.2.2 Social Influence

Social influence is represented in the model as the construct labelled *Social Influence*. It was hypothesised that in terms of offline groups, social influence would have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an offline group (H4a), which

was proven to be supported and therefore concurred with the existing literature. However, in terms of behavioural intentions, social influence was shown not to have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music (H5a) or the sharing of live music reviews with members of offline groups (H6a).

It was also hypothesised that in terms of online groups, social influence would have a positive significant influence on consumers' identity with an online group (H4b), which was proven to be supported by the data. However, in terms of behavioural intentions, social influence was shown not to have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music (H5b) or the sharing of live music reviews with members of online groups (H6b).

It can be noted that in the case of both offline and online groups, the findings suggest that an individual's general level of susceptibility to social influence, as based on the original work of Bearden *et al.* (1989), does not predict a higher level of group influence in relation to certain live music consumption behaviours. As such, for the constructs contained within the main study that represented the hypotheses surrounding social influence, the use of the general interpersonal susceptibility measurement scale did not provide any significant predictors of social group influence within the realms of live music attendance or the sharing of live music experiences.

Therefore, when considering social environments and the extension of identity towards others, the hypotheses of the main study relating to individual's notions of their music consumption being influenced by social peers were shown to all represent non-significant predictors of social group influence in terms of behavioural intentions in either offline or online contexts. Therefore, it can be concluded that in terms of live music attendance, the amount of social influence to which a consumer believes they are susceptible will not be a determining factor on the level of influence they receive from their social groups in either offline or online environments.

It can be argued that this finding may represent a different emerging trend of consumer behaviour that may warrant further investigation. For example, with existing literature indicating that music is often used as a means of expressing one's identity (Shankar, 2000), this finding may represent a potential change in the views of modern-day music

consumers. In other words, the data potentially represents a shift from self-identity to a more non self-representing use of music, such as music consumption behaviours and practices being simply associated with acts of hedonic consumption; i.e. for use in relaxation, during leisure activities, or as a recreational hobby. This could be regarded as a potentially important change in the ways in which music consumption can be viewed, particularly in the association of music with lifestyles and day-to-day activities.

Therefore, it can also be argued that this finding suggests that behaviours surrounding elements of modern-day general music consumption, as well as live music attendance, may not in fact represent theories of consumers' behaviours in relation to this field as previous researchers have discussed. For example, while in the past individuals may have used music as an expression of their own identity; it could be argued that more modern-day consumers may view music consumption in ways that are not so associated with the notions of self-identity and social identity. In order to fully validate the findings and attempt to present justifiable conclusions, it was also necessary to compare this finding with the results from the qualitative research, therefore enabling a full cross-comparison of findings.

As also noted in the analysis of the qualitative research, music consumers who frequent the forums and social networking platforms examined also appeared to engage in discussions surrounding the meaning of music and the associated values that music brings. In addition, the consumers studied appeared to be more engaged when using these forums to discuss aspects of popular music, particularly in terms of the depth to which they discussed their personal values of music. It was noted that many forum contributors, when describing what music meant to them, expressed opinions surrounding the use of music for routine activities in daily life. These tended to include hobbies, sports, and other recreational activities, which take place in one's leisure time. Therefore, the webnography data also provided notable evidence of consumers' values of music appearing to centre on their use of it within the contexts of leisure and recreation, or the hedonic aspects of one's life.

Arguably the more in-depth discussions by consumers about the meanings and values of music through online social networking could be regarded as the expressions of individuals who are more highly-involved with music and its' consumption than the

general population. This subsequently presents a potential difficulty in transferring the findings of the thesis into the context of the universal population. This is particularly relevant in terms of drawing conclusions and suggesting recommendations, which purport to assist in the marketing of popular music in the modern-day environment. However, in consideration of this, it was recognised that the findings of the qualitative research, which initially appeared to suggest that modern-day music consumption may not be as associated with one's identity as the existing literature appears to believe, may also prove to be of importance. For example, it was felt that this may imply that even when studying individuals who are more highly-involved in music consumption, a lack of recognition by individuals that associates their music consumption with their notion of their self-identity, or their social identity, may be present. It was also recognised that acknowledging music consumption as being an extension of one's identity, or indeed to even define one's identity may not necessarily be a conscious recognition on the part of the consumer. Therefore, it may be the case that the behaviours displayed by the consumers who were examined can be linked to their sense of self-identity and social identity, as well as their use of music and associated products. Subsequently, this may also include attendance at live music events and festivals as a sub-conscious extension of their identity to others in either offline or online social environments.

7.2.3 Group Identity

Offline group identity is represented in the model as the construct labelled *Group Identity*. It was hypothesised that in terms of behavioural intentions, the level of identity with an offline group would have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music events (H7a) and to share live music reviews with the group (H8a), both hypotheses being supported by the data.

Finally, online group identity is represented in the model as the construct labelled *Group Identity*. Similar to the offline model, it was hypothesised that in terms of behavioural intentions the level of identity with an online group would have a positive significant influence on consumers' intentions to attend live music events (H7b) and to share live music reviews with other members of the group (H8b). Again, it was found that both hypotheses were supported by the data collected for the main study.

In the case of the hypotheses that attempted to investigate whether or not the level of identity that an individual felt with their social group, as defined by the measurement scale employed in the study based on the original work of Ellemers *et al.*, 1999), was a significant predictor of social group influence, the study indicated that this factor was a significant predictor of live music consumption-related behaviours. In other words, it was determined that the level of influence that a social group has on both an individual's intentions to attend and subsequently share their experiences of live music events is likely to be greater the more the individual identifies with that group. These hypotheses were found to be supported in both offline and online environments, which concurs with previous research (Ellemers *et al.*, 1999).

In relation to these findings regarding individuals' perceptions of their identity with both their offline and online social groups, it can be suggested that this factor is a key determinant of the actual level of influence on the group member in terms of their live music consumption. This finding would appear to suggest that the presence of 'word of mouth' recommendations, as recorded historically in previous literature (Richins, 1983), may still have a major role to play in both the traditional offline social environments and the newer online contexts. As indicated by the analysis of the findings of the main study, in conjunction with the online discussions examined by the qualitative research, fellow consumer recommendations that may also be applicable to this industry include the recommendation of music or particular artists, as well as the provision of reviews of live music events or festivals. Therefore, it can be suggested that aside from the implications, or predictive power, of this construct on both offline and online social group influence in relation to aspects of music consumption, it can be considered that the practices, behaviours, and opinions of others may still be important in the behaviour of a modern-day music consumer. While this has been historically stated to be the case by the previous literature (Holbrook, 1986; Negus & Velázquez, 2002; Larsen *et al.*, 2010; Roy & Dowd, 2010), recent studies do not appear to have considered this view in light of the social and technological advances made by both the Internet and the music industry in the past few years.

It can be concluded from the findings of the two studies conducted by the thesis that in terms of modern-day music consumption, the influence of social groups in either online or offline environments may be regarded as pertinent in terms of external effects upon

individuals' music consumption habits and behaviours. While the existing literature suggested this was the case in an offline social context for products and services in general, as well as for music as a 'product', it is believed that the findings of the thesis fill in a current gap in research knowledge in regards to music consumption behaviours. As previously established, there appeared to be a lack of knowledge surrounding the possible differences in music consumption behaviours when considered in the context of online social networking platforms that have become firmly established through the development of various technologies over recent years. This includes technologies such as high-speed Internet connections enabled by fibre-optic networks, and the introduction of new mobile technologies. It can also be suggested through the data analysed by the qualitative research that the introduction of new portable MP3 technologies, in addition to the music-playing features of 'smart' phones, may have also contributed to an increase in the number of aspects of music consumption-related behaviours attributed to online environments. For example, these technologies allow a consumer to listen to music while on the move, and at the same time, discuss the music they have just heard with friends and other social peers in an online forum.

Recent literature has identified that significant challenges (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009) exist for companies who wish to engage with consumers through online social networking, mainly due to a lack of control of the multitude of new communications channels opened up by the Internet. This includes consumers being able to communicate amongst themselves, as well as companies being faced with a high load communication environment in which marketers are required to compete for consumers' attention with messages sourced from a vast range of peer-driven media. It can be argued that music companies now face a more hectic communications environment than they previously thought possible in the days of traditional media, and methods of advertising and promotion through magazines, newspapers, television, and radio.

It has also been recognised that consumers now have much more choice when it comes to selecting the communications that they wish to explore, including the choice of media outlets to which they pay most attention. For example, the decline of the MTV music television channel can be considered a result of an increased 'filtering' process by consumers. For example, consumers now have the ability through online platforms to select the music that they want to listen to; in terms of songs, artist, or genres of music.

As such, this may have signalled the end of an era in music consumption in which platforms that offer 'fixed' content or non-selectable offerings, such as radio stations and television-based music channels, have been relegated in terms of use by consumers due to a lack of 'choice' in the offerings that are presented. In turn, it can be suggested that the influence that these 'offline' platforms have on individuals' music consumption habits may have also declined due to online options such as Internet-based streaming platforms that allow consumers to select the music they want to listen to, as well as share content such as music and playlists with other people. In addition, as more consumers look to online social platforms in which they can engage and interact with other people by way of music recommendations and reviews of live music events and festival attendance, it can be envisaged that the influence of fellow consumers, in the form of 'word of mouth' communications may become more prominent as technology continues to develop and consumers migrate to online social networking environments that are focused on music consumption.

It can also be suggested that online social networking in relation to both music consumption and live music attendance may represent an extension of the filtering process from purely music selection to a scenario in which a consumer's selection of a particular online social network or forum group represents a certain ideal that appeals to the individual. In particular, the thesis has demonstrated the ways in which the use of music consumption can not only be used in identity formation, but also the differing ways in which consumers use this identity in online and offline social environments. In addition, the study has also illustrated the level of influence dictated by offline and online social groups has not only been found to differ between the two social contexts, but the ways in which in the levels of offline and online group influence are determined also suggests key differences in how music consumption and identity are enacted in what can be considered as extremely different environments.

It can also be suggested that in the modern-day environment, music consumers are considerably more involved in the creation of their own content. This process also includes the uploading of unique creations to the Internet, and subsequently fellow members of online social groups, with whom existing literature (Ridings *et al.*, 2002; Livingstone, 2008) suggests an individual is likely to trust their peers in the online environment. In addition to issues concerning trust, it is the identification with 'like-

minded' individuals that also appears to be of significant importance, particularly when considering the findings of the webnography research study conducted for the thesis. Building upon the levels of influence on music consumption behaviours indicated by the structural equation models in both offline and online environments, the webnography study provided rich qualitative data with which the quantitative findings could be further elaborated upon and explored. While an attempt to measure influence in either offline or online social environments can be made using measurement scales, in order to determine exactly what such influence may entail, the use of a webnography study was important in taking into consideration the discussions, topics, and exchanges taking place over social networking sites; primarily in the context of online forums dedicated to music consumption, as well as live music attendance. In addition, further confirmation of the data collected was possible through the comparison with the findings and discussions found in the literature review, principally those surrounding previous studies on e-tribal behaviours (Kozinets, 1999; Preece, 2001; Johnson & Ambrose, 2006; Cova & Salle, 2008; Simmons, 2008; Mitchell & Imrie, 2011; Nuttall *et al.*, 2011).

Therefore, the rise of online peer-to-peer recommendations (or 'word of mouth') can be considered as not only prevalent in modern-day music consumption practices, but also significant in behaviours associated with social and product identity, as indicated in the structural models produced by the research conducted for the thesis, and also the qualitative data that was explored. For example, events and products appear to be regularly discussed amongst online social groups, whether they are located on more general networking platforms or websites that are dedicated exclusively to music consumption discussions and other related activities. The qualitative data examined appeared to indicate numerous ways in which it can be considered that consumers use online forums in which to construct identities based upon music consumption, and this was followed by the main study which provided quantitative evidence that music-based identity is important in different ways when establishing the varying levels of influence by online or offline social groups on subsequent behavioural intentions associated with music consumption behaviours.

The findings discussed in this chapter can also be used to theorise upon further aspects of behaviours unique to either offline or online social environments, particularly in the

online context, in light of the literature review conducted for the thesis which established that little research has so far been conducted in the field of its effects on music consumption and subsequent behaviours. For example, it can be suggested that the online environment presents a more 'anonymous' world in which a consumer has far more control over their identity than can be achieved in offline environments. In addition, as well as the potential for increased control over identity, there is perhaps also scope for the production of multiple or 'secret' identities. For example, a music consumer could create an 'alternative' virtual identity from the one which they tend to portray to others in the offline world; one that is perhaps based upon different styles of music or artists than is shared on a day-to-day basis with social peers with whom regular physical contact is made, for example in school, college, university or other youth groups, or sports clubs and other hobby-based groups.

The reasons behind these behaviours occurring can be suggested as follows: A consumer may wish to keep their real music consumption preferences (in terms of styles or genres of music and artists which they actually enjoy listening to) a secret from social peers in the offline context who may judge them negatively. For example, an individual who is not comfortable in disclosing their true music consumption preferences in their immediate groups of social peers in the offline context, may feel more comfortable in disclosing their preferences to online peers through the creation and maintenance of an online identity. Through this online identity they can discuss, interact, and engage with other 'like-minded' individuals who inhabit friendly, positive, and safe virtual environments which are usually monitored by administrators who strive to ensure that such forum characteristics are maintained.

Such environments may be critical in allowing modern-day music consumers to truly express themselves to others, whether it is to other people that they know in the offline environment or otherwise. More importantly, in situations where a consumer may perceive negativity from other social peers would be prevalent were they to reveal their true music consumption choices, the use of a separate online identity (including 'fake' identities and avatars to hide the real identity) may be used to avoid such negativity. An example of this would be in avoiding the negative connotations or stereotypes that are associated with fans of 'Goth' music and associated styles and imagery (Hodkinson, 2002, 2006, 2011; Goulding & Saren, 2007). It is argued that the way in which

consumers now have the choice of discussing music consumption in online social groups where true identity may be 'hidden' represents another way that the influence of fellow online social group members could be hypothesised as being higher than that of offline social peers. This links to the virtual communities and e-tribes adhered to in the literature review; both in terms of the traditional roles of offline, the newly-established roles in the online environments, and the types of behaviours associated with them, as established by recent literature in other industries or fields of consumer behaviour.

In further implications for the role that the influence offline social networking may now play in the modern-day music consumption environment, it can be suggested that the decline of more traditional offline identity sources over the past decade, such as the decline in religion or community youth club facilities, provides a further importance on the growing influence on consumption by fellow online users, and not just within the context of the music industry as discussed by the thesis and its overall findings. The growing influence of online social networking in music consumption, as noted during the literature review and discussed in the findings of the initial qualitative research, provides further evidence of a rapidly closing divide between the offline and virtual worlds in terms of the influence that may be extended over an individual's behaviours by peers in each social environment. Key to this phenomenon would appear to be the level with which consumers' perceptions of the trust and credibility of online peers has increased in recent years (Ridings *et al.*, 2002; Livingstone, 2008). In other words, it can be theorised that relationships established in the virtual world are similar in many ways to those created in the offline environment, particularly within the context of relationships created in an environment that fosters and facilitates music consumption, and related activities such as attendance at live music events and festivals.

Consumers' engagement in content creation through online social platforms, as noted during the data collection for the qualitative research, may also be of significant influence to the thesis. As well as uploading content to such platforms as YouTube for videos or Flickr for photographs, music consumers may now also provide links and communications regarding the content to like-minded individuals through social networking sites and group forums in an effort to display the material to like-minded individuals. Practices such as these can be linked to existing theories regarding both tribal behaviours and brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander *et*

al., 2002), which focus on behaviours associated with such groups, including rituals, traditions, and shared communications; shared communications including discussions surrounding consumption, as highlighted by the findings of the qualitative research. This also includes the sharing of user-generated content. Therefore, it can be suggested that the sharing of user-generated content may represent a natural extension from the sharing of music consumption through online discussions to the sharing of user-generated content across social media platforms and online virtual communities.

Such practices can also be linked to music consumption and identity, in that it can be suggested that the sharing of music consumption narratives and user-generated content both represent ways in which consumers may use online social platforms to express their identity to others. In particular, it can be theorised that an individual may create their own content to not only demonstrate their creativity to other members of their social groups, but also in an attempt to express an identity to others which, in the case of the thesis, is one based upon music consumption behaviours. For example, one could include particular images, fashion, or styles perpetrated by a music artist in their content creations, which may also feature music by the artist or video clips. Such user content found online includes fan-made videos to accompany a song released by an artist, or artwork created by a consumer identifiable with a particular artist or band. Whereas such creations were previously restricted to offline social environments where they would be physical displayed to members of social groups, the development of Internet technology and virtual social networking platforms has allowed the display and distribution of user-generated content to online peers and communities.

In addition, it can be suggested that the use of such content may be important in solidifying a music-based identity through a perceived bond to a particular music artist by other social group members, particularly when considering that such content will usually be inspired by a music artist or band in some way. For example, by including in the creative content aspects of an artist's music, lyrics, artwork or some other facet of the artist, their image, or other factors such as their beliefs or promotion of certain rights, it can be considered that an individual is identifying themselves' with the artist. In the case of music consumption, the creation and uploading of such content to online social networking groups a reflection of an individual attempting to improve their standing within a particular social group, much like that found in other tribal

behaviours. For example, in the provision of one's own recipes in online cookery groups (de Valck, 2007), not only to share with other group members, but also to demonstrate expertise, skills, and knowledge which may have the effect of improving a persons' standing or reputation amongst the other group members. It could also be the case that an individual is offering their creative content for review or criticism by other social group members. As well as seeking the attention and respect of fellow social group members, an individual who shares creative content with a social group is looking to increase their standing within the group, and may again be considered as being a significant influence by other group members; especially in cases where one member, or online user, influences another member to create their own artist-inspired content.

It can be suggested that the characteristic divide between the offline and online social environments may again determine how much user-generated content influences other group members. Again, as determined previously in the discussion, the differences in physicality between the two social contexts may have a role to play in the level of influence to be determined. For example, it can be hypothesised that influence may be higher in the offline environment where fellow group members can physically touch and examine artist-inspired creations by individuals, whereas in the online environment, it could be envisaged that a lack of physical content with creative content uploaded by group users may lead to lower levels of influence. In line with the hypotheses presented by the thesis in advance of the conduction of the main study, this is reflected in the ways in which the original hypotheses derived from the existing literature suggested that social group influence on individuals in the offline social environment would be more influential than that of online social networking.

This may represent the equivalent of 'tastemakers', or leading members of social peer groups, who may possess a significant influence over other group members. Again, the level of influence enacted by these individuals over fellow group members may be subject to how highly they are perceived by other group members to both identify with them and the musical artist or artists that are discussed by the social group. The creation of artist-specific content may signal to others a great affinity, or identity, with an artist, that may go beyond just a simple enjoyment of the music that they have

produced, and the online use of both communications and user-generated content marks a change in the traditional use of music within the construction of social identity.

Consumers' use of online profiles through social networking platforms could be classed as a distinct form of self-identification, particularly as many young people appear to rely on the Internet to essentially live a form of virtual social life through the use of self-descriptions and other platforms such as blogs. The use of blogs in particular may indicate a sense of narrative communication and storytelling. In addition, the use of the Internet in general to meet new people who may possess similar traits or tribal elements, as well as to connect with 'real' people with whom an individual is already a social acquaintance, would appear to be important in the modern-day communications between music consumers. Therefore, it can also be suggested that as well as the potential to assist in the construction or development of an individual's self-identity, online social networking may also tie-in closely with concepts and theories involved in the creation of value for consumers.

7.3 Theoretical Contributions

In terms of theoretical contributions, it is apparent from the findings of the thesis that technological advances in the music industry have concurrently developed the ways and means in which social interactions take place between consumers surrounding the products and services offered by the industry. As indicated by the thesis, these interactions can range from simple conversations surrounding music consumption to storytelling narratives of music's role in an individual's life. These discussions were identified by the qualitative research as incorporating aspects of music consumption, such as individual songs or pieces of music that have impacted upon a person during an important stage of their life, or describe their attendance at live music events or festivals which may have provided memorable experiences that an individual wishes to share with others. Therefore, it can be suggested that the introduction of new technologies and social platforms for music-based discussions has appeared to facilitate consumer interactions with 'strangers' whom individuals do not know outside of the virtual community. It can also be envisaged that this provides a potentially international forum

for the online discussion of music consumption and live music attendance, through the removal of geographical boundaries by such social-driven technologies.

Theoretically, the findings of the thesis can also be tied into recent emerging literature that attempts to define further the notions of self-identity, social identity, and social group influence. Belk (2013) has updated his original work on the 'extended self' (1988) to encompass the concept in the digital world. This observes the extension of Belk's original theories to consumers' behaviours and actions in the virtual realm, with a specific application for this thesis in light of the idea that, "Shared digital music and shared musical tastes may mark us as part of an imagined community" (Born, 2011; cited in Belk, 2013, p.481). The online communities examined by the study appear to have built themselves on this very notion, with discussions and consumption behaviours being found to heavily revolve around such topics. Further to this, it has been shown that these digital music communities are significantly influential in encouraging consumer attendance at live music events and festivals, in addition to providing a fertile ground for self-expression and identity building through music consumption and the sharing of recommendations with others.

While not a being a replacement for Belk's original ideas, it was identified that the emergence of new technology such as the Internet (and social networking in particular) has considerably changed the ways in which people consume, present themselves, and communicate with each other; yet the basic conceptualisation of the extended self remains as important as ever (Belk, 2013). Therefore, it can be suggested that the formation and maintenance of one's self or identity through music consumption in the offline environment can also be extended to the digital world. By striving to understand the impact of technology and digitalisation on the consumer's notion of their self and how it may be extended to the virtual environment, it is possible to shed new light on the use of music-based products and services for identity formation and maintenance in an online setting. Belk (2013) also argued that the virtual world and its anonymity may incite more open self-extension and honest expression, and as such it can be suggested that online communities provide even more options for the management of social identity than was possible in the pre-digital world. As self-identity, social identity, and social group influence have been shown by both the literature review and the study

conducted for the thesis to be determinants of consumer behaviour, some critical marketing recommendations can be developed.

In addition, there is no current existing literature regarding identity with online social groups on live music attendance and the sharing of live music experiences through positive and negative reviews. Therefore, these results potentially represented new contributions to existing academic knowledge.

7.4 Marketing Recommendations

In terms of marketing recommendations for the music industry, the thesis generated some theories that may assist in the promotion of popular music; particularly with a view to increasing the consumption of products and services associated with music, as well as attendance at live music events and festivals. Therefore, it can be considered that the thesis does in fact make contributions in two forms; theoretical contributions to the academic field of music consumption behaviour, and implications of these new theories which can lead to practical management recommendations. It is with these new theories in mind that marketing recommendations were developed as follows.

It is suggested that new theories and approaches to the marketing of popular music within these virtual social realms or spaces that build upon these newer methods of communication, need to continue to be developed and implemented. In addition, it was shown through the data analysis of the main study that for the sample population in the online social group context, self-identity was a significant predictor of behaviour in terms of live music attendance and the sharing of experience with other group members. This latter category was also likely to lead to further attendance at live music events by group members. This suggests that music-related marketing should seek to expand further upon the social channels now present in the modern-day music consumption environment.

As well as noting that music is a well-shared product on the Internet, Belk (2013) also identified that the sharing model surrounding such content is often carried out on non-

commercial platforms. This presents numerous potential opportunities for companies within the music industry to engage with consumers who identify with online groups and take an active part in the communities of interest they have joined. For example, marketing communications through social networking websites and discussion platforms, such as forums and message boards belonging to virtual communities, could be increased and tailored to specifically target online consumers. This illustrates one way in which research-driven theoretical contributions can lead to practical implications for managers involved in the marketing of popular music.

The Internet has also given rise to new social networks that can utilise theories such as the co-creation of value and the establishment of online brand communities. Vargo & Lusch (2004, 2008) claimed that co-creation of value is inevitable as the consumer is effectively a 'co-producer'. Therefore, there is opportunity to exploit this in terms of music-based products and services. This is in addition to the use of music in brand-based opportunities; Ballantyne & Aitken (2007) stated that goods effectively become service appliances; which would suggest that music, as a good, could be tied in with service branding. Service experience will therefore, according to these authors, extend the life of the brand.

The music as a brand concept can be extended further when using the ability of the Internet to create online groupings of like-minded individuals. The potential for brand communities was highlighted by Muniz & O'Guinn (2001, p.412), who described such virtual gatherings as being "...a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand". These authors also claimed that these brand communities tend to exhibit three traditional markers of community, those being; (1) shared consciousness, (2) rituals and traditions, and (3) a sense of moral responsibility. This last marker could point to a possible overriding of illicit behaviour such as that of music piracy. McAlexander *et al.* (2002) also emphasised the need to create brand communities, stating that marketers can strengthen brand communities by facilitating shared customer experiences, which subsequently yields a new and richer conceptualisation of customer loyalty as integration in a brand community.

It is also possible to derive other managerial implications for the music industry, particularly implications that directly relate to the marketing of popular music in the modern-day environment. For example, when considering the role that official music artist websites appear to play in the modern environment, it is argued that the integration of social media functionality may increase online discussions in an 'official' capacity. This may subsequently encourage a consumer to feel that they are part of an official community surrounding a music artist

Therefore, it is suggested that more music artists themselves should participate in discussions through such platforms with consumers, as this may lead to aspects of value for individuals and the building of self-identity. As well as the potential for consumers feeling connected to their favourite artists through such online social platforms, tribal feelings of belonging with other like-minded consumers may also take place. As such activities may lead to the increased consumption of an artist's music in terms of either obtainment of music and related merchandise, or consumer attendance at live music events. It is suggested that the co-creation of value with these 'brand' communities through social networking may be an important consideration for managers of popular music marketing.

In other areas affected by the relationships between music consumption and social networking, the increase of mobile networking through modern-day technology may also be critical in recommendations for future marketing activities. For example, consumers studied by the thesis appear to perceive these types of devices as being synonymous with the concepts of portability and convenience. Therefore, marketing efforts through these devices may prove to be vital in increasing online social networking and discussions regarding particular music artists, as well as subsequent music consumption and live event attendance; thus potentially influencing an increase in both.

Similarly, for the organisers of live music events and festivals, the effects of online social networking in relation to these performances appear to promote shared experiences amongst online consumers, which may be important in establishing how consumers' future attendance and practices are affected or influenced. Therefore, it is suggested that an increase in the marketing of live music events through online social

networking platforms and forums may be critical in influencing consumers' attendance; thereby allowing individuals to express their identities and experiences at such events to others. As the main study indicated, this may potentially increase individuals' own music consumption and live music attendance, as well as that of others in both their online and offline social groups.

In addition, there is heavy advertising of music-purchasing services and websites such as iTunes and Amazon across the whole spectrum of the Internet, and especially on related web sites and social utilities such as MySpace and Facebook. It is through these social websites that direct interactions between music consumers take place, be it in the form of recommending artists or songs to each other, or discussing new releases in Internet forums or via blogs. Oestreicher & Kuzma (2009) discussed the important need for record companies to co-create with these services. There is of course considerable revenue to potentially be gained from all such forms of advertising.

It can also be suggested that the findings of the thesis indicate that record companies, and other organisation working within the modern-day music industry, should look to further engage themselves in online communications with consumers, perhaps through ways and means of sharing consumers' narratives and experiences surrounding their music consumption, as well as their user-generated content. For example, the examination and sharing of individuals' stories surrounding their experiences and interactions with their favourite artists may be invaluable in profiling consumers of certain bands or types of artists, which may assist in producing more tailored promotional ideas and campaigns for the target market.

In light of the considerable increase in communication channels that different record companies use to try and attract the attention of consumers, not to mention the online platforms upon which consumers can communicate with each other, this may be of even greater importance in the modern-day music consumption environment. The spreading of positive word of mouth surrounding record companies' artists and bands appears to be even more crucial in the digital age, where significant influence of online social groups has been found by the studies conducted for the thesis in terms of both music consumption and live music attendance. In terms of brand loyalty, or in this case artist loyalty, consumers' engagement in content creation through online social platforms and

networking websites may also be of significant influence in the future of the music industry. Examples can also be drawn from other industries and fields where consumers have generated their own content, particularly in other entertainment-driven industries such as movies, where consumers can use social media platforms and virtual communications to upload their own creative content, often in tribute to their favourite film for example.

Therefore, in the future, it can be argued that the findings of the thesis suggest that artist loyalty may be achieved and maintained by drawing upon consumers' own experiences, and their increasing propensity to share these experiences with other people, whether they be familiar to the individual in the offline world or otherwise, in the online social environment. The findings of the thesis also indicate that online social groups and networking websites are influential in determining consumers' behavioural intentions, signifying that online forums appear to have become a powerful tool in word of mouth communications and marketing, for both consumers and record companies. Therefore, practices which encourage artist 'loyalty' now appear to be important in both online and offline social environments, and perhaps even more so in light of recent declines in forms of identity groups in the offline context.

The findings of the two studies conducted for the thesis also suggest that the effectiveness and longevity of such loyalty will depend upon the subtle ways in which record companies and other music industry organisations and agencies can learn about the identities and personalities of fans of particular artists or bands, and try to encourage artist loyalty through each of the different given social contexts discussed by the thesis. It is proposed that a combination of both online and offline marketing campaigns are conducted in order to generate positive word of mouth, and that the campaigns themselves are based upon the projected identities of the music consumers themselves, especially in terms of the provision of value that will appeal to such individuals.

In other words, future marketing efforts could look to tap in to the wealth of information available through music-based online networking, as well as virtual communities drawn together by their music consumption preferences. For example, record company or artist recognition of consumer-created content that is displayed online to enforce shared identity traits felt by influential individuals could be effective in the maintenance of

'brand' loyalty; or in the context of the thesis, artist or band loyalty in the face of an often-saturated market, genre, or sub-genre of music where new artists frequently emerge and attempt to gain a share of music consumers' income.

7.5 Limitations and Further Research

It can be suggested that as a result of the findings of the two studies conducted for the thesis, the initial identification that significant differences exist between the levels of influence from offline and online social groups on music consumption can be focused upon in further research. For example, the ways in which overall identity is constructed in the differing social environments warrants further investigation, particularly in relation to the design of the online survey used in the quantitative data collection conducted for the main study. The questions that required the participant to indicate their perceived level of the centrality of music in their identity (Music Identity factor in the proposed structural models) and their perceived level of music identity in relation to others (Social Influence factor) were included in the questionnaire as 'general' questions, and not specifically to either offline or online social environments. While specific levels of identity with offline or online groups were included, it is envisaged that the use of further questions that investigate the formation and maintenance of both music and social identity to a deeper level may be included in future research. This would enable greater comparison between how and why identity in relation to music consumption is constructed and used in the very different social environments that are now presented by offline and online networking.

When considering the literature surrounding this field, it should also be noted that differing types of online networking exist. More 'general' social networking platforms are present in the virtual environment, e.g. Facebook, as well as more focused discussion-orientated platforms on particular topics, e.g. forums and news boards. Both of these types of platforms were found to incorporate detailed, lengthy, and data-rich conversations regarding different areas of music consumption. However, it should also be recognised that the differing types of platform may also potentially provide differing levels of influence on music consumption behaviours. For example, it could be

theorised that social groups built around a dedicated forum focusing on a particular type of product or service, in this case the hedonistic-based consumption of music in relation to leisure-driven pursuits, may be more influential on group members' subsequent behavioural intentions than more general social network platforms. Again, this provides scope for further research in the field of online music consumption behaviour.

When considering further research, an element of research design that takes into account the structural and administrative functions of the different types of online social networking platforms may be important in attempting to measure the amount of influence that each has on music consumers. For example, it could be hypothesised that more general social networking websites may not be as influential on music consumers as those virtual platforms that represent a more dedicated focus upon music consumption and associated behaviours. In terms of why potential influence may differ, it can be suggested that the differing levels of engagement, by both the individual consumer and their fellow social group members, may need to be taken into consideration when conducting research on social influence levels. For example, it could be hypothesised that consumers engaged in more general or light discussions surrounding music consumption through social networking platforms may not be as influential as those users who hold more in-depth discussions in dedicated music consumption forums. Likewise, it may also be anticipated that the level to which an individual engages with online social networking and music consumption groups may affect the level of influence an individual receives from their online peers. In other words, a more casual user of such groups may not be as influenced as a user who is more involved or engaged in active discussions surrounding their music consumption with others.

Again relating back to literature, another concept that may be discussed in relation to the findings of the thesis and the potential for further research is that of the various roles that consumers in online environments may take. Previous literature has established that individuals may take on different roles within consumption groups, whether it is in the traditional offline social environment (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stein-Sacks, 2006; Nuttall, 2009) or the online context (de Valck, 2007). These roles traditionally incorporate 'tastemakers' or 'early adopters'; i.e. those group members who take the lead in terms of discovering new products or services and spread such discoveries to other groups

members, thus implying that such individuals can possess a greater level of influence over other group members. This has also been extended to the field of e-tribes and virtual community research conducted in recent years (de Valck, 2007), mainly in the form of products and services from other industries. It is suggested that such theories can be linked to some of the output variables that were established by using the structural equation modelling process in the main study. For example, behavioural intentions relating to the reviews and recommendations of both general music consumption and live event attendance could be considered as being practical examples of group members having a notable influence over fellow group members, and the tastemakers or early adopters within the group even more so; assuming that the findings of previous studies within the literature (Stein-Sacks, 2006) can be extended to the context of online social networking and music consumption.

The varying degrees of influence felt by music consumers can also be compared to different offline social groups and levels of influence, for example the potential differences in influence from immediate family members, as opposed to other social peers. In terms of the offline environment in particular Previous research has indicated a significant paternal influence on an individual's music consumption (Cotte & Wood, 2004). In addition, the concepts surrounding the differing roles of social group members, as discussed previously, have been shown to exist in the offline context in terms of both music consumption (Stein-Sacks, 2006) and goods and services provided by other industries (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). It was acknowledged that such additional concepts were absent from the research design, and can therefore be expressed as limitations of the research. However, all of these further concepts have potential implications for future research in the field.

It was recognised from the qualitative research that when considering the types of comments being posted by forum users, these statements were arguably more focused upon emotional aspects of music consumption. Therefore, it can be considered that some of the consumers' comments were more in line with theories surrounding music psychology, rather than existing theories of consumer behaviour. While it was found that seemingly emotional statements such as these by the participants included in the data analysis were congruent with many of the views expressed by other forum users, it was also recognised that music psychology theory was beyond the scope of the thesis.

Hence, the emotional contexts of music consumption were not considered further in the methodological design of the main study. However, the potential importance of this field to further research was recognised.

Several implications of the research methodology design were noted during the post-review process that indicated possible adverse effects upon the data collection for the main study. In relation to the construct of Social Influence used in the analysis of the quantitative data collection, it was not explicitly stated in the questionnaire whether the general levels of social influence required the participants to consider their perceived levels of influence in both the offline and online social environments. While the research methodology design intended participants to be gauging their answers to their own perceptions of their interpersonal susceptibility in terms of both social contexts, the ambiguity of the question means that it could be possible that participants may have considered their answers in terms of one context over another; for example, their interpersonal susceptibility from other people in terms of their offline environments, and not their online environments. While this notion was not reported by any of the participants who either took part in the pilot study or in the main study itself, it is nonetheless recognised, and suggested, that this aspect of the research design may require further consideration in any similar studies undertaken.

Due to the constraints of time and length of both the study and the overall thesis, other measurement scales were considered for use in the main study, but were not included in the final questionnaire design. However, it was also recognised that measurement scales which are based on existing literature and previous studies in a wide range of consumer behaviour theories, may also present further avenues of research in the context of the thesis. For example, Rosenberg's (1965) scale on self-esteem may be used in conjunction with some of the elements of the questionnaire design to investigate further aspects of social group influence on music consumption behaviours; such as the role of consumers' perceptions of their own levels of self-esteem, in conjunction with other predictors of behaviour such as interpersonal susceptibility that were employed.

In the case of self-esteem in particular, the inclusion of this factor would allow for a deeper investigation of how a consumer's individual characteristics may play an important role in social group influence in both offline and online environments. While

this concept was covered to a certain extent through the inclusion of the measurement scale for 'Interpersonal Influence Susceptibility (Normative)', as established by Bearden *et al.* (1989), by examining other factors such as self-esteem it may be possible to deduce to a greater level whether individual characteristics can significantly predict a person's level of influence from other offline or online social group members.

Finally, it was also recognised that some problems were encountered in analysing the data for the main study. For example, in terms of live music attendance, it can be argued that this is a complicated area in which findings cannot be definitively concluded. There may be present other factors which can impact the collection of data, such as the price of entry. The cost of a ticket to a live music event may also potentially be an important consideration to music consumers in deciding to attend that event. In the case of music festivals this may be even more so the case, as basic ticket prices for access to the music performance arena and facilities such as camping sites may cost around £200 for a festival in the United Kingdom. This again indicated a requirement for further studies to take factors such as this into consideration, and to include these issues in subsequent research designs.

Therefore, despite the findings of the thesis, as well as the presence of some other existing research in the field of music consumption which can be related to the topic, questions in this area of interest still remain. For example, what are the underlying needs that lead consumers to enjoy music in private, yet still desire to share consumption with others both on and off-line, and at live music events and festivals? Is there also present a theme of 'connectedness' as witnessed in other areas of life where consumers are leading increasingly cellular lives through engaging in private bilateral dialogue via e-mail and text messaging, as well as more public dialogue through the use of online platforms? Is connectedness also an important value of music events, be it a shared experience with other consumers or an iconic celebrity who an individual relates to or is inspired by? The application of social identity theory may be crucial in understanding the linking values between the public and private consumption of music, in addition to situational factors.

7.6 Conclusions

Some conclusions from the thesis are as follows. The literature review began by examining in-depth the role of modern-day online social networking within the current state of the music industry. It was intended to develop these aspects of social networking and music consumption in order to provide both a background and a means with which to compare the findings of the thesis with established theories and knowledge. Therefore, the discussions surrounding the existing literature proved to be necessary and critical in comparing and validating the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data collections undertaken for both the qualitative research and the main study respectively, therefore also indicating the validity of the contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes.

Therefore, the literature review highlighted several key points of relevance to the thesis. Online social networking would appear to tie in closely with concepts and theories involved in the creation of value for consumers, as well as the potential to assist in the construction or development of self-identity. For example, consumers' use of online profiles could be classed as a distinct form of self-identification. The review also illustrated pre-existing concepts and theories surrounding music consumption, online social networking, and identity formation (both individual and collective). In particular, the presence of some potentially important aspects of online social networking were highlighted during the review, and it was determined that some of these factors were also pertinent to the results of the two studies that were conducted for the thesis.

Other implications of the existing literature, which discussed consumers in the youth segment of the market, were also profound within the context of the thesis. As discussed, the current generation of young consumers is one that appears to be particularly social, virtually-based, and extremely communicative. This group of consumers seem to make use of a variety of communication platforms to represent identity, expression, and connection. When this is considered in relation to the extensive growth in music-based websites over recent years, this indicates the growing importance of online social networking for music discussion; thus warranting further

research to discover the full effects of such technologies on music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices. The presence of online music-based websites, both communities aimed at mainstream and niche genres, seems to have been effective in the provision of platforms for all consumers of music. The geographical boundaries that separated music consumers previously would also appear to have broken down, as music consumers can now extend their contact and communications with other consumers globally. This may therefore provide greater importance to the current way in which consumers from different countries and cultures interact with each other in relation to the consumption of popular music.

There were other features of modern-day websites that were of relevance to the thesis; for example, the ability for users to tag and comment on songs and music videos may encourage subsequent online discussions regarding music, as may the recommendation systems employed by online shopping retailers and services such as Amazon.com and Play.com. The literature also appeared to indicate that the online sharing and recommending of music, including that led by taste-makers, may shape culture and thus individuals themselves. This may have important implications for consumers from different cultures engaging with each other through social networking platforms, due to the abolishment of geographical boundaries as previously discussed. Therefore, differing cultures and their viewpoints were taken into consideration by the thesis.

The role of official artist websites also appeared to be relevant to the thesis. For example, it can be argued that the integration of social media functionality into these types of websites may also increase online discussions in an 'official' capacity. This may subsequently make a consumer believe that they are part of an official community surrounding an artist, who themselves may also participate in discussions. This may again lead to aspects of value for consumers and the building of self-identity, including the potential for music consumers to feel connected to their favourite artist, as well as tribal feelings of belonging. The co-creation of value with these 'brand' communities through social networking may be an important consideration for music companies; hence further research in the form of the thesis was required.

In other areas affected by the relationship between music and social networking, the increase of mobile networking through modern-day technology such as Internet-enabled

'smart' phones also appeared to be of relevance to the thesis. For example, the benefits of portability and convenience may prove to be vital in any potential increase in online social networking and discussions regarding music consumption and live music attendance. These types of devices therefore warranted inclusion in the data collection methodology of the thesis. Similarly, the effects of online social networking on live events which appear to promote shared experiences, may be important in establishing how consumers' attendance practices are affected or influenced; in addition to allowing individuals to express their identities and experiences at such events.

The theories of the self-identity, and social identity may be applicable to a wide range of goods and services, there is scope for the application of these theories to a multitude of offerings. However, there appears to be a current lack of research that considers the effect of these theories on goods and services offered by the music industry, particularly in relation to live music and the advent of online social network use to facilitate individuals' activities. These theories, along with an apparent increase in consumers' use of narratives and autobiographical storytelling may have led to a notable change in the way that online social networking affects both music consumption and live music attendance as a whole. Therefore, the potential impacts or influences of such theories were incorporated into the thesis in order to comprehend the full extent of their effects on the technologically-enhanced music market; particularly with a view to determining predictors of behaviour.

While many of the theories discussed have received considerable focus by numerous researchers, the applicability of these theories in the context of online social networking and music consumption had yet to be tested. For example, Ellemers *et al.* (1999) felt that it was important to note that while self-categorisation, commitment to a social group, and group self-esteem are related, these facets of behaviour are in fact very distinct in terms of being aspects of social identity. Hence, in addition to individual group members' own sense of identity, there are additional factors that may affect their notion of their selves when they became part of a social group. In the context of the thesis, these existing theories may also be applicable to the self-identities consumers develop when interacting with social groups that discuss music; be they online virtual communities or ones based in the 'real' world. Therefore, these existing ideas provided the subsequent focus of the thesis.

As identified by the literature review, there are numerous existing theories that concentrate on the ways in which consumers use music as a means of constructing both their self-identity and social identity. Several aspects of identity construction, development, and maintenance were discussed that may also be applied to the music industry. While much of the literature concentrated on identity formation in an offline context there appeared to be relatively little research conducted on identity and online behaviours regarding both music consumption and live music attendance. Therefore, the thesis incorporated aspects of identity construction through consumers' use of online music communities, discussion groups, and interactions with fellow consumers through social networking platforms, with a view to discovering the subsequent effects or influences upon their music consumption behaviours and live music attendance.

In light of the literature regarding self-identity and music consumption, it was deemed relevant that live music events or festivals also needed to be incorporated into the thesis' research design methodology. According to the literature review, which considered the youth segment of the music consumption market, communities, and tribes, it was identified that online discussions and relationships may affect or influence music consumption and live music attendance. This also warranted inclusion in the research design of the thesis, as they may lead to subsequent communications that assist in the construction or development of self or social-identity. It was also theorised that this may lead to further consumer-based values of music consumption and live music attendance. The different generational groupings that frequent online discussion websites, or form virtual communities, were also deemed to be of potential interest to the thesis in terms of the differences that may exist between older and younger consumers in the links (both direct and indirect) between their online discussions and subsequent music consumption behaviours and live music attendance practices.

The concept of music as a unique product may also be of note in the construction of self-identity, social identity, and self-categorisation. For example, consumers may use the unique properties of music to express themselves personally or as an individual, or in the context as a member of a group. Similarly, the unique aspects of offerings from the other cultural industries may also affect the formation of identity in both a self and social sense; hence, fashion, art, and cinema may also play a role in the construction of

identity. A combination of the offerings available from cultural industries may be a determinant of the creation or development of an individual's identity. In a music-based context, it can be argued, that this could apply to music and fashion as the two industries are heavily linked. Unique artist-related clothing would be one example of how these two industries have joined to provide unique products and services to consumers. In terms of art, there is particular scope within the music industry for the creation or acquisition of unique artwork to accompany the release of music in a variety of formats; whether it is a physical format, or digital. Much of the musical output of the industry has been accompanied by unique artwork that has become synonymous with the music itself, as well as the artist, as suggested by the qualitative research.

The contexts within the music industry in which the theories discussed could be applicable, whether in offline or online environments, were also examined by the thesis. However, it was found that there was still a requirement to identify exactly how theories of self and social identity apply, or perhaps differ, when researched in conjunction with the numerous and varied online virtual communities. More specifically, how did the theories of self and social identity construction and development affect the interactions and exchanges between members of online social groups; and how did being a member of these virtual communities subsequently affect their members' music consumption and live music attendance behaviours? The relationships between music consumption and self-identity have been firmly established by existing literature, but these questions still remained after an examination of previous research.

This especially appeared to be the case in relation to the technologically-advanced music consumption market which exists in the modern world, and perhaps even more so for an industry that is currently in steep decline in terms of sales of recorded music. Therefore, it was recognised that the identification of the reasons as to how and why online communities and groups differ in self and social identity construction, as well as development, in comparison to offline social groups may prove to be of value to the industry in terms of marketing recommendations.

The qualitative research built upon both the trends of socialisation through consumption and the important impact in recent years of online virtual communities, which have affected numerous industries. In particular, the webnography data collection yielded

some illustrations of the ways in which today's music consumers can effectively use the Internet's social platforms to form virtual communities around many areas of music consumption. What is more pertinent perhaps is the deeper way in which consumers appeared to use these online communities in order to express their music consumption habits and practices, as well as communicate with other perceived like-minded individuals their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a whole range of areas in the sphere of music consumption. These expressions, as well as being a rich source of data for market researchers, can be considered invaluable in the development of the same online communities. This is especially relevant to aspects of music consumption behaviour within the communities such as shared values, loyalty to music artists and groups through the obtainment of both their music and merchandise, as well as attendance at their live music events; and the further obtainment of these 'goods' and 'services' in order to meet the consumer-perceived values of the other online social group members.

In the case of this last point, as with other industries, it could be determined that it is the acquisition of these goods and services above that of a consumer's personal need in order to create an impression upon other online social group members, which may constitute another interesting aspect of music consumption behaviour. As already confirmed by the existing literature, this may especially be the case in the development of identity through music consumption. Hence, it can be argued that the thesis has concurred strongly with the existing literature, and therefore online social communities and networks may be considered as being integral in the concept of identity formation through music consumption behaviours, including live music attendance.

In order to establish these theories within the context of both offline and online social groups, a comparison between the two environments was necessary. Hence, the conceptualisation and employment of the main study, which was developed in order to draw comparisons between the virtual and 'real' environments and the strength of relationships. In addition, the main study attempted to build upon the data gleaned from the qualitative study of the online virtual communities against the more well-established theories surrounding offline socialisation.

Appendix A

Online Data Collection Sources (Exploratory Qualitative Research)

List of online forums used for content observations:

Aberdeen Music (Forum) - <http://www.aberdeen-music.com/forum/>

Black Cat Bone - <http://bcb-board.co.uk/>

Drowned In Sound (Music Forum) - <http://drownedinsound.com/community>

Garagepunk Forums - <http://garagepunk.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=general>

got-djent.com (Music Discussion) - <http://got-djent.com/forums/music-discussion>

Music Anchor - <http://musicanchor.org/forum-9.html>

Music Discussion - <http://www.music-discussion.com/forum.php>

PsyMusic UK (Music Discussion) - <http://www.psymusic.co.uk/forum/forums/music-discussion.35/>

Safe Concerts (Festival Discussion) -
http://www.safeconcerts.com/forum/forum.asp?forum_urn=128

South Wales Massive (Gigs Forum) -
<http://www.southwalesmassive.com/index.php?showforum=9>

Spotify Community - <http://community.spotify.com/t5/General-Music-Discussion/bd-p/spotifymusicdiscussion>

Ultimate Metal - <http://www.ultimatemetal.com/forum/general-metal-discussion-3/>

Appendix B

**Social Networking and Live Music Attendance Survey
(Main Study)**

Social Networking and Live Music Attendance

This survey is part of an exciting project that aims to explore the links between online and offline social networking in relation to live music attendance. This is your chance to take part! ALL COMPLETED questionnaires will be entered into a free prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher, so if you would like to be in with a chance of winning please complete the questionnaire IN FULL and leave an email address at the end of the questionnaire.

All information will be kept confidential and used purely for the purposes of this study only.

Many thanks for taking the time to participate in this study.

My contact details are: Richard Warr, Swansea University, School of Business and Economics, email: 449670@swansea.ac.uk

Genres of Music

Please select three musical genres from the list below that you listen to frequently, in order of your favourite genre first. Please then indicate how much you listen to that genre by marking each one with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very frequently
01) Avant-Garde							
02) Blues							
03) Classical							
04) Country							
05) Dance							
06) Easy Listening							
07) Electronic							
08) Folk							
09) Jazz							
10) Latin							
11) Pop							
12) Rap/Hip-hop							
13) R'n'B							
14) Reggae							
15) Rock							
16) Soundtracks							
17) World Music							
18) Other (please specify)							

Social Networking

Please select three social networking websites from the list below that you use frequently, in order of your favourite website first. Please then indicate how much you use that website by marking each one with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very frequently
20) Bebo							
21) Blogs							
22) Digg							
23) Discussion Forums							
24) Facebook							
25) LinkedIn							
26) MySpace							
27) News boards							
28) StumbleUpon							
29) Twitter							
30) Yahoo							
31) YouTube							
32) Other (please specify) _____							

Music Consumption

For the following questions, please estimate how often you obtain the various types of music formats and music-related products or merchandise which are available. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Never get	2	3	4	5	6	7 Get very frequently
33) CDs							
34) Vinyl records							
35) MP3 music file downloads to a computer or portable device (e.g. mobile phone)							
36) Online streaming via services such as Spotify and YouTube							
37) Merchandise (e.g. posters or artist-related clothing and accessories)							
38) Other (please specify) _____							

39) Please estimate how often you have downloaded a piece of music, or a song, to your computer or portable device (such as a mobile phone) in the last week.

_____ times

40) Please estimate how often you have streamed a piece of music, or a song, from Internet-based streaming services (such as Spotify or YouTube) in the last week.

_____ times

41) Please estimate how often you have bought a CD in the last six months.

_____ times

42) Please estimate how often you have bought a vinyl record in the last six months.

_____ times

43) How often have you attended a music festival in the last twelve months?

_____ times

44) How often have you attended a live music event (not including festivals) in the last twelve months?

_____ times

Individual

The following statements relate to you as an individual in terms of music and your identity, and the influence of other people that you know in your music consumption practices.

These statements aim to discover how much music means to you and your identity. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly disagree	4 Neutral	5 Slightly agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
45) Music helps achieve the identity I want to have.							
46) Music helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.							
47) Music is central to my identity.							
48) Music is part of who I am.							
49) If music was taken away from me I would feel as if my identity had been snatched from me.							
50) I derive some of my identity from music.							

These statements investigate the influence of other consumers (be they friends, peers, or family members) in your music consumption practices, and to what degree you learn from these people. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly disagree	4 Neutral	5 Slightly agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
51) I rarely purchase the latest music until I am sure my friends approve of it.							
52) It is important that others like the music and artists I buy.							
53) When buying music, I generally purchase music by those artists that I think others will approve of.							
54) If other people can see me consuming music, I often purchase music by the artists they expect me to buy.							
55) I like to know what artists and music make good impressions on others.							

56) I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same music and artists that others purchase.							
57) If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy music by the same artists that they buy.							
58) I often identify with other people by purchasing the same music and artists they purchase.							

Social Groups

The following statements relate to you as a social group member in terms of your identity with your groups, and the influence of other people on your live music attendance practices.

Online Social Groups

For the following statements, please give answers in relation to online social groups of which you are a member. These may include a group that is devoted to the topic of music specifically, a group who discuss music on other platforms such as social networking websites (e.g. Facebook or MySpace), or by posting messages on media content websites such as YouTube. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

These statements aim to measure how much you identify with your online social groups.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very much
59) I identify with other members of my online groups.							
60) I am like other members of my online groups.							
61) My online groups are an important reflection of who I am.							

These statements investigate the influence of your online social groups on your live music attendance practices, and to what degree you learn from these groups. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Unlikely	2	3	4	5	6	7 Likely
62) I would attend a live music event based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.							
63) I would attend a music festival based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.							
64) I would share a positive live music event experience with these groups.							
65) I would share a negative live music event experience with these groups.							
66) I would share a positive music festival experience with these groups.							
67) I would share a negative music festival experience with these groups.							
68) These groups are more influential to me in terms of my music consumption practices than my offline groups.							
69) These groups are more influential to me in terms of my live music attendance practices than my offline groups.							

Offline Social Groups (e.g. friends, family, work colleagues, fellow sports club members)

For the following statements, please give answers in relation to offline social groups of which you are a member. This means any group with whom you regularly physically meet and discuss music, such as ones found in school or university, the work place, or clubs. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

These statements aim to measure how much you identify with your offline social groups.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very much
70) I identify with other members of my offline groups.							
71) I am like other members of my offline groups.							
72) My offline groups are an important reflection of who I am.							

These statements investigate the influence of your offline social groups on your live music attendance practices, and to what degree you learn from these groups. Please mark each answer with a tick using the scale provided.

	1 Unlikely	2	3	4	5	6	7 Likely
73) I would attend a live music event based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.							
74) I would attend a music festival based on a recommendation from a member of these groups.							
75) I would share a positive live music event experience with these groups.							
76) I would share a negative live music event experience with these groups.							
77) I would share a positive music festival experience with these groups.							
78) I would share a negative Music festival experience with these groups.							
79) These groups are more influential to me in terms of my music consumption practices than my online groups.							

80) These groups are more influential to me in terms of my live music attendance practices than my online groups.							
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Demographics *(Please note this is a voluntary section)*

Finally, please answer the following demographic questions about yourself. This information will help to compare your views with those of other respondents.

81) What is your gender? Male Female

82) How old are you? _____

83) What is your nationality? Please state: _____

Thank You! Your response is very much appreciated.

If you would like to be entered into the draw for the £50 Amazon voucher, please supply your email address here. The winner will be contacted via this address. Only adults over 18 years of age can participate.

Email: _____

Appendix C

Online Data Collection Sources (Main Study)

Discussion forums:

Aberdeen Music (Forum) - <http://www.aberdeen-music.com/forum/>

Black Cat Bone - <http://bcb-board.co.uk/>

Drowned In Sound (Music Forum) - <http://drownedinsound.com/community>

eFestivals Forum (Download Festival) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/25-download-festival/>

eFestivals Forum (Glastonbury Festival) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/22-chat/>

eFestivals Forum (Isle of Wight Festival) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/28-isle-of-wight-festival/>

eFestivals Forum (Reading and Leeds Festivals) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/39-reading-leeds-festivals/>

eFestivals Forum (Sonisphere) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/47-sonisphere/>

eFestivals (T in the Park) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/3-t-in-the-park/>

eFestivals Forum (V Festival) - <http://www.efestivals.co.uk/forums/forum/15-v-festival/>

Garagepunk Forums - <http://garagepunk.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=general>

got-djent.com (Music Discussion) - <http://got-djent.com/forums/music-discussion>

Last.fm (Addicted to Last.fm) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Addicted+to+Last.fm/forum>

Last.fm (Bipolar Music Taste) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Bipolar+Music+Taste/forum>

Last.fm (British Music) - <http://www.last.fm/group/British+Music/forum>

Last.fm (Classic Rock) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Classic+Rock/forum>

Last.fm (Drum 'n' Bass) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Drum%27n%27Bass/forum>

Last.fm (Extensive Musical Taste) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Extensive+Musical+Taste>

Last.fm (Funk) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Funk/forum>

Last.fm (General Discussion) - <http://www.last.fm/forum/5>

Last.fm (Goth – Metal – Rock – Punk) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Gothic+-+Metal+-+Rock+-+Punk/forum>

Last.fm (i'd die without music) - <http://www.last.fm/group/i%27d+die+without+music/forum>

Last.fm (i'm not anti-social, i just enjoy my music.) - <http://www.last.fm/group/i%27m+not+anti-social%2C+i+just+enjoy+my+music./forum>

Last.fm (Indie and Alternative) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Indie+and+Alternative/forum>

Last.fm (In Rock We Trust) - <http://www.last.fm/group/In+Rock+We+Trust/forum>

Last.fm (I Still Buy CDs) - <http://www.last.fm/group/I+Still+Buy+CDs/forum>

Last.fm (Keep Music Alive) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Keep+Music+Alive/forum>

Last.fm (Metal) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Metal/forum>

Last.fm (Metalheads who don't give a fuck if they are true or not) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Metalheads+who+don%27t+give+a+fuck+if+they+are+true+or+not/forum>

Last.fm (Music is my boyfriend.) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Music+is+my+boyfriend./forum>

Last.fm (OpenmindedMetalheads) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Openminded+Metalheads/forum>

Last.fm (People who listen to music while they're sleeping, especially at times when they...) - <http://www.last.fm/group/People+who+listen+to+music+while+they%27re+sleeping%2C+especially+at+times+when+they+shouldn%27t+be+asleep+but+are+too+tired+to+stay+awake/forum>

Last.fm (People with no social lives that listen to more music than is healthy who are...) - <http://www.last.fm/group/People+with+no+social+lives+that+listen+to+more+music+than+is+healthy+who+are+slightly+scared+of+spiders+and+can+never+seem+to+find+a+pen/forum>

Last.fm (Pitchfork) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Pitchfork/forum>

Last.fm Presents - <http://www.last.fm/group/Last.fm+Presents/forum>

Last.fm (The Grunge Era) - <http://www.last.fm/group/The+Grunge+Era/forum>

Last.fm (Thrash Metal) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Thrash+Metal/forum>

Last.fm (Trance) - <http://www.last.fm/group/Trance/forum>

Last.fm (True Listener) - <http://www.last.fm/group/True+Listener/forum>

Leeds Festival (Official) - <http://forums.leedsfestival.com/tt.aspx?forumid=159>

Music Anchor - <http://musicanchor.org/forum-9.html>

Music Discussion - <http://www.music-discussion.com/forum.php>

PsyMusic UK (Music Discussion) - <http://www.psymusic.co.uk/forum/forums/music-discussion.35/>

Reading Festival (Official) - <http://forums.readingfestival.com/f98.aspx>

Safe Concerts (Festival Discussion) -
http://www.safeconcerts.com/forum/forum.asp?forum_urn=128

Sevenstring.org (General Music Discussion) -
<http://www.sevenstring.org/forum/general-music-discussion/>

Sound On Sound (Musicians' Lounge) -
<http://www.soundonsound.com/forum/postlist.php?Cat=&Board=musicianslounge>

South Wales Massive (Gigs Forum) -
<http://www.southwalesmassive.com/index.php?showforum=9>

Spotify Community - <http://community.spotify.com/t5/General-Music-Discussion/bd-p/spotifymusicdiscussion>

Ultimate Metal - <http://www.ultimatemetal.com/forum/general-metal-discussion-3/>

Unsigned Band Web (Forums) - <http://www.unsignedbandweb.com/forum43.html>

We Are The Music Makers (Music Discussion) - <http://forum.watmm.com/forum/25-music-discussion/>

Social networking groups:

Acoustic Junkkies - <http://www.facebook.com/acoustic.iunkkies>

BBC Radio 1 Punk Rock Show - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6243086730/>

BBC Radio 6 Music - <https://www.facebook.com/BBCRadio6Music>

Black Circles Vinyl Company - <http://www.facebook.com/groups/247772315265574/>

Bogiez Rock Bar and Nightclub - <http://www.facebook.com/groups/bogiez/>

Cardiff After Dark - <http://www.facebook.com/cardiff.afterdark.7>

Clash Music - <https://www.facebook.com/clashmusic>

Death Monkey Records - <http://www.facebook.com/DeathMonkeyRecords>

Derricks Swansea - <https://www.facebook.com/derricks.swansea>

Download Festival - <https://www.facebook.com/downloadfest>

Garage Swansea - <https://www.facebook.com/garage.swansea>

Gigmeup South Wales - <https://www.facebook.com/gigmeup.southwales>

Gigs South Wales - <https://www.facebook.com/gigs.southwales>

Gigwise - <https://www.facebook.com/Gigwise>

Glastonbury Festival 2013 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/130191917029/>

Hard Rock Calling - <https://www.facebook.com/HardRockCalling>

I Like Music - <https://www.facebook.com/ILikeMusic>

I like my music LOUD - <https://www.facebook.com/ilikemymusicloud>

I Love Music! (1) - <https://www.facebook.com/ilovemusics>

I Love Music! (2) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/I-Love-Music>

I Love MUSIC! - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/I-love-MUSIC>

I Love Music!!!! - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/I-Love-Music-/84370923539>

I'm a student and I like rock music - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Im-a-student-and-i-like-rock-music>

Isle of Wight Festival (Official) - <https://www.facebook.com/iwfestival>

Isle of Wight Festival 2012 - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Isle-Of-Wight-Festival-2012>

Keep Calm and Listen On - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Keep-Calm-and-Listen-On/120261031436467>

Koopas Swansea - <https://www.facebook.com/koopasbars>

Last.fm - <http://www.facebook.com/lastfm>

Leeds Festival (Official) - <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialLeedsFestival>

Leeds Festival (Unofficial) - <https://www.facebook.com/leedsmusicfestival>

Leeds Festival 2012 (1) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Leeds-Festival-2012/106129036149420>

Leeds Festival 2012 (2) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Leeds-Festival-2012/230614460317629>

Make Believe Music-Swansea - <https://www.facebook.com/make.believmusicswansea>

Meze Lounge - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Meze-Lounge/327711285879>

Milkwoodjam Swansea - <http://www.facebook.com/milkwoodjam>

Millenstock - <https://www.facebook.com/Millenstock>

Minerva: The Grunge and Alternative Music Corner - <https://www.facebook.com/MinervaGrungeCorner>

Moremusic Recordshop - <http://www.facebook.com/moremusic.recordshop>

Music - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Music/51702392905>

Music Discussion (1)-<http://www.facebook.com/musicdiscussion>

Music Discussion (2) - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Music-Discussion/122849974426374>

Music Discussion Community - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/musicaldiscussion/>

Nation Radio Wales - <https://www.facebook.com/nationradio>

New Reign – Music Discussion - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Reign-Music-Discussion/130079143708505>

Nirvana For Christmas No.1 - <https://www.facebook.com/nirvanaforno1>

NME Radio - <https://www.facebook.com/nmeradio>

Oxjam Music Festival - <https://www.facebook.com/Oxjam>

Parrot Promo-Page - <https://www.facebook.com/ParrotPromo>

Rage Against The Machine ★ Christmas No.1 2009 -
<https://www.facebook.com/ratm4xmas>

Reading Festival (Official) - <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialReadingFestival>

Reading Festival (Unofficial) - <https://www.facebook.com/readingfesty>

Reading Festival 2012 (1) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Reading-Festival-2012/101436533295449>

Reading Festival 2012 (2) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Reading-Festival-2012/261780453839983>

Rhythmix - <https://www.facebook.com/RhythmixMusicCharity>

Rowlands Music shop - <http://www.facebook.com/rowlandsmusic>

Sin City Swansea - <https://www.facebook.com/sinswansea>

Soundwave Festival - <https://www.facebook.com/soundwavefestival>

South Wales Music Scene... Past and Present - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Wales-music-scene-past-and-present/367586655053>

Spillers Records - <http://www.facebook.com/spillersrecords>

Swansea Gigs - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Swansea-Gigs/121261697936285>

Swansea Record Fayres - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Swansea-Record-Fayres/166311056810799>

Swansea Rock School - <https://www.facebook.com/swansearockschool>

Swanee Concertz - <http://www.facebook.com/southwalesevents>

TawAir Pontardawe - <https://www.facebook.com/tawair.pontardawe>

The Garage Music Venue - <https://www.facebook.com/garage.swansea>

The Garage@Whitez - <https://www.facebook.com/TheGarageVenue>

The Miniature Music Press - <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/The-Miniature-Music-Press/147169769480>

The MMP (Cardiff) - <https://www.facebook.com/mmpcardiff>

The Official Chart Update on BBC Radio 1 - <https://www.facebook.com/ChartUpdate>

The Parrot - <http://www.facebook.com/theparrotmusicbar>

Tommys Bar (UWICSU) - <https://www.facebook.com/tommysbarcardiffmet>

Top of the Pops - <https://www.facebook.com/totppage>

Uncut Magazine <https://www.facebook.com/UncutMagazine>

Why Music Matters - <https://www.facebook.com/whymusicmatters>

Zane Lowe on BBC Radio 1 - <https://www.facebook.com/zaneloweradio1>

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