The Evaluation of Brand Extension: A Proposition of a Conceptual Framework Based on Trust

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Abstract
This paper has the purpose to show the importance of the introduction of a relationship approach based on trust in brand extension. After presenting the classical approaches of evaluation of brand extension and showing their limitations, we propose a conceptual model including the antecedents of trust, trust as multidimensional construct and its consequences. An empirical study was carried with a sample of 400 consumers for the chosen brand on the purpose to validate the model and verify the role of trust in this context. This study highlighted the factors that contribute more in the formation of trust and has demonstrated the importance of the role of trust and more specifically each of its dimensions in the evaluation of brand extension and this regardless of the nature of the proposed extension. On the managerial level, this research shows the importance to the practitioners to establish a relational approach based on trust in the brand extension strategy before embarking in this strategy.

Key words: brand extension, trust, relationship marketing, structural equation modeling.

1. Introduction
Since its emergence, brand has succeeded in acquiring a prominent place on consumer market. This is visible through the large number of brands that knew how to build important positions on the world market as well as consumers’ minds. This situation highlights the growing importance of brands and the evolution which they could present all along the last decades. In fact, we can meet more and more brands which are not only associated to one product but to a set of heterogeneous products. This strategy is called the strategy of brand extension. It consists in promoting different products in terms of nature and function from the original product keeping the same name of the brand (Cegarra and Merunka, 1993). This is the case of "Vittel" which is present on the mineral water market and cosmetic products, or "Samsung" that offers mobile phones and electrical appliances. Now, we see that many companies tend to reduce their portfolio of brands, keeping only those with a known name. This is imposed by the competitive situation of the market where brands are becoming more and more numerous and the costs of launching new brands become too expensive. However, this strategy presents a number of risks. In fact, many extensions have been a failure and this situation has led to a bad impact on the mother brand and the other products of the original brand. So researchers have seen the interest of understanding the impact of brand extension on the brand and they presented in this framework several approaches to explain the evaluation of brand extension. Literature is mainly marked by two main approaches: the perceptual congruity and the categorical approach. These two approaches regard a relevant extension as the closest one to the original brand in terms of fit (adaptation) and typicality. This conclusion can be denied by many examples of brands that launched many extensions away from the original brand and achieved a great success. We can mention the case of Benetton brands, LG, Samsung, Tefal...etc. Thus it can be argued that the study of the evaluation of the brand extension is mainly based on the study of the categories of products as well as the physical and /or conceptual characteristics without taking into account the relationship side of the brand and its consideration as a true active partner in the relationship. So

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this restrictive view of the brand is likely to cause the negligence of some concepts which are able to provide some answers to the issue of the evaluation of brand extension. Among these concepts, one can notice the emergence of trust in brand. This is born from a new conception of change based on the establishment of a lasting relationship between partners. Hence, trust has become the main feature of most trade (Dall Olmo Riley and Chernatony, 1997) and without this trust the relationship between partners can be neither stable nor lasting in time (Gurviez and Korchia, 2003). Therefore, trust in brand seems relevant in the case of brand extension. Indeed, this strategy stands for an acute situation of uncertainty because the company suggests a new category of different products in nature and function of the original product of the brand. Hence, the consumer is in an attempt to estimate the quality of extension. This test will be based on the consumer’s knowledge and experience with the brand to determine his attitude towards the new product. We can conclude that the consumer will expect a good product in extension if the original brand is known for its good quality.

Therefore, the integration of trust in the clarification of the evaluation of brand extension can provide answers and elements of clarification that are able to solve some drawbacks of the classical approaches. We can assume that if a brand seeks to have a lasting relationship with its customers, it must ensure a good capital of trust with its clients to have a good acceptability of a change of its offer as a launch of a brand extension. With reference to the drawbacks of both the study of the history of the trust as well as its role in the evaluation of brand extension, we are committed to conceive a conceptual model to identify the impact of each antecedent of tridimensional trust and the impact of each dimension on the retained consequences. A state of the art of different conceptualizations and measurements of this phenomenon are presented as well as different backgrounds maintained by the literature. A conceptual model is so suggested. An investigation carried out by a sample of 400 customers to test the solidity of this model. The theoretical and practical contributions of such conceptualization are then exposed.

2. The Strategy of Brand Extension

Generally, brand extension is defined as the use of an existing brand (called mother brand) to penetrate a new product (called extension) in a category of different products of the original brand. This is the attitude of many authors like Tauber (1981), Aaker and Keller (1990) and Michel (2000). The notion of brand extension is generally linked to a change of a category of products (Tauber, 1981, Faquhar, Herr and Ijiri, 1992). Nevertheless, the notion of brand extension is seen to develop several definitions.

Kotler and Dubois (2000) define brand extension as the use of a brand name that has proven itself to start a product belonging to a new category. Aaker and Keller (1990) think that brand extension is the use of an existing brand to a new product category for the company, in contrast to the line extension that uses the brand name in a product category where brand is already present. These definitions stand for a certain ambiguity which dwells mainly in the definition of the notion of the category of product. Cagerra and Merunka (1993) were the first who tried to clarify this concept. They think that brand extension can be considered only if the category of the product of extension is different from the original one. From his side Ladwein (1993) suggests a cognitive definition of brand extension approaching it from the perspective of the real knowledge of the consumer. Indeed, he believes that despite the clarity and precision of the definition of Cegarra and Merunka (1993), their point of view shows some restrictions linked to their belief that consumers have homogeneous knowledges and structures of the same way. Ladwein (1993) suggests hence to consider “any product extension not drilled by the consumer belongs to the range displayed by the brand”. This definition stands for a disadvantage, for it seems difficult to identify an extension according to the categorical realization of every customer. In fact, what is regarded definite for a customer, as range extension, can be regarded brand extension for another. It depends on the customer’s knowledge nature and structure. Consequently, we can notice that these different definitions highlight the difficulty of identifying brand extension and delimitating the boundaries between the categories of products.
• The Explanatory Approaches of The Evaluation of Brand Extension

Since the 1980’s, the strategy of brand extension was strongly imposed on companies among the strategies of development. More and more brands become no longer linked to an only product but to a group of heterogeneous products. We can mention the case of “Evian” which is originally a mineral water product, now it is present in the cosmetic domain. There is also the brand "Signal" which went from toothpaste to toothbrush and now chewing gum. However, success was not the fate of all the extensions, some ones have failed. They have even led to a bad impact on the mother brand. And to avoid this risk, researchers tried to study the evaluation of brand extension. The literature review shows the domination of two main approaches: the congruence approach and the categorical approach.

○ The Approach Of Perceptual Congruence

The approach of perceptual congruence has met great interest of researchers who are interested in the evaluation of brand extension by consumers. In fact, in literature, the evaluation of brand extension is highly dominated by the notions of “fit” or “logical linking” and perceived similarity. Indeed, most of the developments in this context explain the attitude or preference away from brand extension whether from the perceived similarity between the original category and the category of the product viewed in extension, or the logical linking between the brand and its extension. The concept of similarity has been studied in two different ways in research on brand extensions. On the one hand, some researchers have focused on the role of physical similarity that can exist between the extension and the existing products of the brand, the results seem to lead to the same conclusion: more extension is physically similar to the original products brand, also its evaluation will be based on the mother brand attitude (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Roux, 1995; Boush and Loken (1987). On the other hand some researchers have looked towards the study of symbolic similarity between the brand and the extension. This was the question raised in the study of Park, Milberg and Lawson (1991) that are based on real brands (Timex and Rolex). This research has enabled the authors to put in evidence that the coherence between the brand concept and product concept considered in extension and the degree of similarity with the extension allow a favorable extension. This can be considered when the proposed products in extension are intrinsically coherent with the brand extension. In addition, the literature on brand extension was mainly interested in the transfer of associations and the "fit" between the mother brand and the extension (Xie, 2008). Most authors include in their research the “fit” between the brand and the extension which can be translated as “logical linking” or “perceptual agreement” or “perceptual coherence”. This concept describes “how the consumer accepts the product as logical (with respect to the mother brand) and expects to see this product under the brand name” (Tauber, 1981). This term is actually used as a synonym to similarity in the context of literature on brand extension. However, this concept is preferred to the notion of similarity because the latter has the disadvantage of not comparing more than two objects of the same kind (for example, two categories of products) while that of the fit allow the comparison of two objects of different kinds (for example, a brand and an extension) (Collange and al, 2004; Collange, 2008). However, despite the wide consensus on the significance of this approach several critics have been addressed.

○ The Categorical Approach

This approach based on the representation of knowledge made it possible to rephrase the question of the evaluation of brand extension and respond to the main criticisms of the approach of perceptual congruence. Indeed, according to Ladwein (1993), taking into account the categorical approach has helped to structure a theoretical framework that permit to:

➢ Define brand extension on the basis of existing cognitive structures and evaluate them accordingly.

➢ Consider the problem of the transfer of the characteristics of brand to a product and that of extension on the original perception of the brand: facing an extension, a consumer will compare the brand with the product category in extension. According to Changeur and Chandon (1996), this comparison leads to a certain perception of the way in which the new product is considered representative of the mother brand or not. Several phenomena can occur:
- Acceptance of the product in a cognitive category that the brand shapes in memory.
- Restructuring of the category to introduce the new product.
- Non acceptance of the product in the category previously formed.

➢ To take into account the competitive situation in which extension takes place because the product will be examined from several angles, i.e., its function, its utility, its qualities, and the different brands that sell variations.

➢ To understand the brand extension in terms of the process of consumer choice considering this one as a choice made simultaneously between a product linked to a range associated to a brand and the choice of a product of a certain brand among a set of other competing brands.

However, despite the importance of the concept of typicality, its contribution must be relativised. According to Ladwein, in the case of an extension strategy based on the concept of the brand, a product judged as typically low does not necessarily mean that the product proposed in extension is not interesting for the brand. This extension will be interesting if others ones are launched by the brand and the concept of the brand will change. This modification can help an extension judged as typically low to improve its typicality rating. These approaches can eventually explain the success of some brands like Benetton in its multiple extensions. This orientation has led Ladwein (1993) and Michel (1999) to conclude that the strict use of the term typicality in the evaluation of brand extension can lead to a loss of opportunities by limiting its scope of application, because measurement of typicality leads, as already mentioned, to a resistance to a peculiar change to cognitive category. This implies that consumers tend to evaluate a product that is physically away from the original ones of the brand as slightly typical while this product can be quite coherent with the mother brand and has an opportunity of success. Thus, we can conclude that the study of the evaluation of brand extensions is based on a focus on the study of product categories, physical and/or conceptual of the brand without taking it into account as an active partner in the exchange. This narrow vision of the brand leads to the negligence of certain approaches and concepts that are able to provide a kind of deepening in the resolution of the problematic evaluation of brand extension. However, the conceptualization of exchange has greatly evolved, it is no longer considered as punctual transactions but as a relationship between the consumer and the supplier. The brand has also undergone the consequences of this assessment, it is currently regarded as a partner in the exchange itself. It was born initially from the will of the manufacturer to establish a long-term relationship with the customer, but it also has an interest for the consumer as it allows the simplification of purchasing tasks and consumption, the process of information, the reduction of perceived risk and the maintenance of cognitive coherence and a comfortable psychological state (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). This view of the brand as a personified body, beyond the evaluation of its usefulness, enables the consumer to enter into a relationship with it, allowing the emergence of trust in the partner as the most characteristic trade (Dall'Olmo Riley and Chernatony, 1997, Soh, Reid and King, 2009). The consequences of the consideration of a relationship approach to brand seem to be relevant to the case of brand extensions. Indeed, in this particular case, the consumer is in a situation of acute uncertainty related to the new offer of the brand. In this case the brand offers a category of product new in nature and function. So, the consumer is in a situation of estimating the quality of the new product. And he will depend on his knowledge and previous experience of the brand. It is also estimated that in this case the consumer will rely on his trust in the brand in order to predict the quality of the proposed extension. The integration of the concept of trust in the issue of the extension seems relevant, it would solve the inadequacies of explanatory approaches for the evaluation of brand extensions especially their restrictive view of the brand and their neglect of the impact of a relationship approach on the evaluation of a brand extension.

The Trust

Researches on social psychology and relationship marketing agree that trust plays a very important role in establishing and maintaining long-term relationship. Rotter (1967) defines trust as a general predisposition to believe, to trust the word and the promise of the other. Morgan and Hunt(1994) show that following the outlook of relationship marketing, the company has developed a network of internal relationships with its
lateral partners, suppliers and customers as well. Trust is regarded as a vital concept for understanding the process of structuring business exchanges. In addition, following the call of Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), a recent trend of relationship marketing has emerged and sought to extend its principles to the field of consumer’s behavior. It proposes to consider the consumers’ demand as a holistic request where the tangible part is included with other service elements (intangible) such as information on a better use of the product, after-sales service, etc. ... and not as a simple request for products or services (Gronroos, 1997). Thus, and by including the principle of reciprocity (Bagozzi, 1995), fundamental in the relationship approach, the emphasis is on the benefits and contributions of a reciprocal and sustainable relationship for both consumers and business. With regard to the company, the fact of maintaining exchange relationships with customers is a source of long-term benefit (Berry, 1995). For consumers, set relationships up rather than stick to one-off transactions leads to a variety of benefits such as the simplification of tasks of purchasing, consumption, information process, reducing the perceived risk as well as the maintenance of a state of psychological comfort and cognitive consistency (Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995). This consideration of trust in the brand leads to some implications. First, the adoption of a certain quality of the interpersonal relationship leads to the finding that the brand has some features that exceed the product approach. This idea is not new because the brand has already been treated as a particular by Aaker (1995, 1997). According to Delgado-Ballester and Aleman-Munuera (2001), trust in a person can be regarded as a sense of security based on the belief that his behavior is guided and driven by the favorable and positive intentions towards his partner. So this person will not lie or take advantage of the vulnerability of the latter. Trust in the brand can be defined as a sense of security of the consumer that the brand will reach his expectations and be up to them (Delgado-Ballester and Aleman-Munuera, 2001). It is, therefore, to consider the brand as a human with personality features (Blackston, 1992, 1995) and is given almost human characteristics (Fournier, 1998; Aaker, 1995).

- **Definition of Brand Trust**

Analyzing researches on trust, it has been noticed that these studies were seen as analogous to a trust in a person and therefore they considered interpersonal trust as a starting point to propose a conceptual framework of trust in the brand (Hess, 1995; Siriex and Dubois, 1999; Gurviez 1999; Siriex, 2000). Based on the review of recent researches, we can see that there is some confusion in the definition and implementation of the concept of trust in the brand. Indeed, Fournier (1994) proposed a multi-faceted built to measure the quality of the brand relationship. It consists of two affective facets, two cognitive and two conative. Hess (1995) has regarded trust as a multidimensional concept to which it has been developed a specific scale. This consists of a dimension "honest" a dimension "altruism" and dimension "reliability". Several concepts have been proposed to define trust, they are of several kinds: cognitive as belief (Siriex and Dubois, 1999; Frisou, 2000), emotional as the presumption (Gurvievz 1999; Aurier, and Benavant N’Goala, 2001; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002), and conative as the will (Chaudhari and Holbrook, 2001; Moorman, Zaltmanand and Deshpande, 1992). Beyond the very nature of the trust, there is another disagreement at the level of literature regarding the decomposition of this concept.

Indeed, one can find three conceptions of trust in marketing research: unidimensional, twodimensional and three-dimensional.

- **Unidimensional Conception**

Trust was considered essentially unidimensional by Fournier (1994) and Morgan and Hunt (1994). The two latter have adopted the scale of Larzelere and Houston (1980) from the social psychology. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), the dimensions of honesty and motivation are inseparable in practice though they are conceptually distinct.

- **Two-Dimensional Conception**

According to Ganesan (1994) and Ganesan and Hess (1997), trust has two dimensions. On the one hand we distinguish the objective credibility of the partner that combines his competence, honesty and willingness to keep his promises. On the other hand, there is the benevolence which corresponds to the right intentions of the partner and his perceived determination to pay attention to the needs and desires of the other. This
conceptualization of trust has been operationalized in the relationship approach of the brand in particular by Siriex and Dubois (1999). According to this view, brand trust consists of the honesty and competence attributed to brand on the one hand, and motivations and intentions of the brand to the consumer on the other.

- **Three-Dimensional Conception**

  Despite the differences observed between the authors, the majority of them agree that there is a multidimensional construct. Increasingly, the research presents a three-dimensional design of trust. Some researchers believe that trust consists of three dimensions (Hess, 1995; Gurviez, 1999; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002 Mcknight and Kocmar, 2002; Chouk and Perrien, 2005):

  - The presumption of competence (the mastery of skills)
  - The presumption of honesty that is to respect what is promised.
  - The ability of the brand to take into account the interests of consumers and their motivations for a long term. As already noted, the interpersonal trust is not limited to cognitive foundations, it also consists of affective elements (Lewis and Wiegert, 1985). Indeed, trust is based on a cognitive process in the sense where we choose those who will trust us and we base our choice of "good reasons" which constitute the evidence that the other party is trustworthy (Bories, 2001). However, trust also has affective origins which are the emotional ties formed between people and lead to the formation of a great interest to achieve the expectations and well being of their partners (Lewis and Wiegert, 1985). Thus, and in accordance with Gurviez (1998), we propose to consider trust as a "presumption" rather than as a "belief" in order to emphasize the nature of both cognitive and affective processes of trust. Indeed, the belief, as the presumption is certainly not objective judgments. But what sets them apart is that the belief is generally regarded as a judgment that varies with the level of security that accords to subject. However, the presumption is defined as "to hold true," the consumer is based in this case on evidence rather than on actual facts to form its position with respect to the brand (Gurviez, 1998; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002 ). Therefore, the fact of considering trust as a presumption takes into account the uncertainty that surrounds every trade. In this paper, we propose that trust in a brand will lead to positive outcomes whatever the level of the fit of the brand extension. The research framework is shown in figure 1.

![Fig. 1: The Conceptual Model](image-url)
Antecedents of Trust

From the literature, it was found that there is a variety of antecedents of trust in the brand. In this research, we propose to classify them into two types: consumer characteristics of the brand. These consist of two parts: those linked to the brand and those linked to the product.

- Satisfaction with the Brand

This antecedent highlights the dynamic nature of the formation of the trust. Indeed we notice in the literature the occurrence of some concept emphasizing this aspect as "the age of the relationship" (Anderson and Weitz, 1989) or "The experience with the seller" (Ganesan, 1994). Thus, trust is a dynamic concept that is built and developed through previous experiences with the consumer (Chouk and Perrien, 2003). In this research, we integrate the evolving nature of trust in the role of studying satisfaction in the formation of trust. This through the satisfaction felt during previous experiences with the brand (Ganesan, 1994; Gurviez, 1999) or from associations related to the brand attributes (Gurviez, 1999). The study of the role of this antecedent that seemed relevant in the case of brand extensions as a satisfying experience with a product brand can cause widespread trust in all products with the same brand name. Therefore, it can be assumed that satisfaction has a direct and positive impact on the forming of trust (Zboja and Voorhees, 2006) and that this effect will be the same on all components of trust. Thus, we can state the following hypothesis:

H1: Satisfaction has a positive impact on trust in the brand.

- H1.a: Satisfaction has a positive impact on credibility.
- H1.b: Satisfaction has a positive impact on integrity.
- H1.c: Satisfaction has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Experience with the Brand

The experience with the brand means meetings and past experiences with a consumer brand. According to Dywer, Schurr and Oh (1987) and Krishnan (1996), the consumption experience creates associations and feelings that are more important and safer. According to these same authors, the more experience with a partner exchange is, the less likely there would be periods of conflict in the relationship. This experience allows partners to gain a better understanding of each other and therefore have trust in their behavior and intentions. By analogy, we can consider that the more a consumer gained some experience with a brand, the more he will understand and have trust in this brand. According to Siriex and Dubois (1999), trust appears as a "barometer", based on satisfaction related to past experiences. Thus, this trust in the product can also refer to the set of items associated with this brand.

H2: The experience with the brand has a positive impact on trust in the brand.

- H2.a: The experience with the brand has a positive impact on credibility.
- H2.b: The experience with the brand has a positive impact on integrity.
- H2.c: The experience with the brand has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Congruence

Following the anthropological concept of the brand and the growing importance of the concept of brand personality, there is awareness that the brand was more of a mascot or a simple name printed on a label. This conception of the brand has led to the development of a strong relationship between the consumer and the brand. This is based on the perception of image congruence (real or ideal) between the individual and the product. The brand holds personal and cultural values, it is therefore a means of communication of the identity of the individual to himself and to others (Lacoeuilhe, 2000). Indeed, the perception that consumers have of themselves influence their decision on the brand as a consumer uses the brand whose image is
consistent with his self-concept. This congruence leads to a positive behavior and a positive attitude towards the product. It has a great influence on consumer's preferences, his purchasing intention and loyalty towards the product and the brand (Sirgy, 1982, 1997; Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Ambrose and al., 2003; Vernette, 2003). In addition, research has shown that interpersonal similarities between the two sides of a relationship can cause the appearance of trust.

H3: The congruence between the consumer and the brand has a positive impact on trust in the brand.
- H3.a: The congruence between the consumer and the brand has a positive impact on credibility.
- H3.b: The congruence between the consumer and the brand has a positive impact on integrity.
- H3.c: The congruence between the consumer and the brand has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Familiarity with the Product

Familiarity is generally associated to the number of previous experiences accumulated by the consumer (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987) and familiarity toward a product is “a subjective knowledge of the consumer towards a product” (Cegarra and Michel, 2000). Familiarity to a product leads to the formation of prior knowledge avoiding the need to judge the quality of the product (Chueh and Kao, 2004) and allowing the formation of expectations about a future state (Gefen, 2000). Pechman and Ratneshwar (1992) indicate that the level of accumulated experience with the product may affect their judgment to this product. Some authors postulate that the familiarity is a prerequisite for the formation of trust (Luhman, 1979). Indeed, the familiarity can develop predictability of behavior. This situation leads to the formation of trust (Chouk, 2005).

H4: Familiarity with the product has a positive impact on trust in the brand.
- H4.a: Familiarity with the product has a positive impact on credibility.
- H4.b: Familiarity with the product has a positive impact on integrity.
- H4.c: Familiarity with the product has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Brand Reputation

According to Ratier (2003), reputation is generally defined as "the public's esteem about someone or something." According to Lau and Lee (1999), reputation can grow through advertising and public relations and is influenced by the quality and performance of the product. According to Creed and Miles (1996), the reputation of a partner can lead to positive expectations. Lau and Lee (1999) and Syed and Norjoya (2010) found that brand reputation has a positive influence in the development of trust.

H5: The reputation of the brand has a positive impact on trust in the brand.
- H5.a: The reputation of the brand has a positive impact on credibility.
- H5.b: The reputation of the brand has a positive impact on integrity.
- H5.c: The reputation of the brand has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Competence of the Brand

The competence of the brand is defined as the ability of the brand to solve the problems of consumers and meet their needs (Lau and Lee (1999)). Deutsh (1960) and Sitkin and Roth (1993) considered that this is an essential component in influencing trust. This antecedent seems relevant in the case of brand extensions because if a consumer believes in the ability of a brand, he will expect it to be so for all its offering.

H6: The competence of the brand has a positive impact on trust in the brand.
H6.a: The competence of the brand has a positive impact on credibility.
H6.b: The competence of the brand has a positive impact on integrity.
H6.c: The competence of the brand has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Notoriety

The notoriety forms a component of brand equity. It can be defined as "the degree of knowledge of a brand by consumers" (Dimitriadis 1991). Aaker (1994) adds in this context "the notoriety of a brand is not only the ability of a potential element to recognize or remember that a brand exists but belongs to "a certain product category". The interest of marketers for the notoriety stems from the fact that consumers estimate a brand high notoriety is trustworthy, its name plays the role of insurance for buyers and directly and positively involved in the formation of trust (Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus, 2006). Aaker (1994) notes in this regard that the essential function performed by the brand name is to ensure the credibility of a launch of a new product. According to Sattler and Schrim (1999), the brand carries very important influences on the credibility of a new product and the better known the brand is, the more credibility is important.

H7: The notoriety of the brand has a positive impact on trust in the brand.
H7.a: The notoriety of the brand has a positive impact on credibility.
H7.b: The notoriety of the brand has a positive impact on integrity.
H7.c: The notoriety of the brand has a positive impact on benevolence.

- The Consequences of Trust
  - Commitment

Gurviez (1999) defines commitment to the brand as "The intention, implicit or explicit, to maintain a lasting relationship with the brand, resulting in a brand loyalty, and having a positive impact on purchasing behavior." In the literature, it is noted that trust and commitment are strongly related. It is indeed on a consensus among researchers that trust in the brand leads to commitment as it creates a strong trading relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It also reduces the perceived risk and vulnerability in a relationship that leads to a strong commitment to the relationship (Gansan, 1994). Trust reduces the transaction costs, which increases the likelihood of the continuation of the relationship and therefore the commitment (Walter, Mueller, Helfert and Wilson, 2002). In this research, we consider commitment as a direct result of the trust. This concept seemed appropriate because it allows the longevity of the relationship, the perception of future earnings and a limited desire to search for alternatives (Grossman, 1998). Such consequences of the presence of the commitment in the case of brand extensions seemed very interesting because this strategy has a high level of risk related to the novelty of the product and may be limited in the case of consumers engaged in a relationship with the brand.

H8: Trust positively influences commitment.
H8.a: Credibility positively influences commitment.
H8.b: Integrity positively influences commitment.
H8.c: Benevolence positively influences commitment.

- The Acceptance of the Extension

The acceptance of the brand extension is recommended as a direct result of the trust (Doyle, 1990; Cegarra and Merunka, 1993). According to Gurviez and Korchiba (2003), consumers tend to accept a new product from a brand that they trust. This review is also the one of Siriex and Dubois (1999) who indicates that a brand possessing a high level of trust can benefit of a halo effect making it possible to postpone the
trust in the product for all products associated with this brand. Wu and Yen (2007) argue that brands with strong trust bring a more favorable assessment of the extension than those with a low level of trust. Thus, a new product launched under a brand that a consumer has always been satisfied benefit of a capital of trust already established.

H9: Trust positively influences the acceptance of the extension.
- H9.a: Credibility positively influences the acceptance of the extension.
- H9.b: Integrity positively influences the acceptance of the extension.
- H9.c: Benevolence positively influences the acceptance of the extension.

Acceptance of incident
We will consider acceptance of a deficiency in the quality of the product as an indirect consequence of trust through commitment. Indeed, if a consumer has trust in a brand, he will engage in a relationship with it characterized by a desire to develop a long term relationship. The engagement leads thus to an attachment to the brand and a positive impact on the purchasing behavior to protect a temporary lack of quality (Biel, 1993; Gurviez 1999; Gurviez and Korchia, 2003). This result seems relevant to the case of brand extensions because the risk of incident is more present and commitment in the relationship would allow to the brand on the one hand, a better consumer predisposition to accept the proposed extension and on the other, to forgive him his fault if failure occurs.

H10: Commitment positively influences the acceptance of the brand incidents

3. Research Methodology
A preliminary study was made in order to choose the categories of products and brands used in the study. To achieve this goal we have adopted the following approach.

- **Choice of Product**
  In this study, we chose to work on mass consumption products. This choice was based on the fact that this type of product benefits from a capital of familiarity and high experience of consumers allowing a better evaluation of products. Moreover, we note that in the literature there has been some interest in the role of trust in the food industry. Indeed, consumers suffer from a lack of trust in this type of product. This is due to several reasons such as loss of connection with the product, the abundance of food, the growing influence of media ... etc. (Pichon, 2003). In order to choose one specific product category, we adopted an approach similar to that used in research on brand extensions (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Keller and Aaker, 1992; Boush and Loken, 1991; Reast, 2005). We started in a first step by selecting product categories commonly used by consumers in the food industry. This step helped set up a list of ten categories. In a second step, the same list was used in a pretest to select the category that has the highest score of familiarity by a sample of sixteen people. This procedure resulted in the selection of biscuit as the most familiar product with our sample.

- **Brand Choice**
  Once the chosen category, we have identified the existing brands in this category. We started by making an initial selection of these brands based on the following criteria:
  - **Notoriety of the brand**: it is preferable to use strong notoriety brands, this is due to the fact that consumers generally have a clearer picture of the brands with a strong reputation. In addition, this type of brand has a good level of perceived quality.
  - **The level of dilution**: we chose to work on some brands diluted to eliminate the effects of a wide range of consumer evaluation (Aaker and Keller, 1992).
➢ **The level of perceived quality**: it is necessary that the brand has a good reputation in terms of quality of its products.

This first selection resulted in a first place to hold a list of brands corresponding to the chosen product category. We then submitted this list to test familiarity of the brands by a sample of sixteen people. This step allowed us to retain the most familiar brand to consumers.

- **Choice of Extensions**

  To choose the brand extensions of the study, we adopted a methodology similar to that used in previous research on brand extensions (Aaker and Keller, 1990).

  - **Proposal for the List of Extensions**

    To generate a credible list of extensions for each brand, we organized a brainstorming session with a sample of five persons for each brand. After these two sessions, we selected a list of 17 products for the selected brand. Then we decided to submit the list to two marketing specialists. These ones have distinguished from this list brand extensions, line extensions and complementary range. These experts are based on the definition of Cegarra and Merunka (1993) to make this work.

  - **Choice of Extensions**

    Based on the list of brand extensions used, we submitted each product category proposed to the test of "fit" of Keller and Aaker (1992). This test measures the similarity between the category extension and the original brand category as well as the transfer of know-how between the brand and the extension. The result of this work has enabled us to retain the categories of products with the best fit and those with the least fit. This pretest was done with twenty persons.

  - **Data Collection**

    In this research, data will be collected using a self-administered questionnaire. We have prepared two versions of the questionnaire. Each version corresponds to one of the selected extensions. Our questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was presented to the overall sample. It involves the measurement of the antecedents of trust in the brand and these dimensions. The second part of the questionnaire was presented simultaneously with the first administration while ensuring to that sample different versions of extensions studied. Consumers have discovered the poster of the extension study and responded to items related to the consequences of trust. Our investigation was made with an experimental group of 400 persons. This convenience sample is composed exclusively of management students. This choice is motivated by the fact that it forms an important target for the chosen brand. Our sample is composed of an equal of men and women with a high school education.

  - **Measurement of Variables**

    The selected measurement scales come from the literature review. These are psychometric scales that have been used in similar contexts in our study, which showed good characteristics. In this study, trust is crucial in our model. This variable is retained as a multidimensional made by credibility, integrity and benevolence. The adapted scale of Gurviez and Korchia (2002) is composed of three items measuring the credibility, three items measuring the integrity and two items measuring the benevolence.

    Notoriety is measured by the scale of Gurviez (1998) which consists of two items: the first is interested in the perception of the consumer at the level of brand notoriety and the second measures the historical relationship between the consumer and this brand. Reputation as well as competence are measured by the intermediate scales developed by Lau and Lee (1999).

    Concerning satisfaction, we have considered the measure adopted by Lau and Lee (1999) because this scale presents an adaptation of the measure of Westbrook and Olivier (1981). For congruity we have adopted a direct measurement of the perceived congruity between the consumer and the brand through the scale of Escalas and Bettman (2005). The last experience with the brand corresponds to consumption experiences with the brand as a whole. The operationalization of this variable with reference to the scale of Lau and Lee
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(1999) diagnoses the use of a brand referring back to the first time the consumer remembers having used this brand. The other items deal with the usage frequency. However, familiarity with the product has been measured by the scale of Brucks (1985). This scale comprises an item concerning the direct measurement of familiarity, the second item is relative to the complete importance of the possessed knowledge of the product and the third item measures the volume of knowledge with regard to the surrounding. The acceptance of the extension has been measured by the scale suggested by Gurviez and Korchia (2003) which arises two questions. The first one measures the consumer’s expectations towards the quality of the suggested extension, and the second measures purchasing intention of the suggested extension.

Commitment has been measured through the scale of Gurviez and Korchia (2002) which composed of three items. These ones measure in particular the relationship of the consumer with the brand, the intention of making sacrifices, the intention of defending the brand as well as the intention of carrying on with the relationship with the brand for an expanded period of time. Concerning the acceptance of the extension, it will be measured through the scale of Gurviez and Korchia (2003). This scale is aimed at measuring the intention to continue the relationship with the brand despite the incidents. The evaluation of the brand is generally measured inclusively (Dimitriadis, 1991; Michel, 2000). The considered scale is composed of two items: the first is stemmed from the study of Ladwein (1993) and the second is suggested by Filser (1994).

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Results

The test of the different relationships of the model is achieved in a structural modeling Amos 6 which allows us to specify the causal links between the various constructs. The stepwise method was applied. First, we began by ensuring the quality of adjustment of the measurement model. This test was performed using a principal components analysis and confirmatory factor analysis and completed by the calculation of reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha and Rho de Joreskog) and construct validity (convergent validity and discriminative validity). Then, we estimated the structural adjustment of the model and overall model that is to say studying the indicators of the overall model to ensure a good adjustment between the theoretical model and the empirical data. Finally, and in a last step we checked the hypothetical causal relationships between the latent variables in our model.

• Verification of the Reliability and the Validity of the Features of Constructs

In this section, we will start by ensuring the factorial structure of the scales adopted in this research and the reliability of the constructs retained. To do this, we conducted a series of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and a verification of reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha and Rho of Joreskog), the results of these analysis are summarized in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure scales</th>
<th>Factorial structure</th>
<th>Reliability of the scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notoriety</td>
<td>Two-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.888 Rho=0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with the product</td>
<td>Three-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.71 Rho=0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with the brand</td>
<td>Three-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.6 Rho=0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reputation of the brand</td>
<td>Four-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.865 Rho=0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence of the brand</td>
<td>Six-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.882 Rho=0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Five-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.882 Rho=0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congruence</td>
<td>Six-unidimensional items</td>
<td>α=0.912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study of the Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Measurement Scales

The analysis of the validity of the measurement scales will focus on the analysis of convergent validity and discriminant validity according to Fornell and Larcker approach (1981). According to these authors, a variable satisfies the criterion of convergent validity when the latent variable shares more than 50 percent of its variance with its measures. Moreover, with regard to discriminant validity, this variable should share more variance with its items than with other latent variables (Roussel and al. (2002)). Indeed, with regard to the first part of the model (see appendix 1), we note that convergent validity was achieved for almost all scales except for integrity that has a convergent validity very close to 0.5. In addition, discriminant validity is satisfactory and the constructs for the majority share more variance with their items than with other variables.

For the second part of the model, it can be argued that the convergent validity has been confirmed for most scales except for the scale of the integrity of the brand “with strong fit” that has a convergent validity very close to the standard. In addition, by examining the results of discriminant validity, we note that the correlations found are weak and this variable shows specifically this construct and not another one (Roussel and al, 2002).

Result of Structural Modeling

Our conceptual model has the particularity to be composed of three sub-models. After examining the quality of adjustment of the measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis, reliability and construct validity), we now estimate the adjustment of the structural model and the global model that is to say studying the indicators of the global model to ensure a good adjustment between the theoretical model and the
empirical data. To do this, we will check the quality of adjustment indexes (Roussel and al. (2002)). The following table includes the results of these estimations in the three studied sub-models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Adjustment of sub-models of the study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand (Part1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand (Part1:strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand (Part2:weak fit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By checking the results of this adjustment, it can be argued that the values of the indicators are satisfactory and demonstrate the good quality of the adjustment of each of these studied sub-models. Indeed, compared to the null model, the tested models have a good adjustment, this is shown through the verification of the values of CFI, NFI, NNFI which are greater than 0.9 and RMSEA that is less than 0.05. Furthermore these sub-models also meet the conditions of parsimony as the values of the normalized X2 (X2/dl) are quite low (less to 5) (Roussel and al., 2002). We will now adopt structural equation models to test various causal links between the exogenous variables and endogenous variables consisting our models. The results of our research hypotheses are presented in two parts, the first is the impact of the antecedents of trust on its three dimensions and the second part is to verify the impact of the dimensions of trust on the identified consequences.

- **Study of the Impact of the Antecedents of Trust on the Formation of Trust in the Brand**

  In this first part of the model, we will study the relationships between the antecedents of trust derived from the literature review and its impact on forming the trust and this on each dimension of the latter. In this section, we will test the relationships between these antecedents (independent variables) and the dimensions of trust (dependent variables) by using the regression analysis available on AMOS.

  ➢ **Satisfaction** has a positive and significant impact on all dimensions of trust. So if a consumer is satisfied with a brand, he will have trust in this brand and this impact is important for each dimension that is to say, the credibility, benevolence and integrity of the brand. Thus, we can say that this kind of results is important because if a brand wants to establish a long-term relationship of trust with its consumers, it needs to ensure customer satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis H1 is confirmed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: The influence of satisfaction on the trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: The influence of the experience with the brand on the trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The experience with the brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The experience with the brand has a positive impact on all dimensions of trust especially on the credibility and the integrity of the brand (see Table 5). So the hypothesis H2 is validate.

Congruence between the consumer and the brand that is to say, the perceived similarity between the two exchange partners has a significant impact on the formation of trust (see Table 6). Trying to detail this effect, we note that the congruence effect causes a variable effect according to the dimensions of the trust. Indeed, this antecedent has a significant impact on the brand credibility and integrity, however, this effect is limited for the benevolence. So, a brand that is perceived as similar to consumer will result in the emergence of a credible brand in its offer, but also fair. Thus, a brand that its interest identifies its consumers because this feeling causes the emergence of trustful consumers, this objective can be achieved through a policy of adequate communication. Thus, the hypothesis H3 is enabled.

Table 6: Influence of the congruence on the trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Simple regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>y²</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congruence towards the brand</td>
<td>Credibility 0.900</td>
<td>9.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity 0.753</td>
<td>2.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benevolence 0.382</td>
<td>4.592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Familiarity with the product defined as the subjective knowledge of the consumer to a product has a positive and significant impact on the formation of brand trust in the brand (see table 7). Detailing our results, we note that familiarity plays an important role in the formation of trust in the brand and focus on the affective component. This can be explained by the argument of Chueh and Kao (2004) who suggest that familiarity to a product leads to the formation of a certain knowledge which avoids the necessity of having to judge the quality of this product. So this antecedent leads to the belief that the brand is benevolent and fair and it tries to achieve the objectives and the well being of its customers. Thus, the hypothesis H4 is confirmed.

Table 7: The influence of familiarity with the product on the brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Simple regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>y²</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with the product</td>
<td>Credibility 0.125</td>
<td>2.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity 0.489</td>
<td>4.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benevolence 0.540</td>
<td>6.794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reputation of the brand leads to a significant impact on the formation of trust and this on its three dimensions (see Table 8). So if a brand reaches building a good reputation in the market, consumers will tend to have trust in it. This result is consistent with the literature as a good reputation is synonymous with good quality supply of the brand. Thus, if a brand seeks to improve the trust of its target to its offer, it must strive to develop its reputation, this will be done through good communication primarily based on advertising and public relations (Lau and Lee, 1999). Thus, the hypothesis H5 is confirmed.
Table 8: The influence of the reputation of the brand on the trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Simple regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>0.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reputation of the brand</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The competence** of the brand defined as the ability of a brand to solve problems and meet consumer’s needs has a significant impact on all aspects of trust. According to the results, we can see that the effect of competence is more important to forming credibility and integrity than on the benevolence of the brand (see table 9). Thus, this result is consistent with the literature in which we had found that a competent brand, that is to say, that happens to solve problems and meet consumer's needs, influences forming the trust towards this brand. According to this research, we could highlight that the effect of the competence of the brand is more intense on forming the credibility and integrity than on the benevolence of the brand. Thus, the hypothesis H6 is confirmed.

Table 9: The influence of competence on the brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Simple regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence of the brand</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>0.450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The notoriety** of the brand has a positive and significant impact on the forming of trust (see Table 10), however this effect is limited to the three dimensions of trust. Thus, the hypothesis H7 is confirmed.

Table 10: The influence of notoriety on the brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Simple regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The notoriety of the brand</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>0.245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The Consequences of Trust**

In the second part of the model, we attempted to study the impact of trust through its three dimensions on the main consequences. These relationships will be studied by incorporating the effect of a control variable which is the fit:

- **Commitment**: trust has a positive and significant impact on commitment whatever the proposed extension (see Table11). This result is consistent with previous research that has attracted the commitment as the main consequence of trust. However, through this research, we tried to check the effect of the three dimensions of trust, it was found that credibility and integrity have the greatest impact on the creation of the
commitment toward the brand. In addition, it was noted that even if a brand is launching a remote extension of the original category of the brand, consumer's trust will remain committed to this relationship. However, we note that only the effect of benevolence on the commitment was sensitive to the nature of the extension. Indeed, in the case of strong fit extension, we note that benevolence has a significant effect on commitment, moreover in the case of weak fit, this effect is not significant. This can be explained by the fact that the consumer feels that the brand has not met his interests as he expected especially when it launches a product that is not in accordance with consumers' expectations. This type of result indicates that consumer’s trust in the brand will remain committed to this relationship regardless of the level of fit of the proposed extension. Thus, we can conclude that the sub- hypotheses H8-1 and H8-2 are confirmed, however, the sub- hypothesis H8-3 is partially confirmed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: The Influence of Trust on Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of credibility on commitment (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of credibility on commitment (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of integrity on commitment (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of integrity on commitment (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of benevolence on commitment (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of benevolence on commitment (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The acceptance of the extension:** generally trust has a positive and significant effect on the acceptance of the extension (see Table 12). Detailing this, we notice that:
  - Credibility has a significant impact on the acceptance of the extension whatever the proposed extension. So if a consumer finds that his brand is credible, he will accept the product in extension.
  - Integrity also provides a positive impact on the acceptance of the extension whatever the product launched. So, if the consumer is certain that his brand is honest, he will tend to accept this extension.
  - Concerning the effect of benevolence, we note that it is sensitive to the proposed extension. So, if a consumer finds that his brand is not entirely benevolent, it will be more difficult to accept the extension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12: The influence of trust on the acceptance of the extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of credibility on the acceptance of the extension (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of credibility on the acceptance of the extension (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of integrity on the acceptance of the extension (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of integrity on the acceptance of the extension (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of benevolence on the acceptance of the extension (strong fit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The influence of benevolence on the acceptance of the extension (weak fit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence from these results, one can argue the importance of the role played by trust in the acceptance of the extension and this mainly through the first two dimensions. In addition, from this research, we can highlight the importance of the relational dimension of the brand in the case of brand extensions, something that has not been considered in previous research. So we can say that the sub-hypotheses H9-1 and H9-2 are confirmed by our research, however, the sub-hypothesis H9-3 is partially confirmed.

- **Acceptance of incident:** commitment to the brand leads to a positive and significant impact on the acceptance of an incident committed by the brand whatever the proposed extension (see table 13). This result
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highlights the importance of a relational approach to the brand and more specifically in the case of a brand extension strategy. Indeed, a consumer engaged with the brand will tend to forgive an occasional deficiency of the brand without altering his level of commitment to it. Therefore, brands need to focus on this type of result in trying to build a long term relationship with its customers in order to benefit from their involvement in the relationship and this whatever the difficulties encountered by the brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Influence of commitment on the acceptance of incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Influence of commitment on the acceptance of incidents (strong fit)</td>
<td>0.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Influence of commitment on the acceptance of incidents (weak fit)</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, it can be argued that the commitment has a very important influence on the acceptance of a deficiency in the product quality, independently of the level of fit between the extension and the original product of the brand. Thus, the hypothesis H10 is confirmed.

5. Theoretical and Management Implications

In this research, we tried to integrate the concept of trust in solving the issue of brand extension. This concept has been chosen as defined by Gurviez and Korchia (2002) who retain the trust as a three-dimensional concept composed by the credibility, integrity and benevolence. To enhance the contributions of this study, we identified a set of factors forming the background of the trust in order to understand their impacts on each dimension. These antecedents were classified into three categories:

- **The characteristics of the consumer in relation with the brand**: in this category, we chose the following characteristics: satisfaction with the brand, the congruence between the consumer and the brand and experience with the brand.

- **The characteristics of the consumer in relation with the product**: in this category, we studied the role of familiarity with the product as the main antecedent.

- **The characteristics of the brand**: the characteristics that were included in this category are: the reputation of the brand, the competence of the brand and its notoriety as antecedents of the trust. We also tried to study the impact of trust, and more specifically each dimension on a set of consequences significantly to the issue of brand extension. The consequences used are the following: the acceptance of extension, the formation of commitment and acceptance of incident. Our investigation was conducted with a sample of 400 consumers. We also sought to integrate the fit as a control variable, that is to say, by distinguishing an extension of strong fit and extension of weak fit for each brand. The investigation carried out has led to the following results:

   Regarding the antecedents of trust, it has been clear that:

   - Satisfaction, congruence, reputation, competence, experience with a brand and familiarity to the product have a positive and significant impact on the formation of trust and more specifically on its three dimensions that is to say, the credibility, integrity and benevolence. However, it was noted that the effect of the notoriety was relatively low. Thus, we can assume that for a brand to succeed in having a certain level of trust, it has interest to develop these antecedents by adopting appropriate communication techniques to achieve them.

   Moreover, regarding the consequences of the trust, it can be argued that:

   - Trust has a positive and significant impact from all its dimensions on the formation of commitment and this is regardless of the proposed extension.
 Trust also has a positive impact on the acceptance of the extension. However, it was observed that only the impact of the benevolence varies according to the "fit" between the original brand and the extension.

 Commitment has a positive effect on the acceptance of an incident committed by the brand and this regardless of the "fit" linking the brand to extension product. This type of result highlights the interest of building a long term relationship with the brand for the continuity of the relationship, whatever the conditions. In addition, it can show the indirect impact of trust on the acceptance of an incident through the commitment and the importance of integrating relational dimensions in the particular case of brand extensions.

Thus, these results show the impact of trust on the consequences for the particular case of the problem of brand extensions. These results have highlighted the way in which the trust acts especially the action of its dimensions for this case of brand extension.

This research has several contributions. On a theoretical level, this study is added to the limited number of works that have studied the relationship between brands and consumers in the field of mass consumption. It is also, to our knowledge, among the few which introduced relationship marketing and more specifically the concept of trust in the issue of brand extension. Our study has demonstrated the importance and significance of the role of trust and more specifically each of its dimensions in the evaluation of brand extension and this regardless of the nature of the proposed extension. This type of result highlights the importance of establishing a relational approach based on trust before embarking on a strategy of brand extension and what is the dimension that has the greatest impact in the acceptance of an extension. In addition, this research was used to study the influence of the antecedents of trust on its formation and more specifically on each dimension that can detect the antecedents that have the most impact on the rational dimension and those that influence affective dimensions. On the managerial level, this research shows the importance of the practitioners borrowing a relational approach based on trust in the brand extension strategy. Indeed, this type of result could convince practitioners to adopt a relational approach and thinking to develop and build a relationship based on trust with consumers.

Our research has some limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Indeed, our survey was conducted by a sample of students selected by convenience sampling method. Thus, our results concern only the sample of our study and cannot be generalized in any way to the entire population.

Moreover, our research suggests new lines of research:

 Our survey was conducted in the case of brands operating in the mass consumption. So it would be interesting to study the behavior of consumers for sustainable purchasing.

 Our research could be conducted by a broader sample and for other age groups and other cultural levels, this would allow us to observe the difference in reactions between these different categories.

 Our model could be enriched by seeking for example other classifications of antecedents of trust in the brand or introducing moderating variable.

References
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Appendix: Study of the Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Measurement Scales

### Table 14: Convergent and discriminant validity of the brand (M1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Convergent Validity</th>
<th>Credibil</th>
<th>Integrit</th>
<th>Benevol</th>
<th>Notorie</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Congrue</th>
<th>Satisf</th>
<th>Compet</th>
<th>Reputa</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>0.586</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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### Table 15: Convergent and discriminant validity of the brand (Part 1: strong fit)

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<th>Benevol</th>
<th>Commit</th>
<th>Acceptation extension</th>
<th>Acceptation incident</th>
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### Table 16: Convergent and discriminant validity of the brand (Part 2: weak fit)

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