



Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

**Dottorato di ricerca
in Economia Aziendale
Scuola di dottorato Scuola Superiore di Economia
Ciclo XXII
(A.A. 2010 - 2011)**

The Economy of Passion

**SETTORE SCIENTIFICO DISCIPLINARE DI AFFERENZA: SECS/P08
Tesi di dottorato di Umberto Rosin, matricola 955269**

**Direttore della Scuola di dottorato
Prof.ssa Agar Brugiavin**

**Tutore del dottorando
Prof. Francesco Casarin**

THE ECONOMY OF PASSION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	5
HIGH PASSION INTENSITY INDUSTRIES: TOWARD THE ECONOMY OF PASSION	7
ABSTRACT	7
INTRODUCTION	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
<i>Passion for Activities and the Dualistic Model of Passion.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Emotional contagion</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Emotional Labor and Authenticity in Service Encounter</i>	<i>17</i>
METHODS.....	20
<i>Subjects and Design</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Data Collection</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Scales of Measurement Used in the Questionnaire</i>	<i>23</i>
RESULTS	26
DISCUSSION	69
<i>Summary.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Passion, Positive Emotions and Salesperson's Performance: What the Literature Says</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Emotional Contagion, Authenticity and Sales Performance: What the Literature Says</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Further Research Directions</i>	<i>74</i>
CONCLUSION.....	78
TRIBES OF PROFESSIONALS: TOWARD A NEW TRIBAL MARKETING APPROACH	80
ABSTRACT	80
INTRODUCTION	81
LITERATURE REVIEW	84
<i>Subcultures of Consumption, Brand Communities and Consumer Tribes.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Passion and Passion Contagion</i>	<i>92</i>
METHODS.....	94
<i>Conceptual framework</i>	<i>94</i>
<i>The Empirical Context.....</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Data Collected.....</i>	<i>97</i>
FINDINGS	102
<i>The shared passion.....</i>	<i>102</i>
<i>The Network</i>	<i>107</i>

<i>Evidence of Tribal Elements</i>	116
<i>The Transfer of Passion as a Characteristic Phenomenon of the Tribes of Professionals</i>	120
DISCUSSION	124
<i>Summary</i>	124
<i>The Systemic perspective</i>	124
<i>The Roles of Neo-tribal Professionals</i>	127
CONCLUSION.....	130
PASSION MANAGEMENT: EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES IN NETWORKS OF PASSIONATE PROFESSIONALS. THE CASE OF THE ITALIAN BOARD GAME INDUSTRY	131
ABSTRACT	131
INTRODUCTION	132
LITERATURE REVIEW	135
<i>Characteristics and Related Positive Implications in the Italian Board Game Industry</i>	135
<i>Experiential Marketing Approach</i>	137
FINDINGS	140
DISCUSSION	145
CONCLUSION.....	151
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153
APPENDIX 1. SCALES AND SUBSCALES OF MEASUREMENT	165

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Martine Des Roches, Maria Rees, Marcella Menegale, and Helen Lewis for their linguistic help and expertise in translating, back-translating, editing and proof reading scales of measurement, verbatim, and text of the present research.

HIGH PASSION INTENSITY INDUSTRIES: TOWARD THE ECONOMY OF PASSION

ABSTRACT

The study addresses the lack of research on passion for leisure activities, which leads people to start up a job in the leisure-related field, by exploring the phenomenon through a case study. Being the first study to apply the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) in Italy, and to translate the relative scale of passion, it tackles the current managerial literature inadequacy to deal with passion for activities by bridging psychological and organizational theories. It builds on theory by proposing a new industry model, named “high passion intensity industries” (HPI industries). The construct for this new type of industry is provided by answering research questions on how such industries differ from others, and how these differences might impact organizations and markets. HPI industries are formed by individuals who decided to work within an industry because of their passion for a connected activity (e.g., playing), and not for the profit. The empirical context analyzed through a multi methodological approach triangulating quali-quantitative methods and data, reveals how authenticity, harmonious passion, salespersons’ prevalence of passion over profit objectives characterize the industry. HPI industries have to be considered as an evidence of the recent sociological and economic trend reflecting the emergence of freedom in making life choices with the aim of achieving self-expression and well-being in most developed countries (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 1997; O’Tool and Lawler, 2006; Frey, 1997). In this evolutionary framework, this new type of industries is destined to play a more and more relevant role in the economy.

INTRODUCTION

The present research is an exploratory case study (Yin 1994) conducted to understand how passion for activities characterizes certain types of industries and how such passion might affect the service encounter within these industries. With this purpose, the study contributes to fill the gaps in the current managerial literature on passion, coming up with the conceptualization of an industry model that will be here defined as “high passion intensity industry”.

Many different streams of research related to a not conveniently defined concept of passion for activities have been developed in marketing and management over the last years (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, and Drnovsek, 2009). Subculture of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander, 1996), brand communities (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001), and neo-tribes (Cova and Cova, 2002) represent good examples of pieces of literature that help us understand patterns of consumption driven by passion for activities. Passion for activities is crucial in many life domain aspects. Most of them are related to leisure activities (Stenseng, 2008; Lafrenière, Vallerand, Donahue, Lavigne, 2009; Rousseau, Vallerand, Ratelle, Mageau, Provencher, 2002), and work activities (Cardon, et al., 2009; Cardon, 2008; Forest, Mageau, Sarrazin, and Morin, 2011).

Literature presents an important lack for what concerns studies on the phenomenon of passion for leisure activities inducing individuals to start up, embrace or choose a specific leisure-related job. In other words, little attention has been paid to the passion that drives people to choose their job with the purpose of staying in touch, or keeping the underlying activity of such a job, i.e. their hobby, alive. The present work addresses this issue by studying passion for leisure activities among professionals working in a field related to their passion. The Italian board game industry has been found a useful context to investigate in order to tackle the previous mentioned issue and shed light on the relevant and overlooked phenomenon of passion.

The notion of passion in the managerial literature does not appear as a solid and shared conceptualization, capable of capturing the implications of its nature and deal with the peculiarities of certain types of industries in which it represents the dominating

variable. Thus, the present research, drawing from the psychological literature, adopts the notion of passion underpinning the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratelle, Léonard, Gagné, and Marsolais, 2003) which defines it as “*a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one likes (or even loves), finds important (or highly values), and in which one invests time and energy* (Vallerand et al., 2003). The definition is here deemed to be the most suitable one to achieve a deep understanding of the role of passion in an industry. Differentiating between harmonious and obsessive passion, the dualistic model of passion captures the twofold nature of passion, allowing researchers to discriminate and assess its consequences. Basically, harmonious passion derives from an autonomous process of the activity internalization into one’s self, and allows individuals to live in harmony with their other life activities. On the other hand, obsessive passion comes from a controlled process of the passionate activity internalization into one’s self, and leads individuals to a permanent status of conflict with their other life activities. A more detailed description of the determinants and consequences of harmonious and obsessive passion will follow in the next section.

Passion affecting life choices, with particular reference to work and career choices, is an up-to-date phenomenon that was not as important in the past. The satisfaction of basic needs have traditionally driven job choices all over the world. The present study points out how the satisfaction of individuals’ passion for an activity, and the following achievement of happiness and well-being can characterize an entire industry, on the side of both demand and offer. The reason why passion as a determinant of such choices is having an increasing importance can be better understood under the light of recent studies (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 1997). Their research points out a macro-level trend explaining how more and more people from the most economically developed countries decide to take advantage of a freedom they did not use to have in the past. Self-expression values and postmaterialistic liberty aspirations guide their choices. In particular, the countries exhibiting a high level of GNP per capita show low attachment to traditional values and strong tendencies toward self-expression values, freeing individuals from the

constraints they were traditionally subject to. Northern European countries are leading this value change process, immediately followed by the other developed countries. Other studies highlight a dramatic change in the workplace over the last three decades in the U.S. Workers began to find meaningful job positions allowing them power of discretion and the use of their abilities (O'Tool and Lawler, 2006). The present research acknowledges this value change about work, observing how the phenomenon of passion – here considered both as a main determinant of work choice and a symptom of this global evolutionary trend – will become of greater importance over the coming years. The “Economy of Passion”, thus, further enquires and digs into this phenomenon, proposing an industry model that takes this trend into account and allows a deeper look through specific and focused lenses.

One of the effects of this greater freedom of choice results in an enhanced expression of volitional behavior. Such behavior can be extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. If volitional behavior is lived as an obligation to work, then two consequences will take place: depletion and subsequent difficulties in keeping self-control. On the other hand, if volitional behavior is construed as an opportunity to have fun, then adopting the behavior leads to opposite outcomes: vitalization and easy self-control (Laran, and Janiszewski, 2011). Choosing a job and performing it for the sake of one's passion corresponds to determining an intrinsically motivated volitional behavior leading to the abovementioned positive outcomes.

In sum, the present research contribution mainly resides in proposing a new industry model: the high passion intensity industries. By answering the following questions: “How does this type of industries differ from others?” and “What characterizes them?”, it builds on what theory currently proposes, addresses issues covered by the literature and fills the previously discussed gaps. The findings that will be elaborated in this article will be further developed and analyzed in subsequent articles (Rosin, 2011b; Rosin, 2011c). The Italian board game industry has been chosen as an empirical context given that it was found suitable for answering these questions.

A review of the literature on passion will follow, introducing emotional contagion in service encounter and authenticity as fundamental constructs here utilized

to define the high passion intensity industry model. A description of the multi methods technique employed to triangulate the data collection and data analysis processes will follow. Results will be first presented, then discussed in a dedicated section. Conclusion will wrap up the findings and summarize the theoretic model of high passion intensity industries as industries formed by passionate salespersons displaying naturally felt emotions during the service encounter, and for whom passion matters more than profit. Other related aspects will be also discussed more in detail along with propositions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Passion for Activities and the Dualistic Model of Passion

The Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP) elaborated by Vallerand and his colleagues (2003) has been adopted here as a key framework to understand the phenomenon of passion toward activities, and its role in identifying what will be soon described as high passion intensity industries. As previously discussed, the DMP defines passion toward activities as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one likes (or even loves), finds important (or highly values), and in which one invests time and energy (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2003). Hence, the concept of passion is composed of three fundamental components: the emotional component (the individual likes or loves the activity), the cognitive component (the individual finds it important or highly values it), and the behavioral component (the individual invests time and energy in it). It might be worthwhile to stress how the passionate activity gets integrated into the one's self. The individual will thus define her or himself in relation to the passionate activity. In other words, people who play basketball as their passionate activity will define themselves as basketball players, as well as passionate board game people will define themselves as gamers.

According to the model, there exist two types of passion toward activities: harmonious passion and obsessive passion. Both types of passion are integrated in the individual's self but, harmonious passion derives from an autonomous internalization process of the activity in the person's identity, while obsessive passion depends on a controlled one. In the case of harmonious passion, the individual freely chooses to embrace the activity, as being important for her or himself (autonomous internalization) with no contingencies attached to it (Vallerand, 2010). As a result, the activity will be in harmony with the individual's other life activities. On the other hand, when obsessive passion toward an activity occurs, it is an internal pressure caused by an external or internal factor that pushes the individual to internalize the activity (controlled internalization), which will result in a conflict with the other activities

performed by the individual in her or his life. Obsessive passion causes an uncontrollable urge to engage in the activity.

The autonomous internalization characterizing harmonious passion derives from the intrinsic and integrative tendencies of the self (Deci, and Ryan, 2000; Ryan, and Deci, 2003), while obsessive passion derives from an internally controlling process. In this respect, the DMP can be better understood by considering the self-determination theory (Deci, and Ryan, 1985; Deci, and Ryan, 2000; Ryan, and Deci, 2003).

The development of passion for an activity begins with an activity selection process through which an individual chooses a certain activity among available ones. It initiates once the individual realizes that the activity is consistent with her or his free choices, interests, and identity. It then goes through the process of activity valuation, that is the importance an individual attaches to the activity itself. This is strongly related to the third process that takes place during the initial development of passion, that is to say the internalization of the activity in the individual's identity. The intensity of passion one exhibits will depend on the importance or the value assigned to the activity (Mageau et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2006). In general, individuals with an autonomous personality internalize the activity willingly, and without any external or internal pressure. This process of autonomous internalization into the self leads to harmonious passion. On the other hand, a controlled personality tends to internalize an important and valued activity in a controlled fashion. This process of controlled internalization into the self leads to obsessive passion (Mageau et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2006).

Since the present case study is conducted by investigating passion for gaming among professionals in the Italian board game industry, it might be of particular interest to understand the relationship between passion and addictive behaviors. In regard to harmonious passion, individuals are in control of their passionate activity, that is to say they can even decide to quit the activity if ever it starts affecting them negatively in a permanent way. This does not apply when it comes to obsessive passion because it is the activity that controls the individual and leads to rigid persistence (i.e. the individual keeps on doing the activity although it has negative effects, or is even

harmful), eventually conducting to addiction. Thus, obsessive passion may contribute to addictive behavior in excessive online gaming, pathological gambling and online shopping dependency, whereas harmonious passion does not (Philippe, and Vallerand, 2007; Mageau et al., 2005; Rousseau et al., 2002; Ratelle et al., 2004).

As it will be seen during the presentation of the findings, it turned out that some of the interviewed participants are motivated by a sort of cause-related goal. Such missionary motivation seems to prompt professionals, for instance, to keep youth off the streets or far from online gaming and console playing, to integrate disabled individuals into society through acceptance and gaming. In general, harmonious passion guides individuals toward pursuing their cause through the most desirable forms of behavior that might end up to best serve the cause. The role played by obsessive passion in pursuing a cause is twofold. From the one hand, it may lead to adopting effective and acceptable behaviors while from the other hand, it might jeopardize the cause through the adoption of unacceptable extreme behaviors (Gousse-Lessard et al., submitted; Rip, and Vallerand, 2007).

Harmonious passion leads to experiencing higher levels of concentration and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Obsessive passion leads to rumination and poor decision making. In other words, harmonious and obsessive passion allows respectively to experience the most adaptive types of cognitive process and the least adaptive ones (Philippe et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2008).

Harmonious passion is positively associated with the experience of positive emotions during activity engagement, positive emotions and the absence of negative affect following task engagement, and the absence of negative emotions when prevented from engaging in the passionate activity. On the contrary, obsessive passion is associated with negative emotions during activity engagement, and is unrelated to positive emotions during and after performing the passionate activity. Obsessively passionate individuals will experience negative affect and emotional suffering (i.e. a drop-in positive affect) when prevented from engaging in the activity (Mageau, 2008; Grenier, in preparation).

Harmonious passion may positively contribute to psychological adjustment through its impact on situational positive affect. Obsessive passion, leading to rigid persistence in ill-advised activities (e.g. gambling), tends to detract from psychological adjustment or, at least, not to contribute to it (Philippe et al., 2009; Rousseau, and Vallerand, 2008). Ryan and Deci (2001) distinguished among life hedonic well-being, better known as life satisfaction (the subjective feeling of happiness, seeking of pleasure, and avoidance of displeasure), and eudaimonic well-being, namely self-realization (a complete human life through seeking the realization of one's true potential). Harmonious passion turns out to be positively associated with both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, while obsessive passion shows to be negatively associated with eudaimonic well-being. Moreover, its relationship with hedonic well-being does not seem clear (Philippe et al., 2009; Rousseau, and Vallerand, 2008).

Harmonious passion is negatively associated with rigid persistence and engagement in risky behavior. On the contrary, obsessive passion is positively associated with rigid persistence and engagement in risky behavior, with a negative impact on individuals' physical health as opposed to harmonious passion (Lafrenière et al., 2009; Rip et al., 2006).

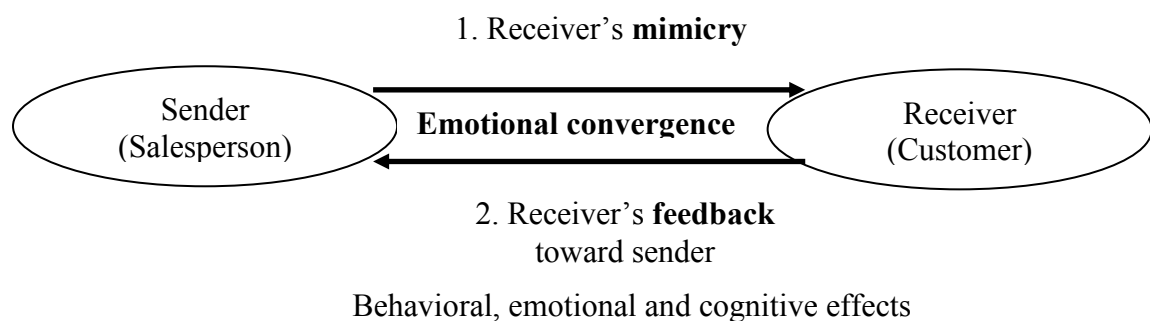
Harmonious passion, promoting an exclusive focus on trying to master the passionate activity, leads individuals to engage in activities – such as training activities – with the specific purpose to improve their skills. Skill improvement, in turns, leads to high performance levels. On the other hand, obsessive passion leads to choosing both adaptive (mastery goals) and maladaptive (performance avoidance) achievement goals. This process is more complex and, then, less than optimal with respect to one engendered by harmonious passion. Still, it can be concluded that both harmonious and obsessive passion lead to performance achievement (Bonneville-Roussy, in press; Vallerand et al., 2008; Vallerand et al., 2007).

Emotional contagion

Emotions play a fundamental role in the theoretic framework that will be presented in the next sections. Emotions, more generally, *are part of life* (Richins, 1999). They are felt both during crucial moments of one's life and during routine or workday events. In particular, emotions *can motivate and persuade consumers* (Andrade and Cohen, 2007). Most important, for the sake of the present research, emotions affect and guide attitudes and behaviors (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999; Cohen and Areni, 1991), and represent the affective part of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). This explains why people generally tend to prefer objects, people and brands that are emotionally connected to them (Lau-Gesk and Meyers-Levy, 2009).

One of the most important phenomenon here analyzed is represented by the emotional contagion. Primitive emotional contagion happens at an unconscious level and is defined as *"the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally"* (Fischer et al., 1992, p.153-154). Supposing the source of the emotion is located in the salesperson (sender) and the customer (receiver) carries out the process of mimicry, then the sender will be exposed to the customer's emotional reaction (feedback). Thus, this feedback will affect the sender, causing in the body a psychological loop producing specific emotions (Tassinari et al., 1989) and cognitive reactions (Damasio, 1994). So, basically, through the processes of mimicry and feedback, individuals *"tend, from moment to moment, to "catch" others' emotions"* (Hatfield et al., 1993, p. 98).

The Emotional Contagion Process (Hatfield et al., 1993)



There are two important aspects to consider during the emotional contagion process: first, the ability to infect others with personal emotions and, second, the customers' sensitivity toward the salespersons affecting the process of emotional contagion during the service relationship. The capability to infect others represents an important asset for the firm given that it leads to higher performance. Being emotionally sensitive, on the other hand, presents pros and cons as it leads to higher performance but, at the same time, stands a higher risk of burnout (Verbeke, 1997). In general, salesperson display of positive emotions during service encounter induces positive affects within the customers (Pugh, 2001).

Emotional contagion can also take place at a conscious level through an aware process of social comparison between people (Barsade, 2002). This type of emotional contagion depends less on the extent to which the sender displays emotions during the service encounter (e.g., smiles), and more on the authenticity exhibited during the interaction (e.g., genuineness of the smiles) (Hennig-Turau et al., 2006). On the other side of the coin, fake or artificial smiles will not be perceived as adequate in order to reduce detected ambiguity, in that it disturbs hampers and eventually prevents conscious emotional contagion from happening (Hennig-Turau et al., 2006).

Cardon (2008) maintains that passion can be transferred from entrepreneurs to employees and posits it happens through a mimicry process and a goal alignment of these latter with the firsts. More generally, Vallerand (2010) goes further proposing that dynamicity, energy and enthusiasm in individuals occupying supervisory positions (such as coaches, managers, teachers, etc.) increase the likelihood of transferring passion to others, with respect to boring individuals.

Emotional Labor and Authenticity in Service Encounter

Emotional labor has been firstly defined as the *management of feeling to create a publicly facial and bodily display* (Hochschild, 1983). It starts from the idea that employees have to show a more or less explicit organizationally desired behavior in order to assure a certain service encounter quality level. This behavior is “coded” into display rules, and regards the emotions employees are expected to express on the job.

There are three necessary conditions allowing a job to involve emotional labor: 1) face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with customers, 2) employees are required to create an emotional state in the customers, 3) the job has to allow employees to exert a certain control over their emotional activities (Hochschild, 1983).

Emotional labor can be expressed through surface acting or through deep acting. Surface acting entails the display of fake emotions employees do not actually feel. In this manner, employees will present fake emotions just on their surface, without feeling them for real (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2003). Through deep acting, employees try to actually feel the emotions required by their job, by modifying their inner feelings (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2003). These two types of acting lie on the opposite ends of an acting continuum (Zapf, 2002) that moves toward the idea of authenticity.

The emotional labor scale (Brotheridge and Lee, 1998; Brotheridge and Lee, 2003) can measure surface acting and deep acting through two dedicated subscales composed of three items each. Nevertheless, these two types of acting do not provide the entire picture reflecting the wide range of displayable emotions during the service encounter. Despite the fact that deep acting seems somewhat close to the concept of authenticity, it is not. The display of naturally felt emotions represents what can be considered authenticity in emotional display during the service encounter. Authenticity has several managerial implications, most of which related to sales performance and consumer behavior. The authenticity of an employee's emotional labor display, rather than the extent to which he or she smiles, affects the customers' emotions and perceptions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). In particular, authenticity from the service provider enhances perceptions of friendliness, and influences customer satisfaction when tasks are performed well (Grandey et al., 2005). Customer satisfaction is increased directly by the customers' post-encounter emotional state and change in positive affect, and indirectly by customer positive affect through customer-employee rapport (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006).

Sales volume and salespersons' ability to develop a rapport with customers and have relationship proficiency with them represent the main constituents of sales performance. These indicators depend on the salesperson's ability to be empathic with

customers, and control them (McBane, 1995; Olshavsky, 1983; Spiro and Weitz, 1990; Willet and Pennington, 1966). As such, these two well related abilities are perceived as assets for the firm (Verbeke, 1997). Related to salespersons' ability to be empathic, it has been observed that competence and capability to create mutual understanding with customers, and to respond to their special requests improve service encounter as well as relationship satisfaction with customers (Dolen et al., 2004). Moreover, from the same stream of research emerged that positive emotions exert significant influence on salesperson performance and relationship satisfaction, while negative emotions have no significant impact on the same outcomes (Dolen et al., 2004).

METHODS

Subjects and Design

The present exploratory case study analyzes a single industry in Italy, setting its unit on analyses at the industry level at first. Then, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the characteristics and specificities of such an industry, the unit of analysis has been narrowed down to the individual level, and 30 “mini-case studies” have been conducted with as many salespeople in the same industry. The Italian board game industry has been selected as the empirical context in that deemed appropriate to study the topic of passion for leisure activities leading individuals to choose their job accordingly, yet uncovered by the current managerial literature.

The study methodology is based on a thoughtful triangulation (Patton, 2002) of qualitative and quantitative methods and data, providing reliability to the conclusions drawn from the data analysis.

Data Collection

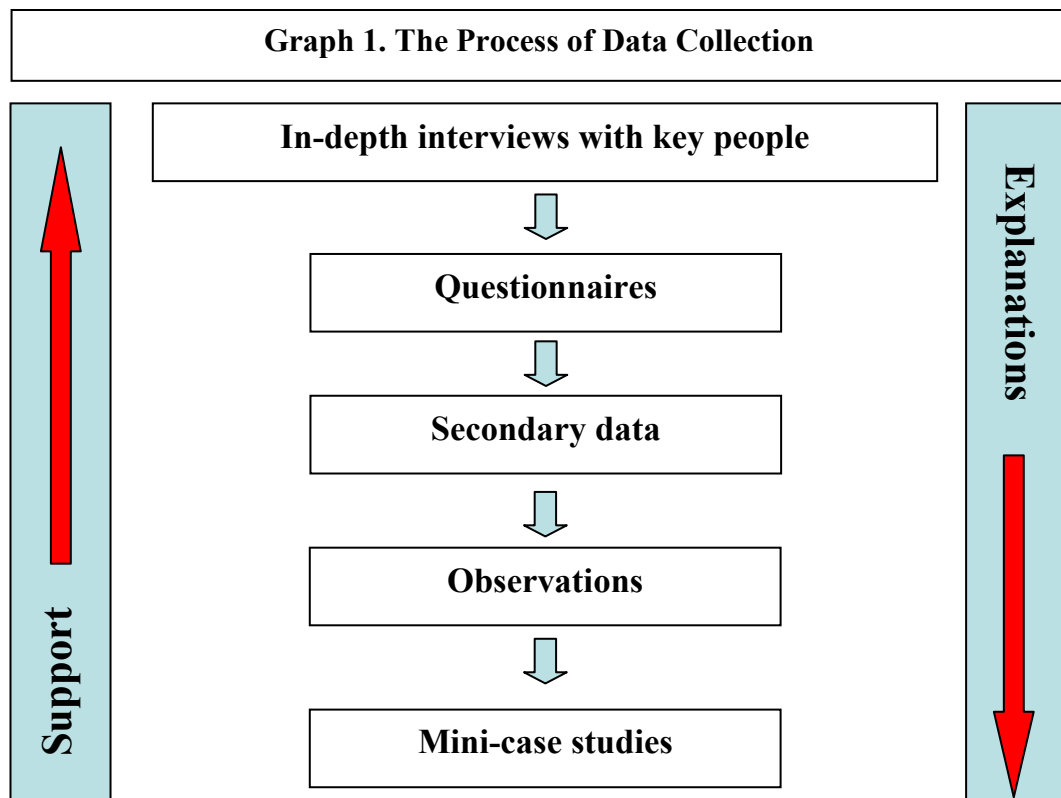
A preliminary round of 41 questionnaires were distributed to **pre-test** the survey. Interesting findings emerged from the preliminary analysis of such data, providing directions for the construction of the questionnaire final version.

Subsequently, the data collection process officially started during the second half of 2008 with **five in-depth interviews** with as many key informants occupying a crucial position in the Italian board game industry:

1. the organizer of the most important Italian board game fair;
2. the founder and owner of the first Italian specialized board game store – also owning today one of the most important distribution chain in the industry;
3. the first woman to found and own a specialized board game store in Italy (third specialized store to open) – today recognized as one of the most important in the industry;
4. the owner of an important board game publishing company;

5. the franchising chief responsible for the most important store chain in the Italian board game industry.

The entire process of data collection flows along a path composed of different data layers coming from various data sources. Each new layer of data gathered provides support to the data deriving from the previous one and, at the same time, contributes to explain, enrich and deepen evidences produced from other data sources.



All the interviews followed an interview guide reporting open-ended questions on broad topics. Nonetheless, respondents, according to their knowledge, preferences and orientation, were free to bring the discussion on deepenings and detail specifications.

Then the **questionnaire** was prepared and distributed to salespeople working in 160 Italian specialized board game stores. The population consists of approximately 160-170 specialized stores, and **101** questionnaires were collected in total as a sample. Besides some demographic items such as age, gender, place of residence, job tenure,

and job position, the questionnaire contains the dualistic model of passion scale (Vallerand et al., 2003) as well as the surface acting and the deep acting subscales (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003). Some items related to the passionate activity, such as board game meeting frequency or years of gaming experience, were grouped together with other items in order to control the definition of passion and other activity related aspects. Respondents were also asked to answer an open-ended question by writing on what motivated them to professionally join the Italian board game industry.

Five field **observations** on the workplace during service encounter (3), with a salesperson during a board game auction (1), and with salespersons during a game fair (1) were conducted. The observation focus was on elements identified during other phases of the data collection, although new elements emerged during the observation. In particular, service encounter and salespeople behaviour were observed during this process. Field notes reporting findings were taken to be compared and triangulated with the results coming from other data sources. This step took place in parallel with the questionnaire distribution. The researcher played the unobtrusive role of an observer-spectator with an insider or emic perspective (Morey and Luthans, 1984).

At the same time, the process went on through the collection of secondary data, formed by interviews available on the Internet with salespersons, publishers, event organizers, game designers, and other key actors from the board game industry, artifacts and other commercial material, Web page content published on the Internet.

Finally, **semi-structured phone interviews** were performed with a salesperson sub-sample, already surveyed through the questionnaire. Salespersons were interviewed during working hours in their store. 40 salespersons were randomly chosen among the 101 who filled the questionnaire. With a 75% response rate, 30 salespersons (following a general introduction from the researcher) were asked to answer three questions: 1) what motivated them to professionally enter the board game industry, 2) what recommendations would they give to young entrepreneurs willing to enter the Italian board game industry in remote regions of Italy, 3) how their twofold nature (i.e. gamer and salesperson) emerges during their relationship with the customer. The third question was asked because both the informative value obtained from the deep acting

and surface acting subscale scoring was unsatisfactory, and the respondents had some interpretive issues while answering the relative items. Although the Italian translation was correct and the lexical meaning of the questions was clear, respondents very often complained that they did not understand “Why on Earth would I have to *‘make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others’?*”. The same applied to various items in both subscales. It occurred to the researcher that many answers were given randomly by the respondents in order to skip the cognitive effort required to fully understand the deep meaning of the question and its implications. It is very likely that the reason depended on the fact that organizationally desired emotions or behaviors to show during service encounter weren’t clearly coded or sufficiently perceived by salespersons (Goffman, 1959). To avoid the recurrency of similar interpretive issues during semi-structured interviews, further explanatory “sub-questions” followed the third question just in the case the answer was found unclear or irrelevant.

After the third question was formulated, a further “sub-question” followed in the case the answer was unclear or not relevant. Thus, with the purpose of clarifying the meaning of the question itself, respondents were asked whether they try to actually feel the emotions they have to show their customers, and if they happen to hide their true feelings.

Semi-structured interviews with specific salespersons, combined with completed questionnaire and other secondary data (e.g. Web page content analysis, leaflet, brochure, etc.) when available, constituted some kind of “mini-case studies” conducted at an individual level.

Scales of Measurement Used in the Questionnaire

The dualistic model of passion scale (Vallerand et al., 2003) has been translated following a triangulated back-translation method. The English version of the passion scale has been translated into Italian by an Italian mother tongue scholar enrolled at the Department of American Studies – Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. The translated scale was then given to an English mother tongue scholar working at the Department of Management – Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, specialized in philology and

linguistics who back-translated it into English. The little differences that emerged were submitted to a professional bilingual proofreader and editor who produced a semi-final version. The same procedure was performed in parallel by the University of Florence, Department of Engineering, and their semi-final version was compared with the other one. The almost negligible differences were submitted again to the professional bilingual proofreader and editor, who definitively settled the Italian version of the dualistic model of passion scale. The scale is composed of 16 items. Six items form the obsessive passion subscale while another six form the harmonious passion subscale, and the remaining four items represent the definitory elements of the concept of passion (see Table 1). In general, respondents are asked to refer to an activity they like, that is important to them, and in which they spend a significant amount of time. Then, they are required to answer the 16 questions on a 7-point agreement Likert scale. For the sake of the research, respondents had to refer their passionate activity related to the gaming activity.

**Table 1. Dualistic Model of Passion Scale
(Vallerand et al., 2003)**

Obsessive Passion	Harmonious Passion	Passion Criteria
I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my activity.	This activity is in harmony with the other activities in my life.	I spend a lot of time doing this activity.
I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity.	The new things that I discover with this activity allow me to appreciate it even more.	I like this activity.
This activity is the only thing that really turns me on.	This activity reflects the qualities I like about myself.	This activity is important for me.
If I could, I would only do my activity.	This activity allows me to live a variety of experiences.	This activity is a passion for me.
This activity is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.	My activity is well integrated in my life.	
I have the impression that my activity controls me.	My activity is in harmony with other things that are part of me.	

The deep acting and surface acting subscales were extrapolated from the emotional labor scale (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003), and then translated through the back-translation method. Respondents were asked to think about themselves while they interact with customers during the service encounter, and to answer the six questions (three for each subscale) on the basis of a 5-point frequency Likert scale (see Table 2).

Table 2. Deep Acting and Surface Acting Subscales
Possible Answers: 1 – never (1) – rarely (2) – sometimes (3) – often (4) – always (5)

Deep Acting	Surface Acting
Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others	Hide my true feelings about a situation
Really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job	Resist expressing my true feelings
Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show	Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have

Data on the demand side of the industry have been gathered through **netnographic** techniques of research (Kozinets, 2002) on the most important Italian online board game communities. Netnography, that is an ethnographic study adapted to online communities, is capable of providing deep insights on consumer behavior and attitudes. Gaming community forums – with particular reference to the largest Italian board game community – were scanned in order to find **polls**, discussions, and threads concerning the consumers' point of view on the main topics discussed in the present work. This netnographic effort helped thus to further strengthen the reliability of the conclusions here formulated.

RESULTS

In-depth interviews with key informants provided the first consistent important information that can be summarized as follows (see Appendix 1 for detailed quotations from the interviews):

- 1) Key informants are passionate about gaming;
- 2) Key informants started up their activity for the sake of their passion for gaming and, in particular, the desire to transform their passion into a job;
- 3) The same reasons characterize salespersons and other professional actors in the board game industry: they are passionate about gaming and have decided to transform their passion into a job;
- 4) Salespersons naturally spread their passion for gaming to customers;
- 5) They don't earn a satisfactory profit from their job in comparison with the one they could make in other industries;
- 6) A lot of them go bankrupt: 50% of the stores in the market fail and are renewed by new stores every 6-7 years. Such data are clearly and dramatically above the average of other industries. Key informants provided this piece of information in 2008, before the economic crisis produced its effects.

The following details regarding the fifth statement of the above list come from the in-depth interview conducted with the franchisee responsible for the most important Italian board game store chain. Board game stores earn total sale revenues of 10,000 euros per month, on average. Considering a board game has around 45% mark-up, what remains is 4,500 euros. VAT 20% cuts earnings down to 3,600 euros before paying rent, bills, and taxes. Net income should then amount to approximately 1,500–1,000 euros per month. Attention must be paid to the fact that these data were gathered in the second half of 2008, when the effects of the economic crisis weren't so crushing yet. As it will appear in further sections, it seems that the average industry performance has been further slowed down over the last years. It has to be noted that other products such as card games and miniature games offer a different mark-up.

A first remarkable issue emerges from the data comparison: how come, in spite the contagion effect engendered by salespersons from the industry and indicated by the interviewed key informants, there is still such a high rate of business failure? If the contagion is real, then more people should have become passionate about board gaming. As a consequence of their passion, they should acquire more board games. Why, then, the sale increase theoretically connected to the spread of passion among customers does not have a positive effect on business success? At this point, there are two possibilities: 1) There is no passion contagion between salespersons and customers or, if there is, it is too feeble to produce any effect; 2) The passion contagion between salespersons and customers takes place, but there are no suitable managerial tools capable of exploiting this opportunity. Further inquiry was then necessary.

The questionnaire distributed to specialized board game stores all over Italy, covered the entire peninsula comprising its main islands (from Palermo to Aosta, from Bari to Bolzano, and from Sassari to Trieste). Most of the interviewees, though, are concentrated in the northern regions and in Rome, reflecting the geographical distribution of the Italian board game retail system.

The industry is formed by relatively young salespeople with an average age of 34 years old (S.D. 5.97), ranging from 21 to 48 years of age. Generally, they exhibit a good experience in gaming, given that none of them has been playing for less than two years, and 86.1% have played for more than 12 years. Many of them (40.6%) play one or two times per week while 31.7% play every day. Interviewed salespersons were pretty experienced: 70% of them have been working in the board game industry for more than 4 years, and a half of which (34.7%) for more than 10 years. 28.7% of the sample reported they have previously worked for another board game industry organization that failed.

The study analyzes the passion scale relative to the dualistic model of passion. An exploratory factor analysis assesses the 12 items representing obsessive passion and harmonious passion factors validated by Vallerand et al. (2003). The sample counts 101 respondents on a population of approximately 165 specialized stores. The KMO test for sample adequacy reported a 0.69 value, which is very close to the 0.70 threshold, but

still well below the 0.60 limit that imposes to discard the analysis. A few more completed questionnaires should easily help reach the 0.70 mark and over. The Bartlett's test of sphericity (289.72) turned out to be significant at .000 level. Even if not perfectly satisfactory, data allow us to proceed with the factor analysis.

The factor analysis initially produced 4 eigenvalues greater than 1.00. Parallel analysis (Keeling, 2000) indicates a two-factor solution as the best solution available (see Graph 1). Parallel analysis compares theoretic eigenvalues appraised using Keeling's formula based on random data with the actual eigenvalues obtained by the factor analysis, and indicates the number of factors to extract with an accuracy proved to be more reliable than the one offered by Kaiser's rule and the scree plot method (Keeling, 2000).

Running the factor analysis and using maximum likelihood as the extraction method, the two factors explain 33.79% of the total variance. This result is not completely satisfactory, but can be considered acceptable given that, for theoretical problems like the one tackled in the present study, the substantial contribution prevails on the capability of the model to explain the greater part of the variance (see Table 3).

Finally, the factor solution, rotated through the promax method, replicates the same factorial structure of the dualistic model of passion scale validated by Vallerand et al. (2003). The six items representing the obsessive passion factor are perfectly split from the harmonious passion factor items with no relevant cross loadings and loading factors higher than 0.30 (see the pattern matrix on Table 5).

Table 3. Eigenvalues and Total Variance Explained

Factor	Total Variance Explained						Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	2,831	23,590	23,590	2,263	18,855	18,855	2,262
2	2,412	20,098	43,688	1,792	14,933	33,789	1,795
3	1,355	11,290	54,978				
4	1,040	8,665	63,643				
5	,874	7,283	70,926				
6	,737	6,140	77,066				
7	,650	5,418	82,484				
8	,545	4,539	87,023				
9	,470	3,919	90,942				
10	,419	3,493	94,434				
11	,370	3,086	97,520				
12	,298	2,480	100,000				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

The first factor (obsessive passion) exhibits a good Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.76 (see Table 4) which is above the limit of 0.70. The most important item in the factor is represented by “*I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity*”, given that if it were deleted it would cause the reliability index to decrease to 0.65. The factor scores 2.29 on a 7-point scale, meaning that, on average, people tend to disagree with obsessive passion items (see Table 7).

Table 4. Cronbach’s Alpha for Obsessive Passion Factor

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,739	,756	6

Studies on professional operators in service company (Forest et al., 2011) and consumers in digital gaming (Wang, Khoo, Liu, and Divaharan, 2008) industries report, respectively, obsessive passion factor values equal to 2.77 and 3.80. These values are sensibly higher with respect to the obsessive passion factor in the analyzed empirical context. Given that the mean value is well below the 4.00 threshold divide, it is possible to conclude that the observed empirical context is not characterized by a relevant amount of obsessive passion.

Table 5. Matrix of Coefficients – Factor Analysis
Pattern Matrix^a

	Factor	
	1	2
I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity	,792	
I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my activity	,742	
I have the impression that my activity controls me	,681	
If I could, I would only do my activity	,527	
This activity is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it	,404	
This activity is the only thing that really turns me on	,398	
My activity is in harmony with other things that are part of me		,790
This activity is in harmony with the other activities in my life		,636
My activity is well integrated in my life.		,540
The new things that I discover with this activity allow me to appreciate it even more		,380
This activity allows me to live a variety of experiences		,357
This activity reflects the qualities I like about myself		,355

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

The second factor (harmonious passion) exhibits a Cronbach's alpha (reliability index) equal to 0.681 (see Table 6), that is a little bit lower than the 0.70 limit but, considering the present study is an exploratory research, it is still above the 0.60 limit of acceptability (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998). The most important item in the factor is represented by “*My activity is in harmony with other activities that are part of me*”, given that if it were deleted it would cause the reliability index to decrease to 0.562. The factor scores 5.45 on a 7-point scale, meaning that, on average, salespersons in the industry tend to agree with harmonious passion items (see Table 7). Studies on professionals working in service companies (Forest et al., 2011) and on consumers in the digital gaming industry (Wang et al., 2008) report respectively a harmonious passion score equal to 4.81, and 4.91. In both cases, scores show a lower proportion of harmonious passion on average with respect to the empirical context surveyed, meaning that the Italian board game industry can be considered an overall harmoniously passionate industry.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha for Harmonious Passion Factor

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,671	,681	6

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of the Obsessive and Harmonious Passion Factor

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean HP	101	3,00	7,00	5,4505	,83251
Mean OP	101	1,00	5,33	2,2871	,98011
Valid N (listwise)	101				

The final step in the passion scale analysis groups the four items representing the passion criteria, and computes the relative mean value. The four items refer to the definition of passion and measure whether the individual likes and finds the activity important, whether he or she invests time and energy in it, and whether the activity is considered a passion. The mean value results equal to 5.79 (see Table 8). This value significantly correlates with the item asking salespeople: *“How much did your passion motivate you to professionally enter the board game industry”*. Spearman’s correlation rho is equal to 0.352 and significant at 0.01 level (see table 10)

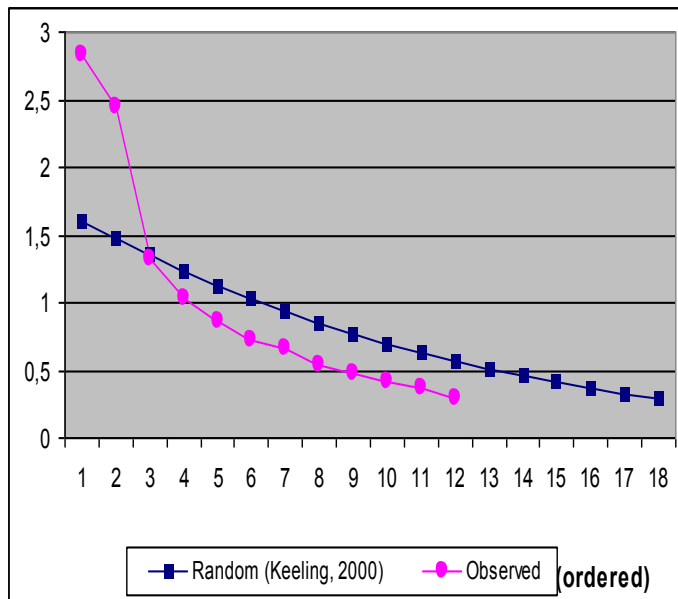
Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for the Four Passion Criteria

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Passion Criteria	101	2,75	7,00	5,7871	,80653
Valid N (listwise)	101				

This correlation supports the idea that passionate people made their decision to start up their business for the sake of their passion and also after the start up they are still passionate for the gaming activity.

Graph 2. Parallel Analysis Indicating 2 Factors as the Optimal Solution



Eigenvalues – Parallel Analysis (Keeling, 2000)	
Theoretic	Observed
1,796125997	2,805
1,686330523	2,396
1,581309146	1,348
1,481013595	1,051
1,38538183	,878
1,294339216	,743
1,207799685	,655
1,125666896	,550
1,047835377	,476
0,974191643	,422
0,904615287	,375
0,838980033	,301

In another questionnaire item, respondents are asked to freely describe what motivated them to professionally enter the Italian board game industry. In 86 cases out of 101 their motivation was explicitly mentioned as passion for gaming; in 7 other cases, the reason could be associated to passion, still being slightly different such as: “Fun”, “I enjoy playing board games”, etc. Job or economically related opportunities were reported in the last 8 cases. A possible explanation to the latter divergent answers emerged during the in-store observations and dialogues conducted with store owners. In particular, some store owners experiencing economic difficulties in terms of low revenues and expense coverage seemed to deny they started their job just for passion by stating it was the outcome of a meditated business plan. It appeared as if they were ashamed of their overall job/business performance. As if the passionate nature of their motivation was something to hide in order to avoid admitting some “Jiminy Cricket” who tried to discourage them to undertake such an enterprise or foresaw their business failure was right. Anyway, when asked to rate on a 7-point scale how much their passion for board gaming determined their decision to enter the board game industry,

they scored 4.75 on average that goes well beyond the middle value of 4. In particular, the lowest rates provided belongs to the least specialized stores interviewed, indicating a very likely and easy-to-guess positive correlation between store specialization (here meant as no diversification, high board game range width and depth) and passion as a motivation to enter the board game business.

The open-ended question asking about the respondents' motivation to enter the industry aimed at verifying if the meaning given by interviewed individuals to passion corresponds to the definition of passion provided by the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). The same idea applies to the 1-7 point closed question asking “*How much passion influenced your decision to professionally enter the board game industry*” (see Table 9).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Passion as motivation to start up (1-7)	6,20	1,183	101
Passion Criteria	5,7871	,80653	101

It aimed at controlling a possible correlation between the passion criteria measured through the dualistic model of passion scale and passion as a job motivation. Spearman's correlation rho (Gosset, 1921) proves it significant at the 0.01 level (see Table 10). On average, the interviewees reported a value of 6.20, with a modal value equal to the maximum (7).

Table 10. Correlations between Passion Criteria Mean Value and Job Motivation

			Passion as motivation to start up (1-7)	Passion Criteria
Spearman's rho	Passion as motivation to start up (1-7)	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,352**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	101	101
	Passion Criteria	Correlation Coefficient	,352**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	101	101

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to verify to what extent salespersons in the industry display their emotions with a certain degree of authenticity, the deep acting and surface acting subscales (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003) were integrated to the questionnaire.

A test of sample adequacy turned out to be satisfactory, showing a KMO test value of 0.710 and a significant value (215.605) for Bartlett's test of sphericity (see Table 11 bis).

Table 11. Tests of Sample Adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,710
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	215,605
	df	15
	Sig.	,000

The factor analysis run with the maximum likelihood extraction method shows only two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 (see Table 12). Kaiser's rule, scree plot and parallel analysis clearly converge, pointing out a 2-factor model as the best one. The total variance explained by the model is satisfactory, and amounts to 59.754% (see Table 12).

Table 12. Eigenvalues and Explained Variance of Deep and Surface Acting Subscales

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	2,704	45,058	45,058	2,321	38,690	38,690	2,192
2	1,608	26,801	71,859	1,264	21,064	59,754	1,640
3	,665	11,088	82,947				
4	,401	6,688	89,636				
5	,383	6,377	96,012				
6	,239	3,988	100,000				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

With a diagonal promax rotation, the coefficient matrix shows the two factors perfectly split with no relevant cross loadings and with high coefficients for each item, clearly defining the two factors as validated by Brotheridge and Lee (2003).

Table 13. Pattern Matrix Reporting Deep Acting and Surface Acting Factors

	Pattern Matrix ^a	
	1	2
Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show	,935	
Really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job	,791	
Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others	,743	
Hide my true feelings about a situation		,906
Resist expressing my true feelings		,628
Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have		,519

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Verifying the reliability of the 2-factor model, the Cronbach's alpha for both factors appears satisfactory. For deep acting factor, Cronbach's alpha is equal to 0.863, which is well above the 0.70 boundary of goodness (see Table 14) while for surface acting factor the Cronbach's alpha is equal to 0.720, still above the threshold of good reliability (see Table 15).

Table 14. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Index for Deep Acting Factor

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,863	,863	3

The most important item in the deep acting factor is represented by “*I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show*”, given that if it were deleted the reliability index would have the highest decrement (Cronbach's alpha would decrease to 0.752) with respect to the deletion of any other item.

Table 15. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Index for Surface Acting Factor

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,721	,720	3

The most important item in the surface acting factor is represented by “*I hide my true feelings about a situation*”, given that if it were deleted the reliability index would dramatically decrease to 0.498, having the highest decrement with respect to the deletion of any other item.

The modal value of all the items composing the deep acting factor is 1, i.e. the lowest value available which corresponds to “never” on the 5-point frequency Likert scale. The factor value is equal to 2.52. The modal value of all but one items composing the surface acting factor is still 1, and the factor value is equal to 2.02 (see Table 16). The only item which modal value is 2 (“rarely”) is “*I hide my true feelings about a situation*”.

Table 16. Deep Acting and Surface Acting Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Mean Deep Acting	100	4,00	1,00	5,00	251,67	2,5167	1,18764	1,410	,253	,241	-1,166	,478
Mean Surface Acting	100	3,00	1,00	4,00	202,33	2,0233	,78318	,613	,630	,241	-,339	,478
Valid N (listwise)	100											

From personal and informal conversation with salespersons, inquiring about the reason why they hide their true feelings about a situation with customers, emerged their desire to avoid that their own problems (i.e. personal or family problems, bad mood, etc.) might interfere with the customer relationship. More generally, many respondents reported some difficulty in understanding and interpreting correctly the questions in relation to the deep acting and surface acting subscales. In particular, they did not feel like having some specific emotions to display in front of their customers. It was clear to

them what they were not supposed to show (e.g. anger, contempt, and other negative emotions) rather than what they had to.

In general, the values reported for deep acting (2.52) and surface acting (2.02) are not so far from the ones obtained in other studies (Grandey, 2003). Considering the difficulties encountered by respondents in understanding and answering the questions, the scarce informative value of the two subscales has emerged. In other words, it appears clear to the researcher that they were inadequate to capture and explain the complexity of the empirical context at hand. The researcher had thus to face a methodological problem: a further inquiry was necessary to really understand the hidden emotional aspects engendered during the service encounter.

Table 17 - Correlations

		Years of gaming practice	How often do you play?	Years of working (scale 1-4)	Age	Gender	HP	OP	Passion Criteria	Deep Acting	Surface Acting
Years of gaming practice	Pearson Correlation	1	-,017	,381**	,224*	-,099	-,006	-,060	,064	,033	,050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,870	,000	,026	,330	,951	,563	,541	,749	,625
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
How often do you play?	Pearson Correlation	-,017	1	-,002	-,202*	,199*	,054	,147	,373**	-,085	,051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,870		,984	,044	,048	,607	,158	,000	,405	,615
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
Years of working (scale 1-4)	Pearson Correlation	,381**	-,002	1	,529**	-,005	,067	-,037	,142	-,029	,131
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,984		,000	,958	,519	,725	,171	,775	,197
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
Age	Pearson Correlation	,224*	-,202*	,529**	1	-,018	,172	-,095	,015	,156	-,058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,044	,000		,859	,097	,365	,883	,122	,571
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-,099	,199*	-,005	-,018	1	-,004	-,040	-,131	-,209*	-,015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,330	,048	,958	,859		,968	,701	,208	,038	,883
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
Harmonious Passion	Pearson Correlation	-,006	,054	,067	,172	-,004	1	,015	,352**	,101	-,056
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,951	,607	,519	,097	,968		,890	,000	,333	,589
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Obsessive Passion	Pearson Correlation	-,060	,147	-,037	-,095	-,040	,015	1	,268**	,094	,161
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,563	,158	,725	,365	,701	,890		,009	,367	,122
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Passion Criteria	Pearson Correlation	,064	,373**	,142	,015	-,131	,352**	,268**	1	-,050	,071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,541	,000	,171	,883	,208	,000	,009		,634	,494
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Deep Acting	Pearson Correlation	,033	-,085	-,029	,156	-,209*	,101	,094	-,050	1	,244*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,749	,405	,775	,122	,038	,333	,367	,634		,015
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99
Surface Acting	Pearson Correlation	,050	,051	,131	-,058	-,015	-,056	,161	,071	,244*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,625	,615	,197	,571	,883	,589	,122	,494	,015	
	N	99	99	99	99	99	94	94	94	99	99

A round of three **observations** conducted in as many Italian board game stores revealed an authentic and spontaneous enthusiasm – sometimes even excitement – in the salespersons' behavior. Customers' reactions to salespersons' display of naturally felt emotions were clearly positive, and in all three cases the encounter was concluded with the purchase of at least one item from the store. More in detail, the following results come from field notes taken during the observation of three salespersons at their specialized board game store. The first one was a store owner who had quite a good experience as a salesperson (33 years old – 6 years of job experience in the industry), the second one was one of the two partners owning the store and having almost three years of job experience (29 years old), and the third one was an employee working in the same store for a little bit less than two years (27 years old). Although the owner exhibited a greater job experience, all three salespersons were at the same level as experienced gamers. Customers of the first store were a couple (boyfriend and girlfriend) looking for a board game to buy as a birthday present for their friend. Customer of the second store was a young gamer looking for an entry-level game to play with his group, and customers of the third store were a couple of friends looking for a rather easy board game to play with friends. To schematize, the service encounter can be divided in three phases: 1) first approach, 2) relationship development, and 3) conclusion.

During the first approach, all the customers entered the store respectfully and quietly. The partner and the employee did not make the customers feel immediately at ease and, overall, they did not conduct this phase at their best. Both of them looked clumsy at the beginning and it took them a while to understand what the customers were looking for. According to the observer, customers remained silent too long or in doubt before expressing what they wanted. On the other hand, the owner established an effective dialogue with the couple of customers almost immediately, even if keeping his quiet aplomb. Very gently he asked what they were looking for.

During the relationship development, the researcher noted that both partner and employee were able to catch up and establish an effective relationship with the customers. When asked to intervene on their “battleground”, they became lively. According to observations, all three salespersons displayed their naturally felt positive

emotions without faking smiles or particular behaviors. They established an eye contact with the customers, sometimes nodding while describing the products. The observer noticed customers nodding several times and smiling in response to the salespersons. A positive change in their emotional state was noted. Their knowledge on the suggested games was extensive and engagingly communicated. The partner and in particular the employee appeared somewhat excited while introducing certain games to the customers. Gestures, tone of voice and, sometimes, feet movements revealed this excitement.

The conclusive phase of the three service encounters resulted in an overall positive outcome. The first salesperson sold two board games to the couple, one as the birthday gift and another one given they had expressed their desire to have the chance to invite friends over and offer them a “memorable” gaming experience. The second salesperson proposed a wide range of different board games to his young customer who declared he had to make up his mind, and announced he would come back later with his friends to choose the game all together. The choice of the right title was a fundamental aspect to him, as all of his gaming friends had to like it. The third salesperson sold two different board games to one of the two customers. The first game was an entry-level board game and the second, a bit more advanced strategy one. By all means, customers concluded their purchasing experience positively, leaving the store and smiling to the salesperson who – in all three stores – smiled at them too.

**Table 18. Scheme of Observed Service Encounter
in Three Specialized Board Game Stores**

Store	Salespersons	Customers	First approach	Relationship development	Conclusion
1 (n.36)	Owner	Couple	Effective dialogue	Authentic-emotional	Purchase x 2
2 (n.21)	Partner	Young boy	Clumsy	Authentic-emotional-excited	“I will come back with my friends”
3 (n.10)	Employee	2 friends	Clumsy	Authentic-emotional-excited	Purchase x 2

In sum, the following emerged during these three in-field observations:

- salespersons were experienced gamers;
- they appeared really passionate and knowledgeable about gaming;
- they displayed naturally felt positive emotions during the service encounter;
- they created a quite effective passion contagion mechanism toward customers, meaning that a positive change in customers' emotional state was noted.

Another observation was conducted during a board game auction at a gaming convention. Having the chance to observe from a close position one of the previously surveyed store owners during the auction, the researcher noted how he bought several awkward and second-hand board games at the auction, just for the pleasure to enrich his collection even if with almost unplayable games. Keeping on offering and acquiring games at the auction, the store owner was constantly informing his friends – sitting on his left – about his intentions and the reasons for his preferences for a certain game with respect to another one. By raising his hand and talking with his friends, the store owner revealed his excitement and, at the same time, his passion for the gaming activity. The observer had the impression that the store owner was deliberately unleashing his desire to enjoy the auction experience, leaving it to an almost uncontrolled gaming instinct.

The last observation was conducted during a national gaming convention and tracked down the behavior of another store owner while meeting other ones. What emerged from this observation was the multiple role played by the store owners who were also colleagues, friends, and competitors. All of them had in common their passion for board games, revealed by the time dedicated to play during their break time and the happiness demonstrated while gaming: smiles, laugh, and jokes alternated with moments of concentration, and potential flow.

While on the field, the researcher had also the chance to ascertain that the degree of bankruptcy in the industry was extremely high. In the largest cities like Milan, Turin and Genova, more than a half of the board game stores' addresses on the researcher's interview list corresponded to failed stores that closed down, leaving traces

of their existence only on the Internet. By visiting the premises and investigating the neighborhoods, the researcher had the confirmation of what emerged during in-depth interviews with key informants about the high risk of bankruptcy in the Italian board game industry. Further confirmation will come from semi-structured interviews.

The presence of other gamers was noted during collateral observation of the store environment. These were playing in very close and dedicated gaming area in two of the three observed stores. The tone of voice used as well as the nature of the verbal interaction between gamers and salespersons revealed the existence of an intimate and close relationships.

Secondary data were gathered by collecting leaflets, brochures and other promotional material together with the analysis of stores' websites and other interviews on the web. The first element noticed was the industry's widespread consciousness of being passion-centered. The leaflet of the second most important board game store chain reports right in the middle, close to the chain's name, the slogan "Burning passion for gaming" (see Image 1).

Image 1. Promotional Leaflet of the Second Most Important Board Game Store Chain



On the other hand, the most important board game store chain not only seems to claim that the concept of passion is embedded in the gaming environment, but it captures the desire of gamers to turn their passion for the gaming activity into a job. In its promotional leaflet, this franchising chain reports the following in capital letters: “*Do you want to make your passion a job?*” (see image 2). The claim clearly invites gamers who are thinking to enter the job market to join their chain by opening a store as franchisees. It also stimulates the potential store owner’s desire to express and satisfy his passion for gaming while making money at the same time.

Image 2. Promotional Leaflet of the Most Important Board Game Stores Chain



By analyzing 25 Italian board game stores' Web site (not affiliated with the above mentioned store chains) some other interesting findings came out. The most important one is related to the presence of the word "passion" or other "passion-derived" words, and conveys to the public the message that salespeople are passionate about board gaming. This result shows up in 20 Web sites out of 25 (see Image 3). In some cases, the Web sites do not use the word "passion" or "passionate activity", substituting it with the words "enthusiasm" and "hobby".

Image 3. Board Game Store Web Page
Reporting the Word “Passion” and Its Derivative (3 times)



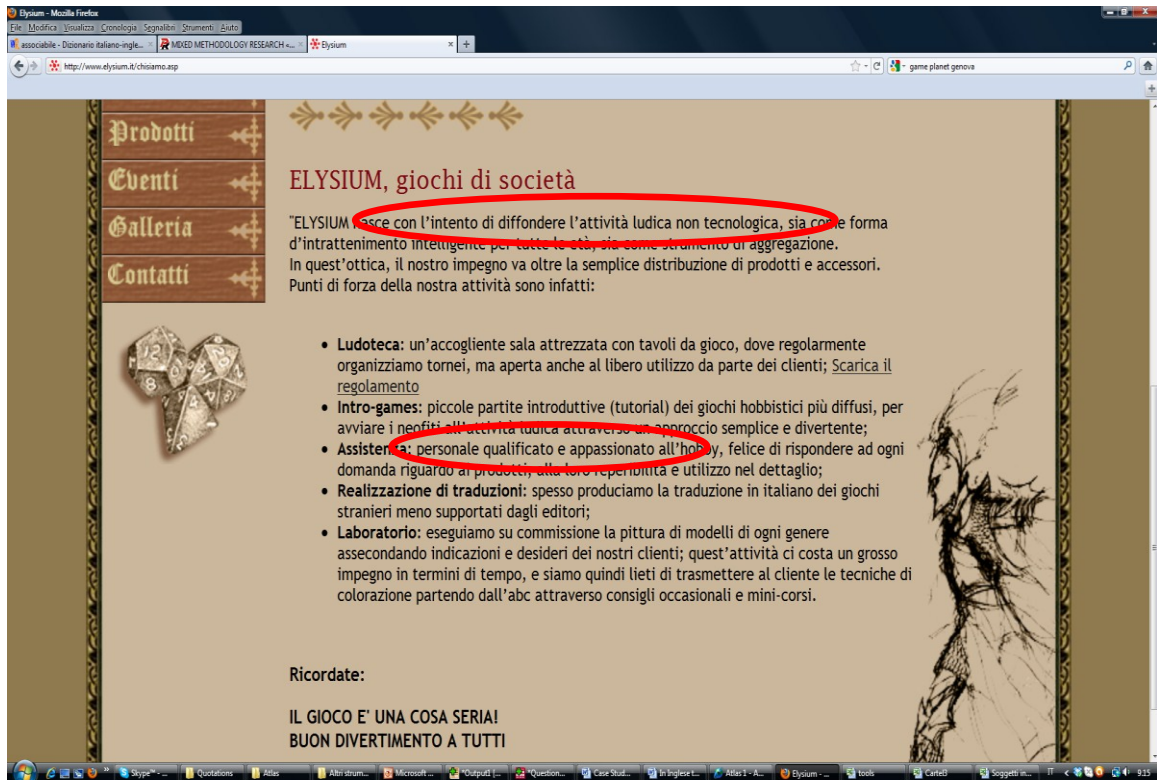
The second important finding detected on the Web sites is that the current store owners openly admit they started up their business with the explicit purpose of turning their passion into a job (see Image 4), confirming in a way the appropriateness of the previously mentioned (see Image 2) communication strategy implemented by the most important Italian board game store chain. This second finding appeared on 7 Web sites and is directly related to the fact that salespersons are passionate gamers first. The desire to transform their passion into a job is a step ahead.

**Image 4. Board Game Store Web Page
Reporting the Transformation of Passion into a Job**



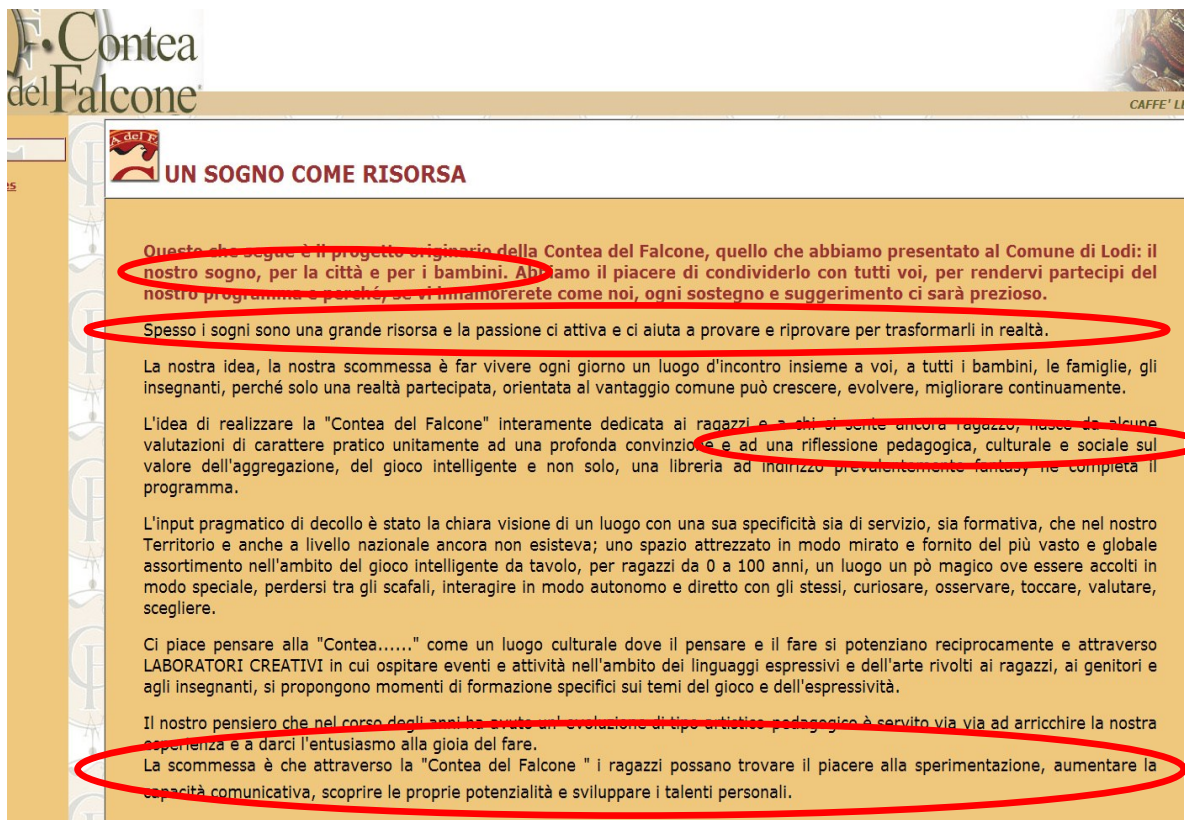
A third finding consists in the salespeople wish to “infect” others with their passion, as this is openly disclosed in their institutional Web sites. This intention to spread their passion through contagion appears in 12 Web sites out of 25, and can be generally found together with other evidences in the Web site content analysis concerning passion of the store owners for gaming and desire to turn their passion into a job (see Image 4).

Image 5. Board Game Store Web Page Reporting the Desire to Infect Others With Passion



The fourth important finding retrieved on the Web sites is represented by the missionary motivation that seems to guide salespeople in the Italian board game industry. Eight stores reported their will to diffuse board gaming culture and give some attention to children in order to develop their ability to communicate and personal skills to keep them off the streets (see Image 6).

**Image 6. Board Game Store Web Page
Reporting the Missionary Motivation for the Activity**



In brief, the secondary data analysis allowed the researcher to retrieve the following evidences concerning some of the salespersons in the industry, at a different extent:

- they are passionate about board game playing
- they turned their passion into a job
- they wish to spread their passion all over the world (passion contagion)
- they are motivated by a sort of superior goal, a missionary motivation.

The first three pieces of evidence from the list above emerged also from the in-depth interviews with key informants. The first one was clearly proved by the survey, and the fifth one concerning a missionary motivation came also from the open-ended question formulated on the questionnaire and asking about the salespeople motivation for entering professionally the board game industry. In particular, beside the passion

motivation, five respondents spontaneously reported a missionary motivation such as keeping children away from videogames or off the streets, providing the youth an intelligent activity to do, etc.

Finally, the **semi-structured interviews** conducted with a sub-sample of 30 salespersons previously surveyed, provided the most interesting explanations to the issues left uncovered or unsolved by the questionnaire, and only noticed in other data sources. Semi-structured interviews turned out to be particularly useful to better understand the complexity of the phenomenon under exam, and strengthen the conclusion outlined by the convergence of results from different data sources.

The interviewees were asked three main questions:

- 1) *What motivated you to start up or join professionally the board game industry?*
- 2) *What would you suggest to a gamer who would like to open a board game store in another region?*
- 3) *How do your salesperson's role and your passion for gaming match during the service encounter?* This question has been integrated to the interview guide to better understand the degree of authenticity characterizing salespersons within the board game industry. As previously mentioned, items concerning the deep acting and surface acting subscales turned out to be particularly difficult to understand by the respondents. In fact, several explanation requests, comments on the inappropriate formulation of the question and a sort of hesitation were demonstrated by the respondent while trying to answer the relative questions. This was attributed to the high cognitive effort (complexity) required to answer such questions right away. Another possible explanation lies in the lack of – or in the distance from – a formalized idea of organizationally desired emotions that salespeople are supposed to adopt during service encounter.

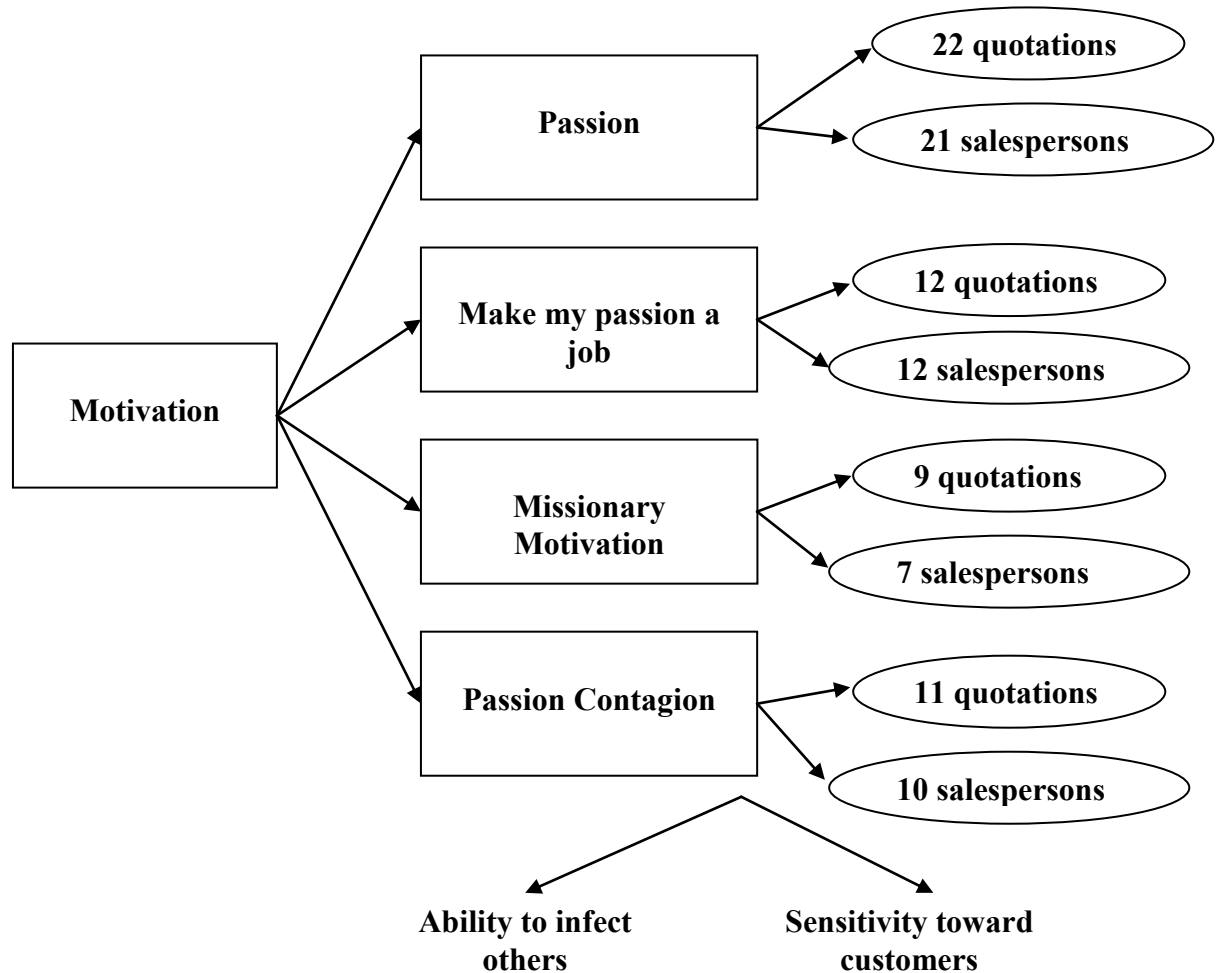
Given that many respondents asked for further explanations of the question, even during the semi-structured interviews, a set of more detailed questions was asked to better explain what the issue at hand was:

- a. How are your emotions while you interact with your customers?
- b. How much do you try to feel emotions you have to show to your customers?
- c. How much do you hide your feelings?

Respondents were free to express themselves and their ideas, diverging and digressing from the strict object of the question during the interviews. Thus, comments and quotations concerning other interesting aspects of their work experience were also noted.

From the first question – what motivated you to enter professionally the board game industry – the researcher recorded 54 quotations concerning 4 main possible reasons motivating the salespersons (see Graph 3).

Graph 3. Scheme of Emergent Characteristics of HPI Industries during Semi-structured Interviews



Passion can be found at the basis as being the motivation for almost all the interviewed salespersons with the exception of one, who said he was motivated by the desire of making money. Nevertheless, this participant used to be passionate about board games before working in the industry. Thus, to some extent, he took advantage of his passion to choose his job.

Here are some quotations from various salespersons providing some examples of how **passion** was the fundamental determinant for them in choosing their job.

- *“Passion! The passion was the thing. Really, it was pure passion! And I’m talking about since ’97 when I was a student at the University of Pavia and there, there was already a store and I already had the passion and the challenge was staring me in the face: I had to find a way to turn my passion into a job. It was my first work experience.” [97]*
- *“Passion for board games!” [98]*

In the first quotation, the interviewee stresses the role played by passion in making his decision to start up a business by repeating the word “passion” four times. In the end, he also hints about a further motivation that will be analyzed afterward: turning his passion into a job. In the second quotation, the interviewee says simply and naturally that passion for board games was the motivation, without any nuances. In both cases, respondents refer to their own experience.

- *“Among the people opening a shop, many are motivated by passion. Actually, all of them! [166]*
- *“Because I like it! A priori there is passion! It’s the essential key for people working in this field.” [68]*
- *“If a salesperson weren’t passionate he wouldn’t do this job! This is for sure!” [100]*

In these three quotations, the respondents’ observations refer to the entire industry, describing passion as an obvious, common and well-known characteristic of the industry.

- *“Passion has made me start my own business. Moreover, I like being with the guys. I’m a bit of a natural entertainer. I did work as an entertainer.” [64]*

- *“Let me tell you, I opened a shop mainly because, first of all, I like it and it is a passion; second of all, because I like the contact there is with the public.”* [86]

The previous two quotations, where passion still represents a motivation, refer to a further tendency that is somewhat embedded in the industry and characterizes a great part of the professionals working within this industry: the desire to stay with other people. It denotes the presence of diffused social skills that will be found again along the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and deserves further and specific research.

- *“Passion! I think that working on your own passion is the best thing ever!”* [84]

Finally, another quotation points out how passion was his motivation to professionally enter the board game industry. Further, the interviewee connects the idea of passion with the idea of working, stating that the mix of the two things represents the best solution one can achieve, not only for his job but also for his entire life. In a way, the quotation contains two different concepts: working because motivated by passion for gaming, and working for the desire to transform your passion into a job. The last concept will be deepened here below.

The following quotations indicate how salespersons were motivated by the desire to **turn their passion into a job** when they decided to work in the board game industry. A total of 12 quotations from as many salespersons were isolated.

- *“I opened my shop because I wanted to turn my passion into a job. I wanted a job that I would like.”* [58]
- *“I’ve been playing for 25 years. I love card games, role-playing games, and all the fantasy world. I tried to turn my passion into a job.”* [63]

- *“The reason that pushed me is the most basic one and I believe that this is the case for all the people doing my job: I had a passion and I decided to work, and I really tried to turn that passion into a job.” [79]*

As it can be noted, all of them are also consistent in using the same words: *“turn my passion into a job”*. Moreover, here the respondents provide their point of view referring to themselves and to their experience. In other words, the subject (or the object) of each sentence is “I” (or “me”). In the following quotation, this reference changes:

- *“You do this job to turn your passion into an occupational activity.” [77]*

In this case, the respondent is applying this attitude to the entire industry. Even the tone of voice accompanying the sentence – that cannot be reproduced here – emphasized how it is an obvious observation of the reality, like a matter of fact.

The next quotations come from a group of nine mentioned by seven different salespersons. They highlight how a sort of **missionary motivation** lies behind the decision to open a board game store.

- *“My work has educational goals. I can pass on something, I can educate! We’ve found that games are one of the most powerful means of learning: when you play, you are completely involved and this is how you learn!” [60]*
- *“At the local level, I [through my job] have a great relationship with the Social Services and role-playing games are very much valued as a pedagogical tool.” [77]*
- *“I opened this shop because I wished to spread this hobby and “protect” the kids from the streets or the computers/soles.” [25]*

According to their words, it seems as if salespeople were also working as social workers. This position, though, is probably the less generalizable to the surveyed population.

The last group of 11 quotations, which answer the first question about motivation, comes from 10 salespersons and refers to their desire to spread the **passion contagion** and infect others with their passion.

- *“I’ve had many jobs in the past and I found out that I relate well to people and this is important if you want to manage a shop like ours. This way, you can pass on your passion for board games to others.”* [69].
- *“When you open a shop, you have less time to dedicate to your passion, and you mainly dedicate yourself to passing it on to others.”* [70].
- *“You’re selling fun! This is not easy! It’s not concrete: you must make people get passionate!”* [68]

All three quotations are consistent with the idea of passion contagion; nonetheless, the first two seem to conceive this process as something you possess (“passion”) and then you transfer to others (“pass on”). They entail the **ability to infect others with your own emotions**. The third one departs from a slightly different point of view. To get someone passionate about something brings in the idea that you attract someone toward you, or you awake something left asleep into the other person. You do not just pass on something. It implies that salespersons do possess a certain **empathy** toward their customers and **are emotionally sensitive**. This empathic capacity will be found again in further quotations and underlined.

All three reveal something really interesting for the sake of the present research. The first one recalls the previously observed concept of social skills as an endowment of most professionals in the industry. This is probably related to the fact that almost all of them are gamers, and that board games naturally involve socialization as well as the development of some sort of social skills. The second quotation highlights another

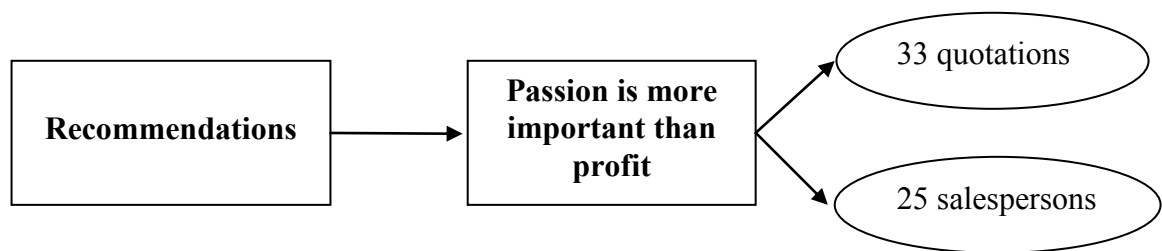
important concept that applies to many salespeople: once you open a board game store, you have to dedicate yourself to work and you do not have time to play anymore or not as much as before opening the store. What happens then is that there will be situations in which passionate salespersons can no longer practice their passionate activity. This will normally lead to frustration or other negative outcome. The third quotation highlights another important aspect of the HPI industries. Salespersons do not just sell colored boxes or other tangible products with other general services enriching them. They basically attach their passion to the product and the amount of passion attached depends on idiosyncratic conditions (e.g. environmental conditions, service provider-customer relationship, etc.). This process of product enrichment further contributes to distinguish this type of industry from the others. In fact, many store owners specialize in selling only products they are passionate about. In this way, they can deal with their passion on a daily basis and sell it to customers. Selling becomes thus a way to transfer their passion.

Needless to say, the prerequisite for turning passion into a job and transferring it to others is to be passionate. Thus, almost all the quotations attributed to such consequent motivational aspects, actually further strengthen the idea of passion as a motivation to professionally enter the board game industry.

A further crucial characteristic of HPI industries is derived from the answer to the second question addressed to salespersons: *“What would you suggest to a gamer who would like to open a board game store in another region?”* A very unexpected and incredible series of convincing and convergent quotations were recorded by the researcher. All of them but one contributed to delineate a singular peculiarity of the industry: that passion matters more than profit. This conclusion derives from the consciousness diffused among salespersons working in the industry and consisting in what is adduced in their quotations: there is no chance of making profitable business in comparison to other accessible industries; the risk of going bankrupt is much higher than in almost any other industry; anyone would do this job for money. Many of these beliefs can be connected to the idea of pursuing a sort of superior goal, a kind of mission that is much more important than the profit, while in some other cases what

really matters is the satisfaction of the salespersons' passion through board game playing, the contact with other gamers, the possibility to spread their passion and exhibit their competence, etc. In sum, 33 quotations were gathered from 25 different salespersons, leading to the same conclusion (see Graph 4). Here are few examples:

Graph 4. Scheme of Emergent Characteristics of HPI Industries during Semi-structured Interviews



- *“I can't get by on what I make in the store: business is shit.” [60]*

Although this first quote comes from a very motivated and energetic salesperson who already reported his missionary motivation in other quotes, it appears evident that the source of his motivation is not in the profit. The interviewee, in fact, confessed he would have run his store until there would not be any money to withdraw from any available source.

- *“Professionally, I earned a lot more money before opening the store.” [54]*

In this second quote, the respondent makes a profitability comparison between two industries: the one he used to work in and the Italian board game industry. By confessing he is resigned to do a job which is worse in terms of profit with respect to his previous job, he also entails there is another motivation that pushes him to carry on his activity.

- *“It is very hard! I tell you right away! It is a market niche; the profit margins are ridiculous. The rents (in proportion to sales) are exorbitant. I come from another sector and I also have other businesses in other industries, and I can see the difference. On the one hand, you’re making money; on the other hand, you’re surviving. And to survive you need to work a lot: 10 hours a day including Saturday and Sunday. If not, you’ll close down within 3 years. In that sector, 90 % of the shops that open will close down within 3 years. If you want to throw yourself anyway into the action, you must have money (because you must have money anyway to start up), and then it’s nice. But – let me tell you – you don’t make money, you work like hell, you don’t play anymore because you really can’t play... but you’re not working in a factory!” [120]*

In this third quote, the degree of comparison reaches a more objective level. The interviewee, in fact, runs many stores in different industries at the same time. What emerges is that in the other industries you make profit whereas in the board game industry, you can just aspire to survive. And what you have to do in order to survive is to work a lot more than in the other industries, possess slack resources to invest, and face an extremely high risk of failure (90% every three years). Thus, the main motivation cannot be the profit. Something more important for them drives their choices. Passion is the real motivation.

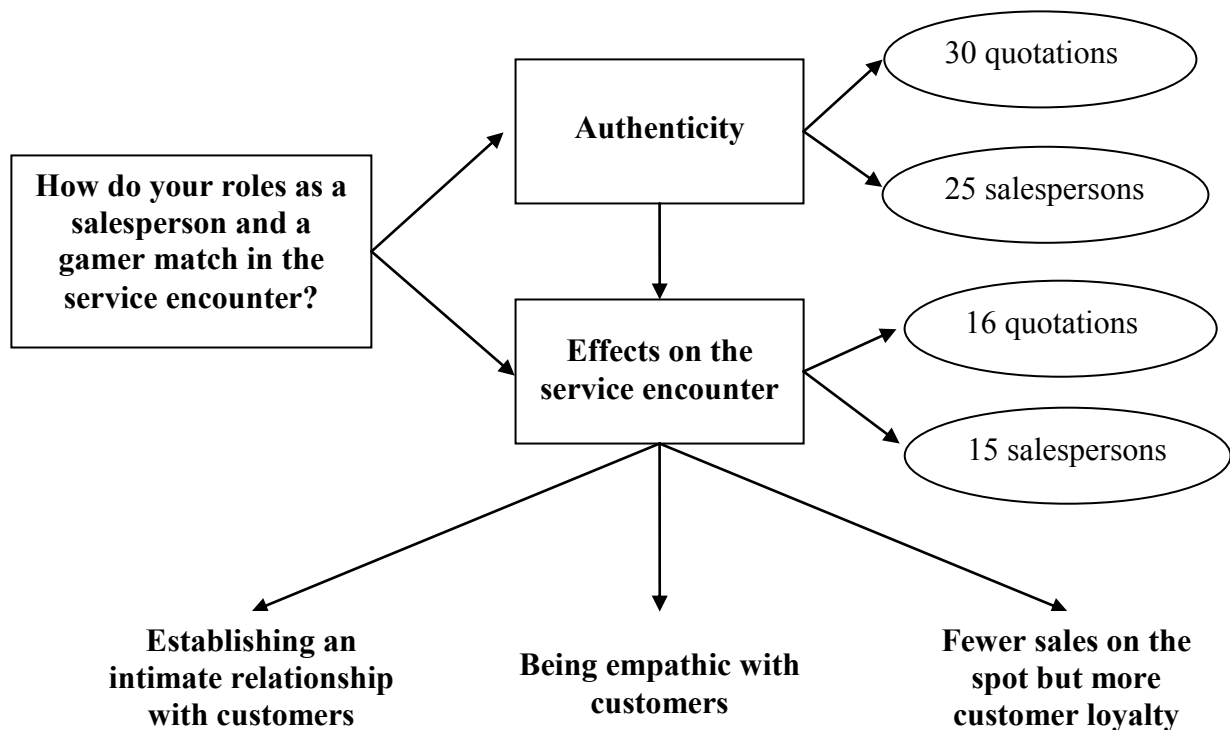
The last question asked to the respondents aims to understand the degree of **authenticity** displayed by salespeople in the Italian board game industry. Here again, the 30 quotations collected among 25 different salespersons describe their behavior as characterized by the daily display of naturally felt emotions (see Graph 5). Here are some examples:

- *“I never try to feel emotions that I must show. Actually, I do not really think about it: I am always true to myself when I suggest the clients some games.” [53]*

- *“I never hide my emotions! That’s me and I wouldn’t be able to act differently. I can express myself freely every day with this job!” [60]*
- *“Well... It must not be an effort. I show the emotions I feel without forcing myself. I don’t try to feel the emotions: I really experience them.” [75]*

The three quotes have a very similar meaning and shed light on the shadows left by the questionnaire results. The inadequacy, or at least the incompleteness of the deep acting and surface acting subscales to describe salespersons’ behavior during the service encounter, is complemented by the results emerged through the semi-structured interviews. They plainly show how salespersons demonstrate naturally felt emotions during the service interaction, without acting or trying to pretend anything.

Graph 5. Scheme of Emergent Characteristics of HPI Industries during Semi-structured Interviews



The following quotations, on the other hand, show how the interviewees hide their true feelings only when they are “in a bad mood”, with the clear intent to not jeopardize their business. By doing so, they also demonstrate a certain degree of empathy toward their customers.

- *“If I’m pissed, then I’ll hide my true feelings; otherwise, there’s no reason to do so!”* [74]
- *“If my day goes wrong, then yes. If not, I never hide my feelings, especially when it is about games.”* [75]

Speaking about the nature of their role played in their store, salespersons seemed aware of the **effects it exerts on the service encounter outcome**. Here are some examples extracted from the 16 quotations reported by 15 different salespersons (see Graph 5):

- *“A passionate salesperson performs much better than a simple clerk that is hired just to perform the mechanical act of selling. Thus it is really important to be passionate about games.”* [90]
- *“If I have three products to sell, one that I know, one that I don’t know anything about, and one that I like, well, I will sell the one I like 10 times more than the one I know, which I will sell 3 times more than the one I don’t know.”* [89].
- *“My hobbyist nature always comes out. Always! Shouldn’t be like that I think I would have closed down a long time ago. I always leave my passion to come out because it helps selling anyway. It helps me more than being a good salesman! All my emotions are authentic and this shines through! For instance, it is pretty clear when I suggest a board game I’ve already played rather than when I suggest one I haven’t played yet, one that I’ve only heard about, even good things. It changes radically the way I present it, even if – for those who already know the game – the one I’m presenting and that I’ve*

already played is worse than the other one. I give more details, just because I played it already, and then I sell it much more than the other for the same reason.” [80]

In these examples, salespersons demonstrate to be aware of the positive effects of being naturally passionate during the service encounter and they provide comparisons against other in-store situations.

- *“The fact that I am too passionate about games always prevails. I find it difficult – really difficult – to hide my true feelings about a board game, either when I suggest it or explain it. As a dealer, I should push those products that I know are better for me, but as a person, as a player, as a passionate gamer, I can’t make it, because the passion exceeds the willingness to make money!” [84]*
- *“We treat our customers as human beings, not as “legged wallets...” I always recommend what is best for them, and when they ask for information on a product, what comes out matches what I feel inside. It corresponds to what I am. Maybe I could sell more stuff in a short period of time by not acting like this, but we prefer to have customers who buy just a few things today, but will come back again in the future. This is also the rationale of the franchisee chain I work for. If people are having a rough time – as it often happens in life – then it is better if they keep their private life away from their job to avoid any interference with the customer’s relationship. This is where you must stick to your role as a ‘salesperson’, but if you are passionate you don’t need anything else. Other stores might not follow this. I go for pizza with my customers: many of them are friends of mine!” [88]*

In the two quotations above, salespersons show their consciousness of the limits related to their naturally passionate behavior during the service relationship. They admit they could probably sell more products on the spot if they only behaved more

cunningly, that is if they only acted in front of their customers. Nonetheless, important ethical considerations emerge. They are connected to the friendly relationship developed with their customers, the previously discussed “missionary” nature of their job, or simply the internal pressure for being just what they are: passionate gamers who sell board games with their passion attached.

- *“Attitudes like: “This thing is really cool, uh, just take a look ...” I don’t do things like that! Never! But as we’re open to the public, you can’t hurt people’s feelings. You can’t always be upfront because sometimes you realize that the customer can’t take it. I always try to be myself, to be honest. If you ask me: “What’s this game like?” Well, I might have ten of these games in the shop but I’d tell you if I didn’t like it.” [100]*
- *“I never pretend with my customers. Almost never! That’s also because when I used to go into a shop and the sales assistant was all excited because he was showing me the newest games, I used to get a bit pissed off... because he was pretending! He was as fake as a 3 euro coin. As for me, I don’t hide my feelings: if I’ve got a good relationship with a customer, I can even tell him politely to “go take a walk”, but without being too rude or too blunt towards someone who doesn’t deserve it, or who’s not doing it on purpose, or things like that...” [78]*

The two previous quotes reveal how interviewed salespersons do not want to be fake or to pretend in front of their clients, especially because they would not like anyone behaving like that in front of them. This explains why surface acting is avoided in the industry. As already seen also in other quotations, salespersons develop a sort of empathic capacity toward their customers. The underlined periods in the previous and in the next quotes witness this sort of sensitivity.

Other aspects that emerged along with the various quotations consist in the **particularly close relation** salespersons develop **with** most of their “aficionado” **customers**. As it can be seen in the last two citations, this often results in the

establishment of friendship with related habits, such as having pizza together, going to board game fairs together and car-pooling, playing at home together, and so forth. Moreover, salespersons spontaneously reported their awareness of the consequences of having friends as customers, as exemplified by the following quotation:

- *“I never resist expressing my true feelings! Never! Never! It’s really difficult for me to tell lies shamelessly. I wouldn’t do that even if it were to sell the worst board game in the universe sleeping on my shelves for 10 years. Most of all because I believe such things will come back to you eventually. If you palm somebody off a piece of crap, your bad action will eventually come around. **This is my life: 90% of my customers are friends as well.** It’s a good thing but also a bad one. I mean, working with your friends is great, but selling stuff to your friends is horrible. But that’s the way it is...” [95]*
- *“I’m not an aggressive salesman. Maybe I should, but I’m convinced that being true to myself pays off in the long run. **Establishing an intimate relationship with clients who in turn develop friendships by coming to my shop to play.**” [79]*

During the data collection process, the researcher happened to interview only one salesperson expressing an opposite opinion about the authenticity within the industry. However, it cannot be considered valid given that it comes from a salesperson working in a toy store targeting infants and young children, therefore not specialized in board games. The presence of a few board games in their product catalogue misled the researcher who realized too late that the store was out of the research interests.

All the results reported from semi-structured interviews pertain to the salespersons’ beliefs and bring to the light a part of the awareness embedded in the Italian board game industry. They basically define the characteristics of the examined empirical context. Being these characteristics self-reported by salespersons, they represent sort of shared consciousness among the industry. Based on the convergence of meanings emerged from the content analysis of the above-mentioned quotations, the

number of salespersons supporting the same ideas, and the extent to which the interviewees projected their beliefs onto the entire industry, it is possible to identify elements of this shared consciousness and group them in two sets. In the first set, there are those elements involving most of the professional actors within the industry, while in the second set are listed the ones that might characterize smaller groups of salespersons. Both sets contribute to define the HPI industries, even if the first one presents properties that are more generalizable (external validity) over salespersons in the industry, while the second might present more idiosyncratic characteristics. In sum, the shared elements of consciousness forming the two sets are:

Set 1

1. Strong consciousness of being passionate;
2. Desire to turn their passion into work;
3. Consciousness of carrying on their business for passion and not for profit;
4. Consciousness of being authentic with their customers.

Set 2

1. Consciousness of the effects of their passion on the service encounter outcome;
2. Consciousness of a missionary motivation;
3. Consciousness of the desire to infect and transfer their passion.

A very last group of data has been gathered by looking at the demand side of the Italian board game industry. By scanning the Web sites of the most important **online gamer communities** it has been possible to derive some conclusions concerning the market. For example, the brick-and-mortar board game store is not the prevalent source of board games for expert gamers. The relative majority of them (36.68%), in fact, prefer to buy games in Italian online shops. Italian brick-and-mortar stores come second (27.03%). The role of traditional stores providing a proximity service to customers is targeted toward and exalted with newcomers or less expert gamers who want to get involved and, or receive information and directions about board games. Expert salespersons can then exert and exploit their passion-related skills, taking

advantage of the phenomenon of passion contagion reported by salespersons during semi-structured interviews.

Where the Gamers of the Most Important Italian Game Community (*La Tana dei Goblin*) Purchase Their Board Games



Participants: 259

Source: "La Tana dei Goblin" – March 31, 2011

<http://www.goblins.net/modules.php?name=Surveys&op=results&pollID=55&mode=&order=0&thold=0>

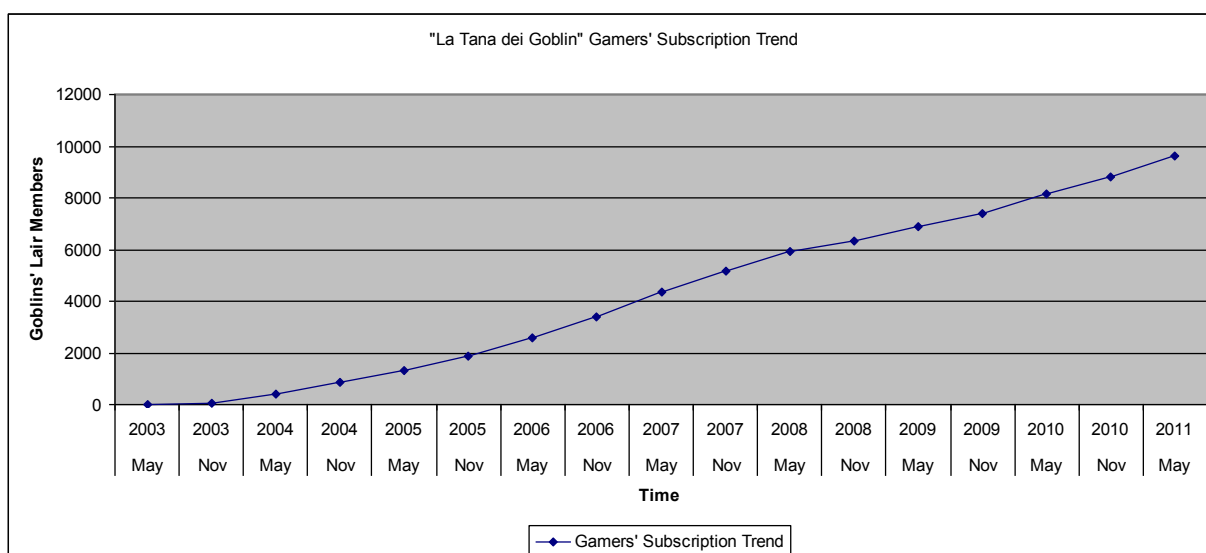
What emerged clearly during the analysis of online communities forums is the shared consciousness of impossibility to earn satisfying profits from opening a board game store in Italy. Discussions promoted by young aspirant board game store owners asking for suggestions and recommendations clearly stated the high risk of failure and any hope to gain money. The only legitimate reason left to the potential entrant to start up a new business in the industry is the satisfaction of his or her own passion. So, basically, two other characteristics of the industry are not only confirmed but also considered as common knowledge within the community of gamers. In other words, the netnographic analysis of online communities, corroborated the following findings: passion by far as the most important motivation to work in the industry, and the greater importance of passion with respect to the profit. The first point is further strengthened by discussions on the nowadays crisis of the board game market.

The analysis of online communities forums turned out to be particularly useful also to understand the phenomenon of the business failure involving online stores that went bankrupt as well as the brick and mortar ones.

At the present time, shopping malls do not represent a threat, as the products are not yet sufficiently diffused in the market. Shipping costs and language barriers protect the local stores, both traditional and online.

The industry is also showing a positive trend in terms of members. The online communities are expanding and the most important one exhibits increasing subscription rates of 22.12% (on average) per year over the last 4 years (see Graph 6). The target of 10.000 members should be reached before the end of the year.

Graph 6. Subscription Trend to the Largest Italian Board Game Community



Source: “La Tana dei Goblin” – May 31, 2011

At the same time, the number of online shops – the most important competitors of traditional brick-and-mortar stores – is increasing. More and more traditional stores are opening their online commerce websites to face the Internet competition. Given the economic crisis and the dynamicity of the industry in terms of turnover, it has not been possible to measure the online shop bankruptcy rate. At least, the five most important Italian online shops are run by passionate board gamers.

DISCUSSION

Summary

The triangulation of the different methods and data sources assured the reliability of results, defining the boundaries of the HPI industries. The conceptual pillars on which the definition of this new type of industries is based are represented by the characteristics examined in the previous section and are summarized hereafter (see Table 19).

Table 19. Summary of Findings and Data Sources

	Passion	Turn Passion into Job	Missionary Motivation	Passion Contagion	Passion > Profit	Authenticity	Effects of Passion
In-depth Interviews	X	X	X	X			
Questionnaires	X	X					
Observations	X			X		X	X
Secondary Data	X	X					
Semi- structured Interviews	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Netnography	X			X	X		

Passion, Positive Emotions and Salesperson's Performance: What the Literature Says

Looking at the results on passion, it is possible to conclude that salespeople find their motivation to professionally enter the Italian board game industry in their passion for board gaming. Moreover, it is a passionate industry, meaning that this passion will tend to persist also during the job activity development. All data sources examined tally with this conclusion, without any hesitation. In particular, as indicated by the passion scale's results (Vallerand et al., 2003) gathered through the administration of questionnaires filled by the sample of 101 salespersons working in the Italian board game industry, this industry is harmoniously passionate (HP index = 5.45, S.D. 0.832).

Important managerial implications derive from this outcome. First of all, according to the literature on the matter, harmoniously passionate individuals will practice their favorite activity, or activities in harmony with their other life activities, without creating conflicts and knowing when it is in their own interest to stop engaging in the same activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand, 2010).

Second, harmonious passion is associated with positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions (Mageau, 2008; Grenier, in preparation). In-field observations reported, in fact, the display of positive emotions during service encounters. According to the literature, the display of positive emotions induces a positive affect in customers (Pugh, 2001). Such a change in positive affect results in increased customer satisfaction (Henning-Thurau et al., 2006). Moreover, the display of positive emotions generates a significant increment of salesperson's performance and relationship performance with the customer (Dolen et al., 2004). Positive outcomes in relationship performance are witnessed by friendship and loyalty developed between salespersons and customers in the industry, and recorded in the semi-structured interviews.

Emotional Contagion, Authenticity and Sales Performance: What the Literature Says

The literature attributes an important role to personal characteristics in the emotional contagion process. In particular, as it has been already reviewed, both salespeople's ability to infect others with their emotions and the fact of being emotionally sensitive toward customers lead to higher performance. The latter, though, generates a higher risk of burnout (Verbeke, 1997). These two personal characteristics spontaneously emerged in the quotations recorded during semi-structured interviews as characteristics of salespeople in the industry. In addition, the analysis of the online board game community forums showed the infectious nature of the industry. The literature goes further maintaining that being empathic with the customers, besides improving the service encounter experience, increases the customer-salesperson relationship and, thus, the overall sales performance (Dolen et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the display of naturally felt emotions (i.e. authenticity) enhances the emotional contagion process while inauthentic behavior (i.e. fake smiles, pretending to love a product, etc.) hampers it (Henning-Thurau et al., 2006). Both in-field observations conducted during the service encounter, and semi-structured interviews clearly pointed out the authenticity of the emotions displayed by salespersons during the service relationship, leading, thus, to a more effective process of emotional contagion.

The display of naturally felt emotions, in addition, positively affects customers' emotions and perceptions of friendliness (Henning-Thurau et al., 2006). The empirical data gathered has demonstrated the presence of authenticity within the Italian board game industry. Beside that, the development of friendship between customers and salespersons has also been noticed. Such a relationship offers then a good support to confirm the effectiveness of the authenticity positive influence on the perception of friendliness.

Finally, authenticity positively influences customer satisfaction when the task is performed well by the salesperson (Grandey et al., 2005). Probably, observing and reporting signals of happiness on customers' faces (i.e. smiles and friendly gestures) during the ending phase of the service encounter cannot be considered a proof of customer satisfaction, but it must be certainly close to it.

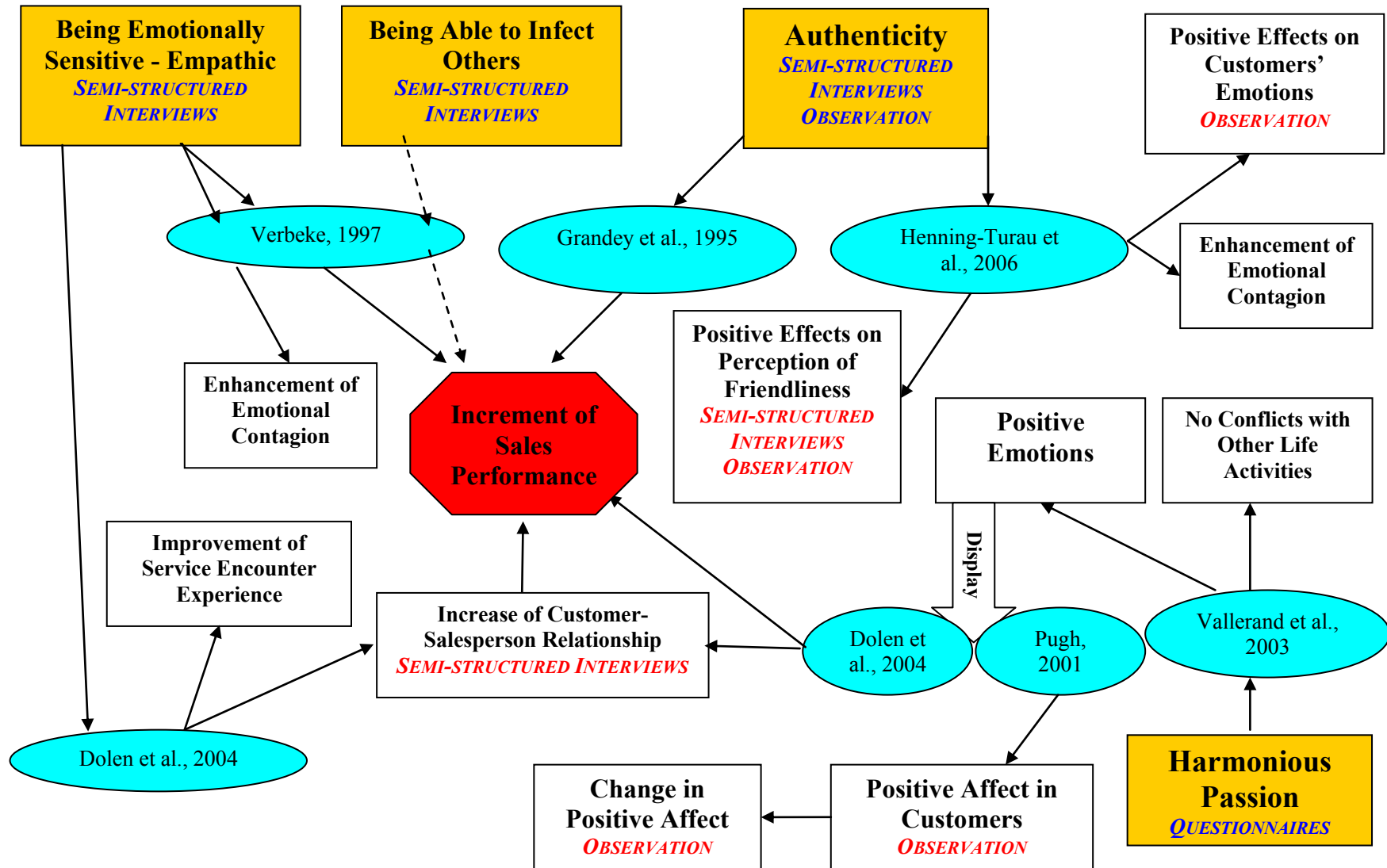
The high rate of business failure demonstrated by this industry and the low revenue level reported by store owners during semi-structured interviews are somewhat contradictory with the positive outcomes that literature seems to relate to the characteristics found in the industry. Converging evidence emerged as well from the first data gathered in the present research.

Harmonious passion, ability to infect others with your own passion, capacity of being emotionally sensitive or empathic, authenticity and display of authentic emotions are some of the HPI industries' characteristics previously discussed and found in the data collected. The literature maintains that there are positive outcomes connected to these characteristics which, in turn, may lead to further positive results. Some of these results have been either observed or reported during semi-structured interviews, or

both. Nonetheless, the increment of sales performance has yet to be measured (see Graph 7).

Further research is then required to assess this fundamental value. The present research, hence, draws attention to this crucial aspect that has to be investigated in future studies, testing the proposed model of HPI industries. Data on the impact of passion and other determinants on performance should be obtained through the analysis of sales, economic and financial indexes, or information directly collected from consumers. Other variables influencing the industry performance (i.e. economic crisis, foreign markets, strategic or managerial gaps, etc.) and their relative effects should be isolated and evaluated. Some insights, which shed light on some of these variables, are provided in another study (Rosin, 2011c).

Graph 7. HPI Industries' Characteristics Empirically Found and Correspondent Positive Outcomes Proposed by the Literature.



On graph 7 depicted above there are four gold boxes representing the characteristics emerged during the process of data collection and data analysis. Below their names appears the data source through which the characteristic was identified (i.e. questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observation). Each gold box is connected by an arrow to one or more light blue oval-shaped boxes each one representing a specific article in the literature. From this oval-shaped box departs one or more arrows directed to other rectangular boxes. These latter express the positive outcomes the literature associates to the relative causal characteristics. In the same box, below the outcomes names, there may be indicated in red the data source through which the outcome was reported or noticed.

Further Research Directions

It might be worthwhile to stress that the approach adopted to conduct the semi-structured interviews was inspired by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and open to any possible result. In this respect, all the findings here coded and reported were – for the most part – unexpected and not solicited during the interviews. In this manner, the present research identifies the main dimensions of HPI industries that further research should inquire. Further studies focused on the specific characteristics (e.g. desire to transform a passion into a job, to pass on your own passion to others, etc.) might provide a precise measure of the phenomenon's dimensions. Thus, an investigation protocol aimed to assess industries in their passionate extent can now be drawn from the findings discussed above.

As discussed above, the most important research enhancement concerns the need to evaluate the impact of passion and other characteristics defining the HPI industries on sales performance. Performing studies on the consumer side of the industry and obtaining data on sales and other indexes will be fundamental to test the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed industry model.

Further research development can be conducted along the demand side of the industry. Questionnaires, in-field experiments, in-field observations, pre-encounter and post-encounter interviews, focus groups, panels and other sources of data, collected

while focusing on customers, will define more precisely the boundaries of the entire framework.

Other geographical regions have to be tested to verify whether the same results can be found also out of the Italian boundaries. Evidences coming from forum discussions in foreign online communities and from quotations retrieved among professionals working in foreign board game industries seem to lead to this conclusion. For example, the owner of the first specialized board game store in Canada clearly states that there is no profit-related reason to enter the industry:

“One of the great misconceptions [in the gaming industry] is that you can invent a game and make money doing it. Seriously, I have a lot of game inventors who come here, and we give them advice if we can, but it is very difficult to actually make a living. It's difficult making a living making games, and it's difficult making a living selling games. (laughs)” [Ted Adachi – Le Valet d’Cœur – Montreal]

At the same time, one of the most popular employee who works for the most important U.S. board game company and sells and explains game rules to customers precisely describes how display of positive emotions, authenticity, missionary motivation, and very likely passion contagion phenomenon, take also place on the other side of the Atlantic:

“Well, teaching games is a lot of fun for me. I really enjoy playing games, but I enjoy teaching games just as much. In addition, teaching games gives me a sense of satisfaction that I don't get from playing games. I truly believe in the good that playing board games and card games can bring to a family and friends, so when I teach people how to play games, it feels to me like I have the possibility of giving people something that will bring them joy in the future.” [Scott Tepper – Rio Grande Games]

Further studies should then extend the range of HPI industries to other sectors. In general, most of the leisure industries should be good candidates and be part of the

HPI industry set. Sports such as skiing, snowboarding, skating, rollerblading, biking; other leisure activities as playing music instruments, collecting stamps, reading comics, collecting and listening to vinyl records, and so forth have proved to be passionate real-life contexts in which most of the professionals may be characterized by the same elements defining a HPI industry. Moreover, in the field of arts and culture, there is evidence of passionate motivation which is typical of the HPI industry. A quotation taken from the speech of one of the most important actor in the Italian fine arts heritage conservation field says:

“I went all out with my passion and enthusiasm. This because without passion you won’t get anything!” [Franca Coin – Venice International Foundation – Gleam Team Project]

In this quote, passion seems to be the kingpin of the whole activity exerted in the field. Its author generalizes the central role of passion to the entire field of interest.

Many other quotes or data can be gathered to extend the research. Nonetheless, an important step ahead has to be taken in the psychological research domain to better and deeper understand the mechanism of passion contagion among people and groups of people (Vallerand, 2010). Concrete results, in this respect, will provide further strength to the formulation of effective marketing strategies with significant implications on the managerial practice and on the economy of passion.

CONCLUSION

The present research builds on theory and has identified a new industry model named “high passion intensity industries”. The set of HPI industries is not empty. There is at least one industry that belongs to it: The Italian board game industry. HPI industries are fundamentally characterized by 1) salespersons who decide to work in a leisure industry because of their passion for the leisure-related activity and maintain this passion throughout their career; 2) passion is the most important motivation even with respect to profit; 3) salespersons in the industry display naturally felt emotions during service encounter. Further research is needed to increase the set’s memberships.

Relevant and positive managerial implications in terms of customer satisfaction, customer’s positive affect, improvement of salesperson-customer relationship, and increased sales performance emerged from the discussion of the empirical results combined with the findings from the literature on passion, emotional labor, and emotional contagion. In spite of all these strengths, the empirical context analyzed shows an extremely high rate of business failure. The economic crisis and foreign country competition cannot fully explain the overall unsuccessful performance of this industry. Such a bad performance, in fact, was there also before the advent of the economic crisis and the development of an online market in the industry. The cause, hence, arises from the inadequacy of the current managerial toolkit to comprehend and exploit all the positive implications deriving from passion. The proposition of this new industry model centred on passion of professionals reveals the need for new marketing and managerial tools, together with the adoption of a new organizational perspective. Relationships and strategies along the supply chain have to be revised. This will be discussed in details in the next two articles, as part of the PhD thesis which the present research belongs to.

The relevance of the present research lies also in the timeliness with which it intercepts this contemporary trend highlighted in recent sociological and economic studies (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 1997; O’Tool and Lawler, 2006; Frey, 1997). The choice of a job motivated by a passion for a leisure-related activity

represents the achievement of self-expression and the freedom that – nowadays – characterizes an entire industry. This phenomenon was unconceivable only twenty years ago and, drawn by the most economically developed countries, it is destined to play a major role in the economy.

TRIBES OF PROFESSIONALS: TOWARD A NEW TRIBAL MARKETING APPROACH

ABSTRACT

Assuming the inadequacy of the 4 (or “n”) P’s marketing model to address the recent challenges of the global market, I would like to propose a tribal approach as having the capacity to capture those fundamental elements of an industry which would otherwise go unnoticed or be misunderstood. I would therefore like to suggest the introduction of the tribe of professionals as a new concept capable of extending and improving the neo-tribal framework. I will argue here that this new subject represents a strategic and unexploited – as it was previously unknown – asset for the market. Its strategic importance derives from factors such as its centrality in market relationships, the proximity of the retailer to the consumer and its related capability to transfer passion from one consumer to another. The dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) is thus adopted to provide a solid theoretical framework for defining the concept and properties of passion. The role played by the other actors in the market in fostering such a process is crucial. The empirical arena chosen to test the proposed model is the Italian board game industry. Some managerial implications and further extension of this research are discussed at the end.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the traditional marketing approach based on the “kotlerian” model of the “n” P’s (with $n \geq 4$) and the process of segmentation, have turned out to be inadequate to deal with changes in the global market. Several critiques and attempts to adjust the model (Gladwell, 2002; Costantinides, 2006) have identified the limits of this approach, although it continues to be dominant. In particular, the marketer’s technique of grouping customers into segments that he has himself determined, maximizing on the internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity of certain socio-demographical characteristics (Kotler, 1997), has been shown not to capture the real nature of the market. By using this technique a lot of opportunities to satisfy and improve the relationship with the customer have been missed. The market and consumer fragmentation (Fabris, 2003), together with the ineffectiveness of traditional communication techniques, push firms to look for new strategic solutions which move away from the mass market approach (Cova, Giordano, and Pallera, 2007). Thus, in the present work, the neo-tribal approach (Cova and Cova 2002) has been adopted because it appears to better capture those facets of consumer behavior which are particularly important in marketing research and practice.

The purpose of this research is to extend the tribal perspective through the analysis and reinterpretation of the market structure. It aims to complete the theoretical framework which focuses on the tribal phenomena by introducing a new element: the tribe of traders. In the marketing field, the neo-tribal approach has, until now, always paid attention to tribes of consumers. These can be considered to be a community of consumers sharing a passion for a product, a brand, or a consumption activity. The main role played by the product or activity in question is the function of linkage among consumers (Cova, 19997; Cova, 1999). Marketers have traditionally looked at this heterogeneous group of people as a potential target for them to address their products at, and for them to interact with. In this essay I would like to show that there are other important passion-sharing groups of people which marketers need to pay attention to, in the competitive scenario: the tribes of professionals. In other words, retailers, wholesale

dealers, and manufacturers in certain industries are connected by their passion for the same activity or product. By answering the research question: “What are the characteristics of this new collective tribe?”, the research allows us to distinguish tribes of professionals from amongst the consumer tribes. Furthermore, it helps to understand how the existence of a tribe of professionals can represent a strategic asset for its industry. I will put forward an enriched framework capable of shedding light on consumer and organizational behavior issues in tribal contexts. As a consequence, a new approach to these markets characterized by the presence of tribes of consumers and tribes of professionals will be required.

The theoretical contribution proposed here aims to tackle one of the most important criticisms made of the “relatively young” tribal marketing approach: its limited exploitability in the market. Although it allows us to better understand consumer behavior and market dynamics, the tools it offers to address and pursue major marketing goals are still underdeveloped, difficult to apply and less efficient when compared to those proposed by the traditional approach more than twenty years ago. The enrichment of the tribal framework offered here improves the range, the efficiency and the effectiveness of the marketing tools available by: 1) increasing strategic options for marketing management and 2) broadening the boundaries of the tribal environment by the inclusion of new potential targets (subjects) for marketing strategies (the tribe of traders). In other words it offers the opportunity to improve the tribal framework by adopting a new vantage point.

The research process, then, can be divided into three main phases: a) showing the existence of the tribe of traders as a new, and previously unknown, subject, b) illustrating characteristics peculiar to this tribe, and c) pointing out how this subject represents a strategic asset for its industry. Consideration will be given in the next article to the managerial opportunities opened up by the disclosure of such a new “tribal actor” in the market (Rosin, 2011c).

Tribes of professionals can be found only in certain industries nowadays. One characteristic of tribes of professionals is the frequent establishment of friendships between competitors and entrepreneurs working in the same industry. Such friendships

do not necessarily spring from inter-company business activities. This network of passionate competitors and professionals, cemented by non-economic bounds, is counterintuitive if examined in the light of classical economic theory. It represents the expression of a recent global sociological trend that records the tendency to choose activities in line with the achievement of self-realization and the abandonment of traditional values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 1997). It's a process of liberation from the traditional constraints which guided people towards simply satisfying their basic needs (Maslow 1954/1987). This process is taking place in most economically developed countries. As such, the constitution of tribes of professionals is a phenomenon destined to play an increasing role in the market.

The following chapter discusses the three main theoretical approaches proposed in response to the inadequacy of the dominant marketing model. These approaches are linked by the fil-rouge of passion. They will be presented in chronological order and a summary of their similarities and differences will be presented in Table 1. Then, the wider tribal approach will be narrowed to focus on marketing issues. The most recent contribution to marketing literature will be briefly explained in section two in order to outline the findings which this research builds upon. Section three pays particular attention to the methodology employed to collect and analyze the data. In section four, the empirical domain where the model has been tested will be presented. The results of the tests will be shown and then discussed. Opportunities for future research will then be expounded and a conclusion will be reached.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Subcultures of Consumption, Brand Communities and Consumer Tribes

Alongside their alternative perspectives on the currently prevailing marketing framework, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) analyzed the phenomenon of Harley Davidson bikers, shedding light on what they named a “subculture of consumption”. In other words, a group of people, spontaneously divided into subgroups, who decided autonomously to gather around a product/brand – Harley Davidson bikes – projecting onto it a wide range of meanings, values and symbols. The product, then, no longer plays the role of being a simple means of transportation. Rather it becomes a link between people: The heart of the subculture. Individuals within the subculture of consumption refuse the values created and imposed by “external” society and substitute them with new values, deliberately created within the same subculture. Any attempt to pursue marketing goals, defining customers who belong to a subculture of consumption by using the usual parameter (i.e., age, gender, wealth, job position, etc.) turns out to be ineffective. Therefore a fundamental need presents itself, to consider the existence of this new geographically-localized social reality of consumption, to understand it and its values (Schouten – McAlexander 1995).

Further support for this theory can be found in the literature introducing the concept of brand community (Muniz – O’Guinn 2001). This can be considered to be a social structure that reflects the features of traditional communities¹ but stands out due to its commercial orientation towards a particular brand. In general, these brand communities tend to form themselves around brands which exhibit a strong image, a well-rooted tradition and compete in a highly aggressive environment. Thanks to current information and communication technologies, brand communities are not constrained by geographical boundaries and the face-to-face relationship is no longer necessary – although it is still possible. The three main features that a social entity requires to be considered a brand community are: 1) the collective sense of being

¹ Defined as something other than a simple space and as “a common understanding of a shared identity” (Muniz – O’Guinn 2001, p. 413), or “a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds” (Bender 1978, p. 145).

connected with other members that leads to the consciousness of being different from those who are outside the community, 2) evidence of rituals and traditions within the community and 3) the sense of obligation felt by members toward other members of the same community (Muniz – O’Guinn 2001).

The most important theoretical contribution that underpins the foundation of the neo-tribal perspective comes from Maffesoli (1996). The sociologist affirms that the current historical period we are passing through – the post-modern era – signifies the end of individualistic culture and a switch to a tendency for social aggregation. The way in which society is moving toward the values of re-aggregation conceives the neo-tribes as a set of fragmented and varied pieces, coming from the past experience of the mass market culture (Maffesoli 1996; Shields 1996). These fragments are represented by the neo-tribes. From a sociological point of view the neo-tribal formations are ephemeral, scattered and not restricted to a specific geographical area. They are also dynamic, in the sense that they can disappear and then reappear at a later point in time.

The contribution of Maffesoli has been successfully borrowed and transferred into the marketing field by several authors, creating a sort of Mediterranean marketing mainstream, proposing the recent and successful - according to a number of publications and authors involved (Cova – Kozinets – Shankar 2007) – tribal marketing approach (Cova – Cova 2002). Defining the boundaries of this social entity formed by individuals linked by a shared passion or emotion, it is useful to observe how such boundaries differ from those defining the concepts of the subculture of consumption and the brand community. The tribal marketing approach is characterized by a partial overlapping of the three types of conceptualizations. In the marketing perspective, the absence of geographical boundaries and the ephemeral nature have to be considered together with the presence of numerous subgroups within the same tribe. These subgroups, as in the subculture of consumption, exhibit a heterogeneous and relatively autonomous way to relate with, and belong to, the tribe. They are influenced by the dominant culture of the geographical area where they reside and are less stable than the subculture’s subgroups. Hence neo-tribe is just a short way of referring to what has

properly been defined as a “neo-tribal constellation” to highlight the importance, the variety and the dynamic nature of the subgroups of which the tribe is made up.

Table 1: A comparison of the three social settings: subculture of consumption; brand community; and neo-tribal constellation

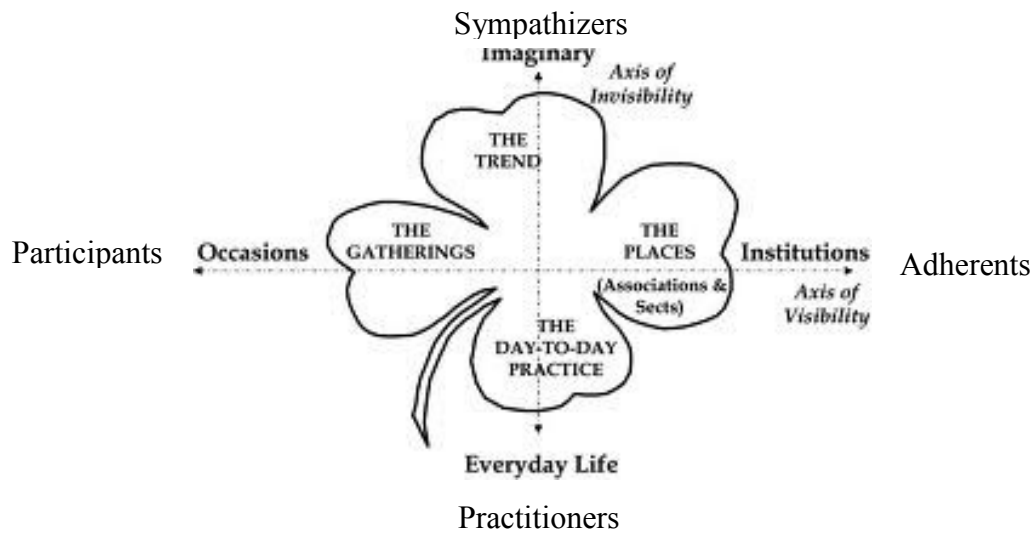
	Subculture of Consumption	Brand Community	Neo-Tribal Constellation
Interaction	Face-to-face	Online and/or face-to-face	Mainly face-to-face (but also online)
Commercial nature	Yes: product or brand	Yes: brand	Not necessary: also activities and passions
Degree of geographical localization	Strong	Weak	Intermediate
Social marginality Vs integration	Refusal of dominant values	Acceptance of dominant values	Variable
Degree of adhesion	Very strong	Relatively strong	Variable: 4 levels
Defined internal structure	Medium	Minimal	Maximum
Stability	Absolutely stable	Relatively stable	Internally ephemeral
Common features	Shared passion and evidence of rituals and traditions		

Table 1 provides a summary that helps to assess the main differences and similarities among the three aforementioned definitions of social settings. These settings are the expression of the effort to understand and react to postmodernist social change. They can also be interpreted as an attempt to meet the need for new marketing tools and viewpoints to cope with the revolution caused by networking technology and the consequent knowledge empowerment of the 21st century consumer (Kozinets 1999). For the sake of marketing research, the more general and ample nature of neo-tribal constellations may be narrowed down to the rank of tribes which consume, or brand tribes (Cova – Pace 2006). In this manner it is possible to equate the concept of a tribe

to those of a subculture of consumption and a brand community, enabling the first concept almost to encompass the other two.

The members of a tribe, unlike the members of the subculture of consumption and the brand community, may exhibit a different level of adherence to the tribe (see Graph 1). In particular, it has been suggested that you can divide the members of a tribe into four groups according to the role they play within it: 1) the adherents or devotees who show the maximum level of involvement and have institutionalized their position within the tribe, 2) the participants, who join in with gatherings, conventions and other occasions, 3) the practitioners who practice and express their passion in everyday life, and finally 4) the sympathizers who exhibit a positive feeling toward the passion or the activity which constitutes the core of the tribe (Cova 2003). At the same time, there are two main axes along which tribal activity is expressed: the axis of visibility and the axis of invisibility. Along the first one, the members of the tribe reveal themselves by participating in gatherings such as conventions or other events – on the one end – and by attending the institutional places where the day-to-day practice is carried out (such as stores, pitches, gyms, and so on) – on the other end. The axis of invisibility represents the practice of passionate tribal activity that stays in the background and is not immediately visible to the public. The day-to-day practice of a solitary bicycle rider is something that is not visible to the community and belongs to the personal experience of the tribal individual; something he or she lives every day. On the other extremity of the axis there is an imaginary dimension represented by trends, the movement, and fashion (Cova, 1999; Cova, and Cova 2002). The four roles played by the members of the tribe (adherents, participants, practitioners, and sympathizers) are associated to a specific locus along the two axes (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. The four roles played in a consumer tribe by its members along the main axis of invisibility and visibility (source: Cova and Cova, 2002)



The latest theoretical developments on tribal marketing have led to the definition of four new categories of consumer tribes by looking at the tribal phenomenon from a different perspective. Four hybrid forms of tribes have been mapped onto a double-axis graph which exhibits the “market appropriation” units of measure on the x-axis, and the “market annexation” on the y-axis (Cova – Kozinets – Shankar 2007). The degree of appropriation identifies the extent to which a tribe takes away control of the product from the marketers (i.e., the way of conceiving of it and perceiving it) by projecting on it its own tribal values, meanings, symbols and identities. A suitable example of a high degree of appropriation is offered by the Harley Davidson subculture of consumption studied by Schouten and McAlexander (1995). The degree of annexation stands for the extent to which a tribe, or some of its components, has consciously decided to intervene in the marketplace in order to be involved, or at least to actively interfere, with the economic process related to that product. A specific example of this was put forward by Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007). It considered the Star Trek devotees who decided to create their own science

fiction show and broadcast it on the web. In this example, the three authors have identified four different types of consumer tribes:

- 1) double agents, characterized by a minimum of market appropriation. In other words the members tend to re-appropriate services and products without conscious opposition to the consumption system,
- 2) plunderers, exhibiting the highest degree of market appropriation and interacting with the product through hijacking or subversive acts,
- 3) activators, characterized by the minimum level of market annexation. An example would be fans of the Royal Family. They underline how tribes don't express the social intention of changing or fighting the system,
- 4) entrepreneurs, placed at the highest level of market annexation. They relate to the consumption activity, joining the market and also playing an active role on the production side of the industry.

The category of consumer tribe as entrepreneur emphasizes the dichotomic role of its members, who join the market whilst also carrying out consumption and production activities. At first sight, it may look like the concept of tribes of professionals which follows – and which is discussed here for the first time – resembles the tribes of entrepreneurs mentioned in recent literature (Cova, Kozinets and Shankar 2007). It is therefore necessary to make a distinction between the two definitions. Firstly, it is a matter of institutional role: The tribe of traders is made up of subjects who have decided to switch from the role of consumer to the role of traders. This role is officially recognized by the customers and specifically governed by law. It places traders in between the manufacturer and the consumer, giving them, as will later be shown, a privileged position in implementing effective marketing strategies. The tribe as entrepreneur, on the other hand, is made up of subjects who consciously maintain their role as consumers. Secondly, it's a matter of purpose: While the members of the tribe of traders decide to assume their roles considering profit as a decisive variable, members of the tribe as entrepreneur do not. Thirdly, it's a matter of function: While the core activity of the trader is limited to buying and selling, the entrepreneur tribe

member moves toward the development and the creation of new products, carrying out what can be considered a “traditional” production activity.

Despite the great impact such a new institutional and tribal subject might be expected to have on business discipline and practice, in terms of enhancing understanding of consumer behavior and customer relationships, facilitating new marketing strategies and even helping to determine companies’ organizational structures, marketing literature on the topic does not consider it, revealing a chasm which the present work aims to fill.

These three approaches contribute to form what is nowadays called non-conventional marketing. In this respect, the ten principles of non-conventional marketing elaborated by Giordano and Pallera (Cova, Giordano, and Pallera 2008) provide the general directions to follow in order to adjust marketing strategy toward a neo-tribal approach. The principles are listed here:

1. **From Brand DNA to Viral DNA** – Plan the viral nature of your brand before doing anything else.
2. **From Target to People** – There are no targets to hit, but rather people to resonate with.
3. **From Life Styles to Moments of Life** – Come out of your office and enter the tribes in their moments of life.
4. **From Brand Awareness to Brand Affinity** – Don’t try to please anyone but make choices and feed your affinities.
5. **From Brand Image to Brand Reputation** – Don’t try to build up an image but win a good reputation.
6. **From Advertising to Advertainment** – Don’t aim at persuasion, but entertain and stimulate conversation.
7. **From Media Planning to Media Hunting** – Exchange your media planner for a “cool hunter” of consumption.
8. **From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting** – Give up the mass media and think of how long the tail is.

9. **From Market Position to Sense Providing** – Don't look for market positioning, but for your meaning within society.

10. **Don't Do but Be Communication!** – What you should aim for is consistency, from beginning to end.

As can be seen, these are general principles that might be considered less normative and precise in indicating operative marketing tools than those deriving from the Kotlerian marketing mix approach.

Passion and Passion Contagion

One of the most important concepts underpinning the neo-tribal marketing approach, as well as the brand communities and subcultures of consumption, is the passion felt and shared among the tribal members. In spite of its relevance, there is not a shared and solid conceptualization of passion in managerial literature (Cardon, 2008). Therefore for the purposes of this thesis, I will adopt the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) as a reliable and well developed theoretical framework capable of capturing and explaining the emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of the social settings being examined here. The dualistic model of passion (DMP) addresses passion for activities in particular, while in many cases, the neo-tribal approach refers to activities, brands and products. It should, however, be noted that it's the consumption of a product that really matters to consumer tribes. It's riding your bike, skating on your rollerblades or watching Star Trek sci-fi series that makes you join the tribe or community. Riding, watching, eating, using, playing, collecting, and so forth, are all product-related activities for which an individual can feel a passion. Thus in tribal industries the connection between the product(s) and the related activity is almost inseparable. Given its interest in passion for activities the DMP is therefore suitable to be adopted in such a marketing framework.

The dualistic model of passion (DMP) defines passion for activities as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one likes (or even loves), finds important (or highly values), and in which one invests time and energy (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2003). Therefore, the concept of passion consists of three main parts: 1) the emotional part (the individual likes or loves the activity), 2) the cognitive part (the individual finds it important or highly values it), and 3) the behavioral part (the individual invests time and energy in it). Moreover, it has to be considered that the passionate activity becomes part of a person. In other words, it contributes to defining the individual self through an integrative process that can be performed in an autonomous way or in a controlled one (Deci, and Ryan, 2000; Ryan, and Deci, 2003). For example, people who play basketball as their passionate activity will define themselves as basketball players, just as passionate board game players will

define themselves as gamers (Vallerand, 2008, Vallerand, 2010). Depending on the way in which they integrate (autonomous Vs controlled), individuals will develop either a harmonious passion or an obsessive passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). This twofold nature of passion represents the origin of the name of the dualistic model of passion. In general, individuals who are harmoniously passionate for an activity can decide when to stop the activity or stop performing the passionate activity freely and without any internal conflict or pressure. Conversely, obsessively passionate individuals experience an almost permanent status of conflict with other life activities, finding it difficult to decide whether or not to give up the passionate activity when it conflicts with other duties (Vallerand et al., 2003).

Being part of a tribe entails a sort of frequent contact with other passionate members of the tribe. Moreover, contacts with people from outside the tribe take place particularly during those occasions placed on the aforementioned axis of visibility (see graph 1), i.e. gatherings, institutional places, and so forth. Through these contacts an important phenomenon takes place naturally: the contagion of passion among individuals (Cardon, 2008; Vallerand 2010). In other words, the passion and the enthusiasm can be transferred from one subject (or several subjects) to another subject (or several subjects). As has been noted, one of the most important constitutive elements of passion is emotion. Thus, during passion contagion phenomena, emotional contagion processes (Hatfield et al., 1994) take place as well, with the two types of effect nestling one inside the other. The literature on emotional contagion has defined it as "a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes" (Barsade, 2002).

METHODS

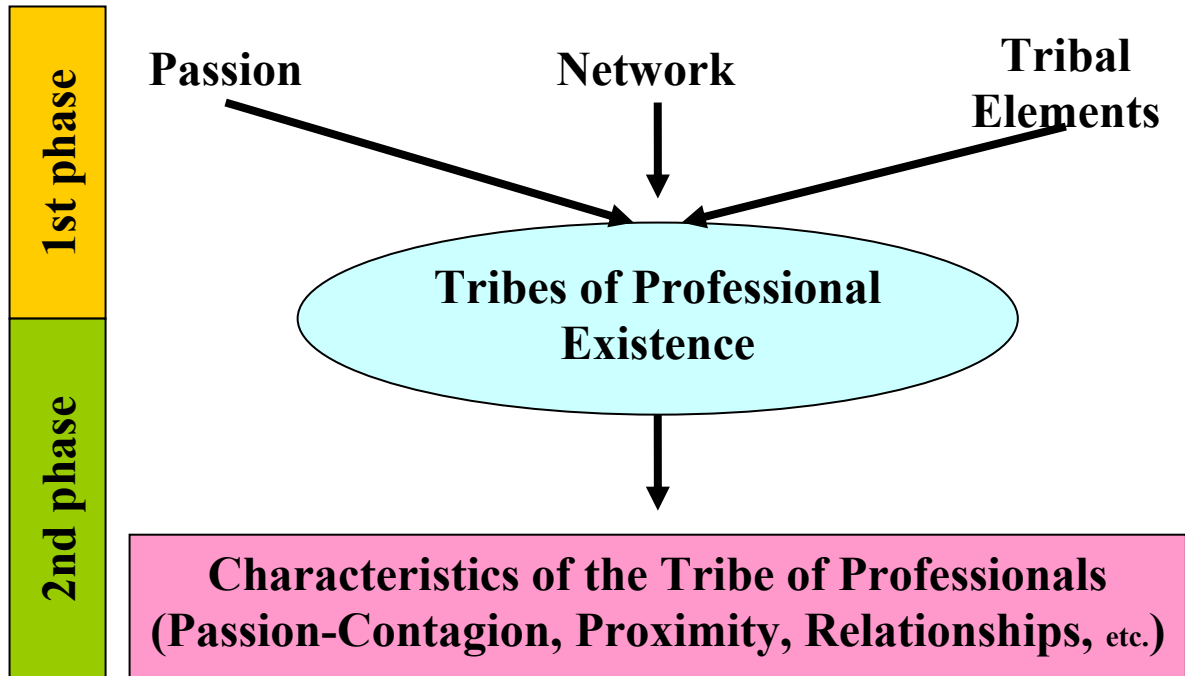
Conceptual framework

Adopting an eminently inductive approach, the present work shows the existence of the tribes of professionals and highlights its main characteristics through a single case study. The basic idea consists in choosing a consumer tribal environment (market or niche) and testing the model described below (see graph 1).

The conceptual framework proposed here is an almost linear scheme that can be replicated in any social setting to test the existence of tribes of professionals. It consists of two main phases. Firstly showing that neo-tribes really exist. There are a series of conditions all of which must be met to prove existence of the tribe. The first condition is a shared passion among those subjects being studied. The second condition is the existence of a network between professionals. It can be a more or less formalized and structured network, characterized by online connections but there must also be interaction in non-virtual places. Finally, the third condition is the evidence of tribal elements within the empirical context being analyzed. They may be symbols, legendary figures, icons, rituals, costumes or cult places (Cova 1997, Cova 2003).

Once it has been established that all three conditions have been fulfilled and therefore the existence of a tribe of professionals has been demonstrated, it is possible to move on to the second phase: the study of its characteristics, such as proximity to other subjects, the extent of the passion-contagion phenomenon, and the relationship with other tribes (see graph 2). A further step in the research might be a closer look at the actual and potential effects of such a new tribal subject in the market.

Diagram 2. The conceptual framework



Given that the network is an essential constitutive element of the tribe, networking and communications are necessarily embedded in neo-tribal settings. It is therefore important to consider the role of those actors who take care of these aspects, facilitating by their very nature the communication and formation of links between subjects in tribal settings (i.e., associations, event organizers, P.R., journalists, etc.). Their activity is, in fact, capable of affecting the relationship and the performance of tribes of professionals.

The Empirical Context

The Italian board game industry has been conveniently chosen as the empirical domain in which to conduct research to show the existence, and to study the characteristics of the tribes of professionals. Among the different research opportunities available, such as comics, vinyl records, certain sport industries, and other tribal

industries studied previously (Kozinets et al., 2008), I have chosen the board game industry for two main reasons:

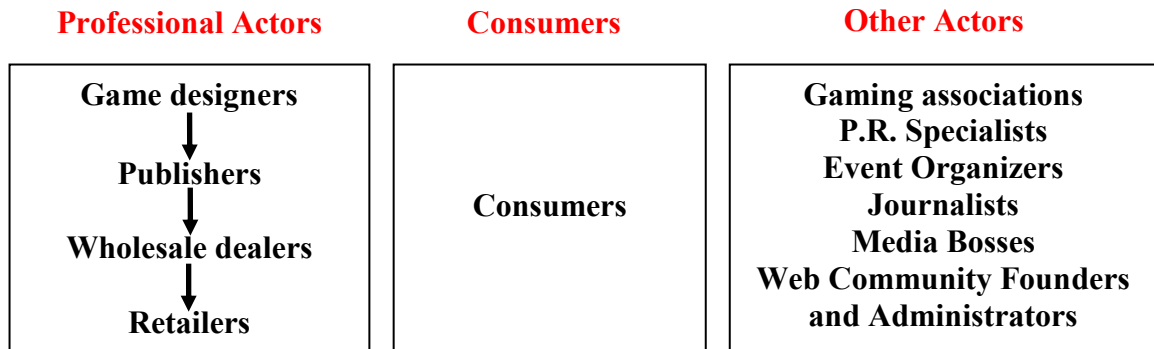
- 1) its **accessibility**, due to :
 - a. the availability of many professional actors to collaborate in the research, due to their natural tendency to socialize, verified during the research process;
 - b. the current status of the industry, in need of development and visibility;
 - c. the involvement and the contacts of the researcher which allowed the achievement of an emic perspective (Pike, 1967; Creswell, 1998);
- 2) its tribal **nature**, as already witnessed by the recent article written on the intercultural implications concerning global brands under a neo-tribal approach, which has studied the Warhammer² board game tribe in two different geographical contexts – France and the United States (Cova, Pace, and Park, 2007).

For the purposes of this study the board game industry will be defined as comprising role playing games (RPG), collectible and living card games (CCGs, NCCGs, and LCGs), miniature games and other types of table game.

The board game industry typically consists of three groups of subjects: professional actors, customers, and other operators. The first group (professional actors) comprises subjects professionally involved in the industry, such as game designers and graphic designers, publishers and manufacturers, wholesale dealers, and retailers. The second group consists of consumers who do not play any role in the industry's organization or do not have any direct economic interest in it. The third group stays in the middle, in that it plays quite an important and functional role in the organization of the industry but its members do not consider it their main job. Despite contributing to the industry's growth, they do not pursue lucrative goals. This means that the required resources to live come from a work activity carried out in another industry (see Diagram 1).

² Warhammer is a miniatures game simulating battles among opposing armies in a fantasy 3D scenario whose trade mark is owned by Games Workshop: <http://www.games-workshop.com/gws/> .

Diagram 1: Board Game Industry's Actors



Given the nature of the topic, essentially concerning the relationships between individuals within the same industry (i.e. professionals vs. professionals, professionals vs. consumers, other actors vs. professionals, other actors vs. consumers), their role and shared passion, the strategy of interviewing individual operators in the industry has the aim of picturing the entire Italian board game industry as a single unit of analysis.

It is worthwhile to specify that – as well as more generally argued by Geertz (1973) – the present work does not study a consumption context in order to deepen the understanding of such a setting, but rather it unfolds its analysis in a consumption context with the aim of expanding general knowledge, generating new concepts and proposing new theories.

Data Collected

A series of strategies have been implemented to ensure the quality of the research. A thoughtful triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods has been employed to lend reliability to the conclusion formulated here (Patton, 2002). The triangulation of multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources also shows the consistency of the conclusion reached. Finally, given the involvement of the researcher in the empirical context studied and the consequent risk of subjectivity during the

process of data collection and analysis, the research was supervised by another scholar. Playing the role of devil’s advocate, the existence of the supervisor created a sort of triangulation of researchers, giving credibility and consistency to the conclusion reached at the end of the research.

The process of data collection begun in 2008 with a first series of **six informal interviews** held with key informants within the empirical setting chosen. Two publishers, two board game designers involved in board games distribution on the Italian market, and two store owners who are also board game designers were interviewed. They reported – through open interviews – clear evidence of a passion characterizing the industry. By indicating a wide area of investigation, the first round of preliminary in-depth interviews allowed the preparation of a first questionnaire. The process of data collection is briefly schematized in table 1 and described hereafter.

Table 1. The process of data collection

	Data source	Addressee	Nature	Year(s)
6	Informal preliminary interviews	Professionals	Qualitative	2008
58	First round of questionnaires	Professionals+Others	Quantitative	2008-2009
5	In-depth interviews	Professionals	Qualitative	2008-2009
5	Participant and non-participant observations (field notes)	Professionals + Consumers	Qualitative	2008-2010
7	Polls (to consumers)	Consumers	Quantitative	2008-2011
+	Secondary data (documents, artifacts, images, etc.)	Industry	Qualitative	2008-2011
101	Second round of questionnaires	Professionals	Quantitative	2010-2011
30	Semi-structured interviews	Professional Retailers	Qualitative	2010-2011

The first source of quantitative data consists of **58 questionnaires**, each one containing 31 questions (21 multiple choice, 8 yes/no questions and 2 open questions). The questions were asked by means of telephone interviews conducted with as many

professional actors and other operators in the industry as possible. Here follows a brief list of questions drawn from the questionnaire:

- A.1) How often do you play board games?
- A.2) In your game sessions, how many people play (excluding yourself)?
- A.3) How often do your relatives participate in your game sessions?
- A.4) How long have you been playing board games?
- A.5) On a scale from 1 (= it changes every time) to 5 (=I always play with the same people), how stable do you think the group of people you play with is?
- A.6) What motivated you to enter this market?
- A.7) Are there enough meetings between professionals and other actors of the industry?
- A.8) How much do gaming professionals or other actors participate, in your opinion?

Another quantitative source of data used to address this, as yet undiscovered, group of customers is **seven polls** published in the most important Italian board game web site (La Tana dei Goblin³) which collaborated with the author of the present work providing invaluable assistance. The Polls concerned passion for playing board games (2), the network of players (3), and the transfer of such a passion (1) and a demographic characteristic – the age – of the respondents (1).

Five in-depth interviews were conducted by the organizer of the most important gaming event in Italy (more than 160.000 attendees), the owner of the first specialized board game store in Italy (who also owns an important distribution chain), the first woman to found and own a specialized board game store in Italy (one of the most important and well-known), the franchisee responsible for the most important Italian franchising chain, and the owner of a publishing company. During the interviews a series of open questions were posed and the answers were recorded. The questions concerned their attitude toward playing board games, their relationship with other subjects within the board game industry, and their participation in gaming events.

³ La Tana dei Goblin - <http://nuke.goblins.net/>.

They were asked also about possible recurrent elements of particularly representative characters within the industry.

Five in-field observations were carried out from 2008 until the end of 2010 with the purpose of understanding the behavior and interaction between subjects in the Italian board game industry. In particular, three observations took place in three board game stores and focused on the development of the in-store service encounter. One observation targeted a store owner with his friends during a crowded board game auction and one happened in a crowded board game convention and looked at the meeting of many professionals in one corner of the convention.

Documents found on the web, mainly represented by reports of interviews conducted by other subjects with important actors and entrepreneurs in the board game industry, observations and e-mails coming from the mailing list of the Italian board game professionals named “Kili” (acronym of *Kalendario Iniziative Ludiche Italiano*), were collected and stored in Atlas.TI, visual qualitative software for data analysis.

A second round of questionnaires was distributed to almost all those frequenting Italian specialized board game stores. Out of around 165 specialized stores, a sample of **101 questionnaires** was collected from as many salespeople. Most of them were store owners but, in certain cases, they were employees entrusted with the responsibility of running the store. In all cases these individuals had a direct and daily relationship with the customers. Besides assessing passion within the industry -measured through the Italian version of the passion scale (Vallerand et al., 2003)- some other important items were examined such as:

1. the intensity of the interaction with other store owners
2. the intensity of the interaction with other professional actors within the industry;
3. participation in board game events
4. the degree of connection to other means of communication within the industry (i.e., magazines, web communities, board game associations, etc.)

Finally, **30 semi-structured** interviews were performed with as many salespeople randomly extracted from the 101 previously surveyed. Two main questions were asked during the interview:

- 1) what motivated you to enter the board game industry in a professional capacity;
- 2) what is your relationship with your competitors, and what is your degree of interaction with them and with other professionals in the industry

64 responses were recorded for the first question and 22 for the more specific second question.

FINDINGS

The shared passion

Some preliminary findings emerge clearly from data and it might be useful to highlight them before analyzing the other data. The passion shared among professionals and other actors in the Italian board game industry concerns the passion for playing board games. It's a passion for a leisure activity that, as will be demonstrated, motivates professionals to enter the industry and start up their business. The same applies to those other actors in the industry who decided to found or join a board game association, organize events, take care of relationships in the board game industry, and so forth.

Moreover, there is a general overlapping of roles among the three groups of actors: Professionals, consumers and other actors. In general, almost all of them are gamers and, thus, consumers. Professionals appear to be the first endorsers of the products they deal with everyday in their jobs. There is also a role overlapping within the same group of professionals. Many publishers can be seen behind the counter at game fairs, while selling their products, or explaining game rules.

From the **preliminary informal interviews** it emerged that the Italian board game industry is characterized by professionals really passionate about board games. Beside the passion declared by all six key informants, some interesting anecdotes helped to assess the phenomenon. For example, the owner of the most important Italian publishing house used to do another job before entering the market. For the pure sake of his passion for gaming he first took over a loss-making game publishing firm. Then, he kept on buying out shares in other publishing companies gathering them together in a single group that nowadays is the biggest Italian games publisher. This part of the story was collected through the first interview conducted with a game distributor. It was partially confirmed and subsequently extended by another key informant (a game designer). The owner of the most important publishing company has the biggest private collection of board games comprising more than 14.000 different titles, and it is growing. An apartment that occupies an entire floor of a large building contains all his

games and two employees are paid to catalogue his board games, and keep them clean and in order. He usually invites people to play at his place and has opened a pub where everyone can play board games, have food & drinks, and dance tango (another activity he is passionate about). Basically, this important character on the Italian gaming scene, is pursuing his passions through work activities, sharing them with other (potential) gamers or passionate individuals. This anecdote together with other stories of gaming events, meetings with other colleagues, daily practice and past gaming experiences lived in first person by the informants, convinced the researcher to choose the Italian board game industry as a suitable tribal environment to test the existence of tribes of professionals.

After the preliminary informal interviews the process of data collection started off with a series of **58 questionnaires** distributed to and collected from professionals and other actors in the Italian board game industry between 2008 and 2009. Respondents of the sample are divided into two groups: 66% (38 questionnaires) are professionals who own or run publishing companies, wholesale distribution companies or retailing stores. The remaining 34% (20 questionnaires) of the individuals questioned play major roles in board game associations, board game event organization, game designing, etc. In the first group, the general reason for entering the board game industry in a professional capacity was their passion for board games. This applied to all but two respondents. Four other respondents, while still motivated by passion, were also motivated by other factors such as the desire to start up a business of their own, the chance to find a suitable place to set up a company, and so on. The members of the second group within the sample (non professional actors) were all motivated by the same reason: Passion for board games. Overall, those questioned believed that was a very important factor in the decision to start up a company or enter the board game industry in a professional capacity (an average of 3.95 on a 5-point Likert scale, $SD= 1.175$), and a relative majority of them stated that passion was the determining factor in that decision (mode = 5). All the respondents played board games and met their friends to play at least once a week. Similar results will be shown in the questionnaires completed by the tribes of consumers.

In-depth interviews clearly underline the passion of the informants who spontaneously tell of the strong natural presence of passion among all professional and non professional subjects in the industry. Some comments collected during in-depth interviews with professional or other actors follow:

“Speaking about the reason why one decides to open a business in this industry I would say: the reason is passion. If you think of the money you don’t enter this market professionally.” [Sofia – owner of Filosofia Games, publishing company]

“There is a new generation of retailers that established businesses in Italy over the last 20 years. It consists of passionate young guys [...]. Customers who enter a board game store therefore find a passionate gamer and not just a salesperson.” [Fernando – Game distributor and store owner]

“I have the opportunity of working with all those things I love and that have given me so much pleasure up to now! Every time I organize an event I throw myself into it 100%, attempting to transfer as much joy and emotion as I can to the public” [Emanuele – Event Organizer]

As can be seen here, the first two quotes refer to passion as something widely diffused in the market. The first and third ones also imply a natural passion for gaming among the informants. Also the second informant spontaneously defines himself not only as a passionate gamer, but as – probably – the most passionate gamer in Italy:

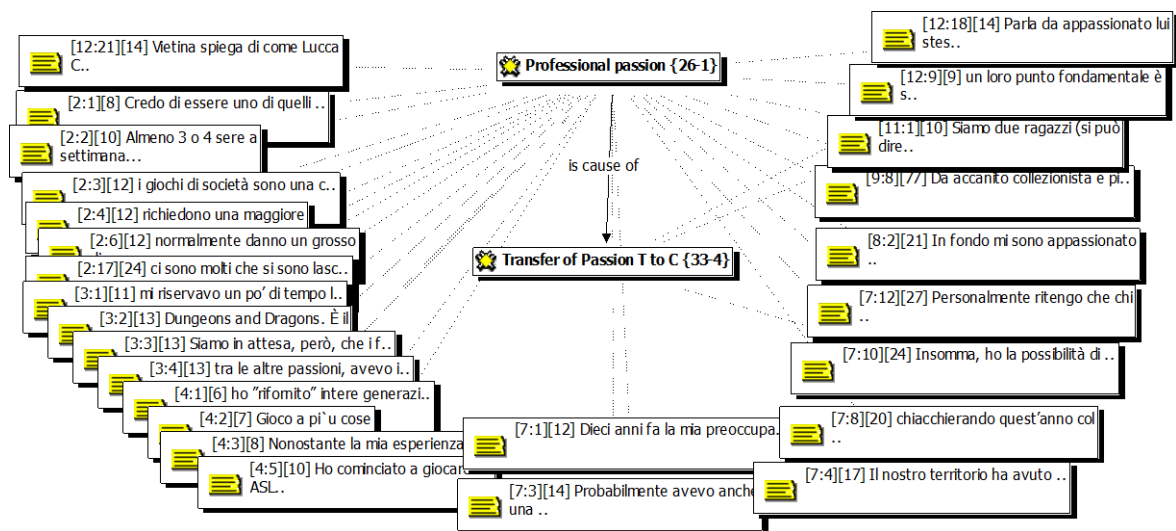
“I think I’m one of those who have played the most in Italy. Given the job I do and the passion I have... I’ve been playing since the 70’s. I’ve played around 400 different games.” [Fernando – Game distributor and store owner]

All the five in depth interviews stress the concept of passion as characterizing both themselves and the entire industry. The same applies to the five **observations**,

three of which were conducted during in-store service encounters, one during a board game auction and the fifth one during a gaming convention. Passion has been expressed by professionals both through the wide knowledge of games shown to others, and through the enthusiasm or even the excitement exhibited while interacting with customers and colleagues (Rosin, 2011a).

Data gathered on 34 **documents** and emails available online (comprising interviews conducted by journalists and other media staff) have been coded and graphically pictured through Atlas TI version 5.0. In particular, 26 quotations show how passion is widely diffused among professionals in the Italian board game industry (see graph 2).

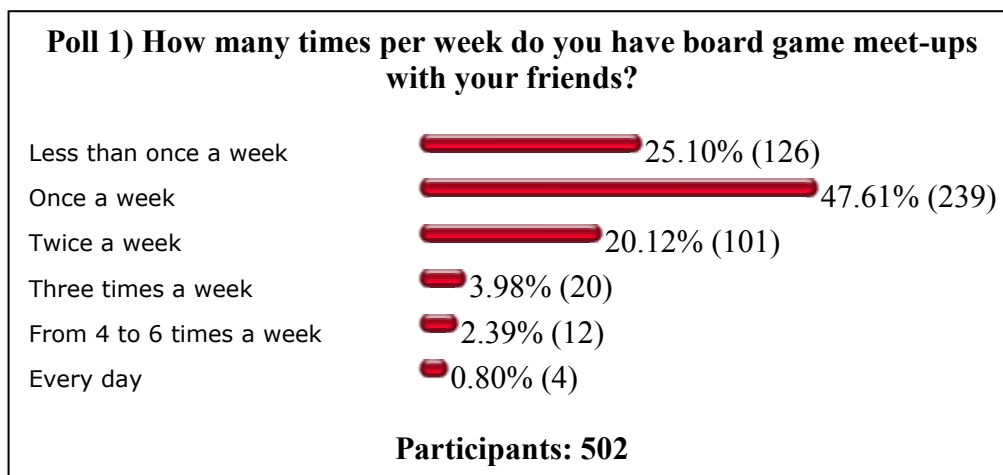
Graph 2. Passion shown by professionals: 26 quotes from documents represented by AtlasTI



As can be noticed in graph 2, the professionals' passion for board games is the element that allows the same passion to be transferred to others, both professionals and consumers. Moreover, some comments refer both to the concept of a professional's passion and to the phenomenon of passion transfer. Other evidence of passion among

professionals can be found on several web sites run by companies working in the Italian board game industry. A resume of such evidence is reported in other studies (Rosin, 2011c).

Seven polls have been conducted among the community of gamers, only part of which consists of professionals who attend the same forums and board game associations. In general they appear to play board games regularly and most of them (almost 75% of the 502 respondents) play one or more times per week.



These data show the gaming habits of the board game community. They also represent, to a certain extent, a measure of passion in the relative consumer tribe. By measuring the time invested in the passionate activity, the study assesses one of the four criteria defining passion according to the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2003).

A sort of proxy measure of another dimension of passion is the amount of money invested in purchasing board games in any given period. To some extent, it might represent the importance attributed to the activity. The following poll helps to evaluate this second dimension among the community of gamers (see poll 2).



The last round of **101 questionnaires** distributed to as many sales people in the Italian board game industry assessed both the level of passion and the level of obsessive and harmonious passion. The following results were recorded through the dualistic model’s scale of passion (Vallerand, 2003).

Passion criteria, measured as time invested in gaming activities, how much the activity is liked or loved, how much it is considered to be a passion by the respondent, how important the respondent feels it to be, results to be 5.79 (mean value) on a 7-point Likert scale of agreement, with a standard deviation equal to 0.806. Harmonious passion is equal to this and obsessive passion amounts to 2.29. Further details and comparisons with other industries have been already presented in other research (Rosin, 2011a.).

Finally, 30 **semi-structured** interviews to previously surveyed sales people reported 54 comments underpinning the wide diffusion of passion among sales people. Other studies have already shown this data extensively (Rosin, 2011a).

The Network

According to the conceptual framework elaborated and followed while conducting this research, the second constitutive element of the tribe of professionals is the existence of a network connecting them. Results show the existence of such a network.

The first round of **58 questionnaires** showed that all respondents met their friends to play board games at least once a week. All informants had already been to a gaming convention or fair. 75.4% of them are members of an online gaming community, and more than half of them are actively involved with the publication of a specialized board game magazine or website. Finally 87.5% of those professionals questioned had a gaming area available for customers or other attendees in their workplace. Through all these means (gaming conventions, board game magazines, online communities, etc.), professionals and other actors establish their affiliation to the tribal network, developing the communication and the transfer of passion for board games to others.

Observations conducted during gaming conventions and during a board games auction confirm the existence of a network among professionals. During the convention in particular, professionals and other actors from the industry met together in a corner of the main hall, close to the TV station of a channel dedicated to the streaming of board game events and other game-related programs named Meeple TV. Pats on the back, smiles, jokes and even board game matches with colleagues and old friends who work and operate in the industry were recorded.

In depth interviews also revealed evidence of a network connecting professionals together. The owner of a publishing company who organized a gaming event made it clear, first through an example relating to herself, and then with a generalized statement with regard to the entire industry, that there is a link between the various actors. She said,

“ Sure! For example of the three people I've invited here two are publishers and the other is a web-site manager. Two of them are staying at my home. It's a very friendly industry.” [Sofia – owner of Filosofia Games, publishing company]

At the same time, another wholesale dealer and store owner stated the following,

“At the moment the biggest fair in Italy is Lucca Games. There all the actors attend and meet together!” [Fernando – Game distributor and store owner]

Finally, Emanuele Vietina, the organizer of the most important board game event in Italy (Lucca Games) says that

“During Lucca Games professionals interact a lot with each other. [...] the system of relationships is very “fluid” and it allows the creation and the development of new patterns of commercial relations. Given that the industry is rather small, I believe that true friendships have flourished. They drink a beer; they go for dinner together... I really like a lot of people in this industry and not only for their professional capabilities but also as human beings.”

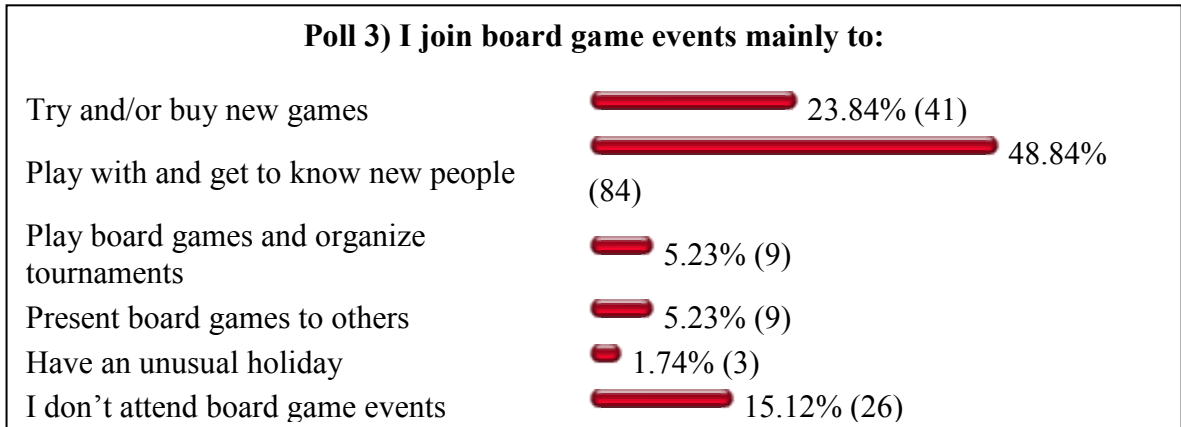
Massimo Rucci, the chief of franchising in Magic Market, one of the two biggest board games distributors in Italy, says: *“In Lucca, normally, we get together, we exchange opinions, pieces of information... During the year we gather together either at a meeting organized by a publisher or at other minor conventions [...] we meet each other and we always chat together. Usually, however, we keep in contact via e-mail or telephone and we exchange ideas, information, etc.”*

These pieces of evidence further support the existence of a network operating in the day-to-day invisible relationships linking professionals who exchange ideas, opinions or information at the bar, the restaurant, via e-mail or telephone.

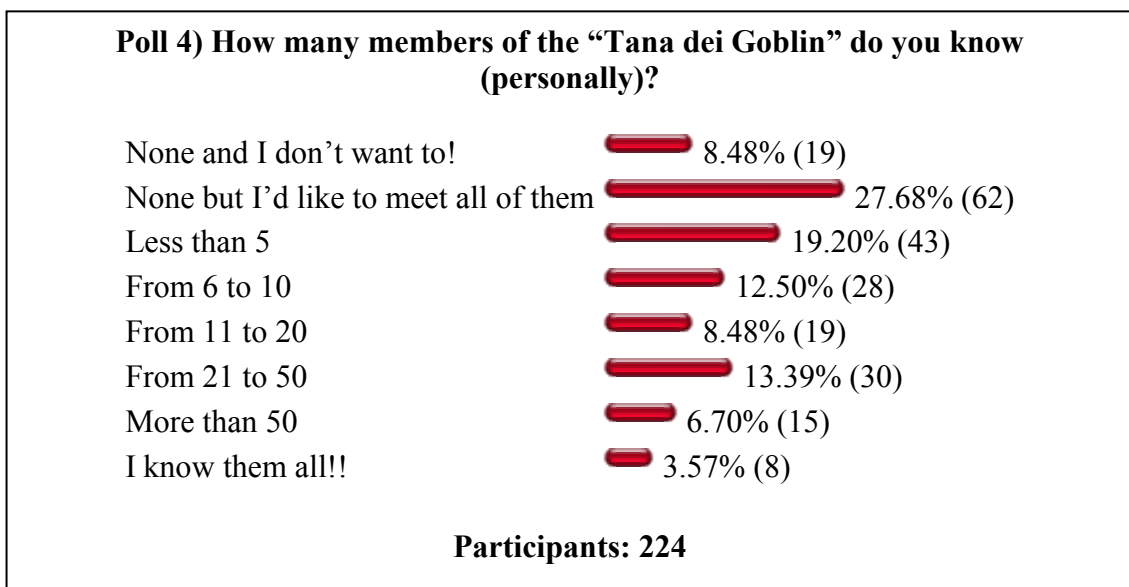
Other comments lead to the same conclusion: Professionals know one another and meet up at convention and other occasions. There is a network that connects them and allows them to talk and even play together.

On the quantitative side of the data analysis there are **three polls** which have been conducted among the community of gamers that complement the picture of an industry where networking is occurring. The same assumptions from the two previous questionnaires (1 and 2) hold for this one: the overlapping role between professionals, other actors and gamers, and the fact that these subjects are members of the same gaming community (which completed the questionnaires) allow us, to a certain extent,

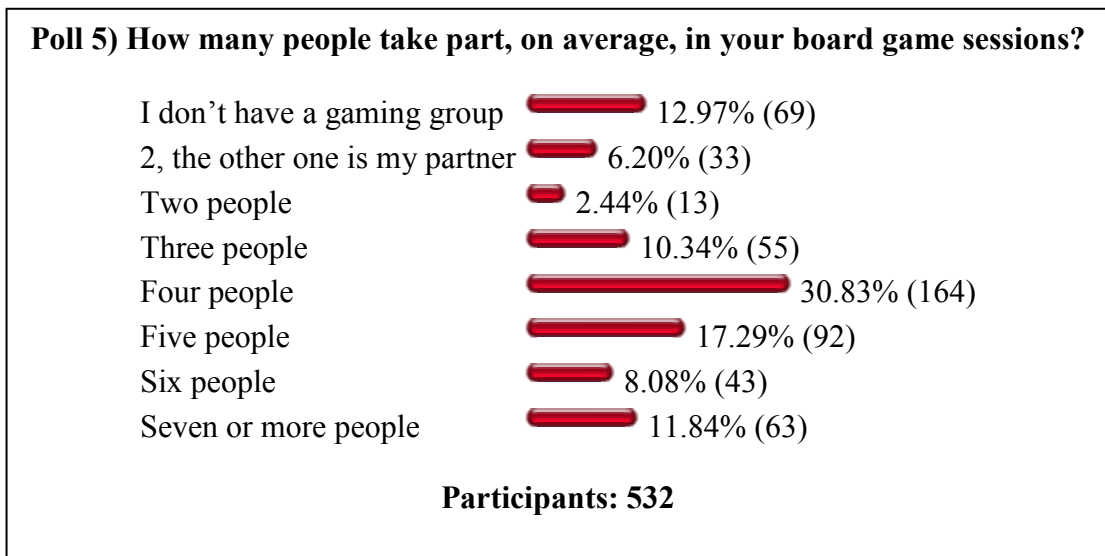
to project some of the findings onto the tribe of professionals working in the board game industry. In any case the questionnaires help to give an overall picture of the industry and allow the comparison of findings derived from other data sources.



Around half the participants attending board game events such as fairs and conventions are there to meet and play with new gamers. This indicates the clear inclination of gamers toward the creation of a network and gives the idea of a growing group of passionate people.



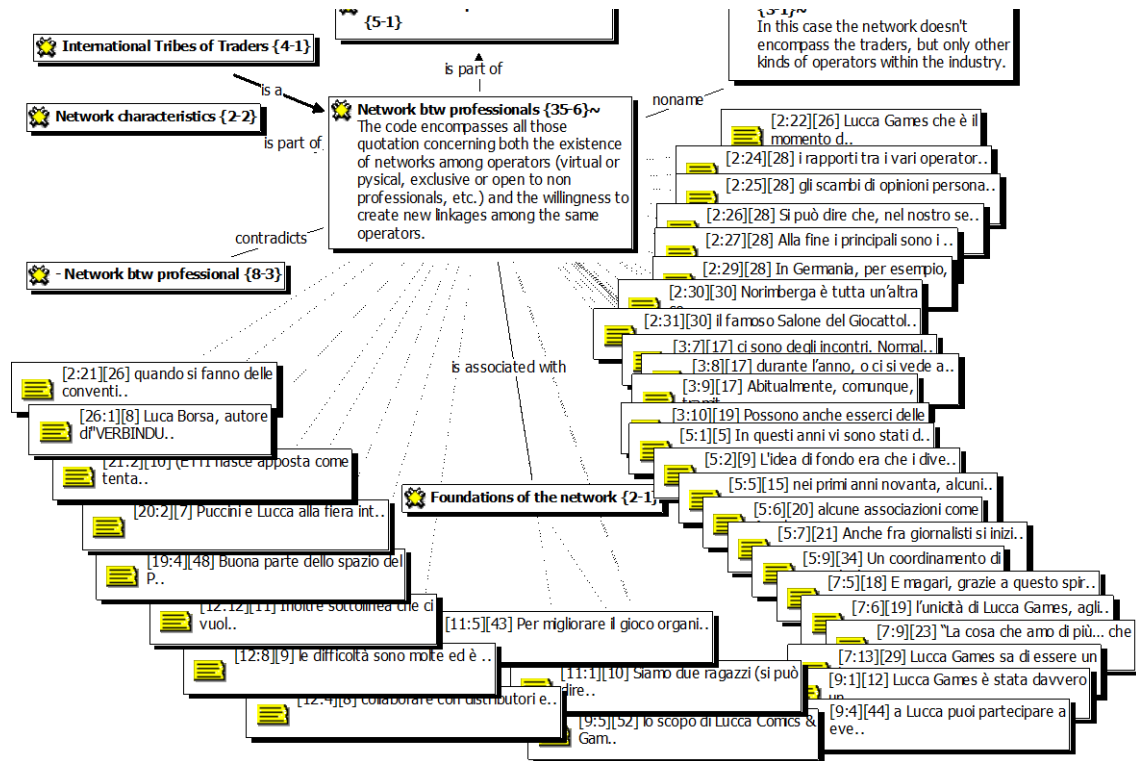
The community of gamers, then, shows 36.16% of respondents do not know any of the members of their online community personally, and 19.20% of them know fewer than five members. Results coming from other data sources lead to the conclusion that professionals know one another much more than what comments made by the tribe of consumers might suggest.



Combining results from questionnaires no. 1 and no. 5, 68.04% of the gamers surveyed met regularly with four or more people to play board games.

Secondary data recorded and analyzed through Atlas TI 5.0 provide 35 comments testifying to the existence of a network of professionals and other actors in the industry (see graph 3).

Graph 3. Network among professionals: 35 comments from 34 documents. Diagram by Atlas TI



Surrounding the network of professionals there are comments gathered to show the existence of other networks, such as the network of other actors (named operators), and networks connecting professional and non-professional actors with customers. Some rival comments have been retrieved from documents that contradict the idea of a shared network among professionals. Nonetheless those rival comments are judged too far and few between in comparison to the triangulated evidence shown from the numerous data sources examined here.

From the analysis of the physical and virtual environment a set of elements corroborating the thesis of existence network can be clearly observed. Moreover, it is also possible to examine what happens abroad, in countries characterized by a more developed gaming culture such as Germany or the U.S.A. The places where professionals meet can thus be physical or virtual, localized in Italy or abroad and, in particular, can be exclusively conceived for professional actors or mixed, allowing

access to consumers. However above all, these places represent the tribal environment where gatherings, day-to-day practice, institutional events and the imaginary world of the board game unfold (Cova and Cova, 2002).

The mailing list of the group of Italian board game professionals and non-professional actors named “Kili” (acronym of *Kalendario Iniziative Ludiche Italiano*) consists of more than 400 people including store owners, wholesale dealers, publishers, game designers, members of board game associations, event organizers, and so on.

Among the most important Italian exclusive virtual places there is the mailing list KILI, which only market operators can access and where the exchange of information is thick and constant. The web site of “La Tana dei Goblin” is the main Italian web site for the board game community of players and has special areas (forums) dedicated to professional actors wanting to enter into contact with tribes of consumers. The Nuremberg fair is the most important European event reserved for professionals. There, all the most important retailers and distributors meet up “*to coordinate themselves*” [see the quote from the interview with Emanuele Vietina, Event organizer – Lucca Games]. There are special cases such as “Play”, the convention (the former ModCon) that takes place every year in Modena – Italy – which dedicates the entire Friday to professionals and non-professional actors and the following Saturday and Sunday to a meeting between the latter and consumers. Another special case is the restroom area of Lucca Games – the most important Italian board game event – restricted to the operators and a “pro” area where all the tribes get together. Many other places have contributed both to developing the network and to the transfer of passion between professionals and consumers over the years (see table 4), but the Essen fair in Germany really stands out among these: every year a full-fledged pilgrimage takes place toward the German city; hotels, flight, trains and even caravans are overbooked for the event. Essen can be considered a “cult-place” for the tribe of professionals, a “must-attend” event. Moreover in Germany a union of game designers has recently been established.

Table 4. Meeting places in the board game industry, exclusively for operators mixed groups

<u>Places</u>	International	Italian
Non-virtual	Tournaments and competitions	Club 3Emme (1981), game rooms, shops
Virtual	Board Game Geek, Board Game News	Tana dei Goblin (mix), KILI (exclusive)
Association (manufacturers)	GA.M.A. (exclusive) Game Manufacturer Association	Giochiuniti, Inventoridigiocchi.it
Fairs	Nuremberg (exclusive) and Essen (pilgrimage)	Lucca Games, ModCon, Ludicamente

Through the second round of **101 questionnaires** distributed to sales people within the Italian board game industry it has been found that

- more than 90% of them have been or regularly go to Lucca Games (the most important gaming fair in the industry);
- each respondent has attended, on average, 8.64 big board game conventions or fairs;
- sales people tend to interact around once per week, on average, with other competitors
- sales people tend to interact around once per day with other professionals working in the industry;
- every salesperson subscribes to, uses the services of, and/or actively collaborates with around 2.6 board game associations, magazines or communities.

All of these findings help us to identify a very interconnected network of professionals who meet at gaming events, particularly the most important event in Italy

(Lucca Games). They interact with a certain frequency and use different means of communication.

Semi-structured interviews yielded 22 comments from 19 different store owners testifying to the existence of a network of professionals. Some examples:

“I always go to board game fairs and conventions. It’s my job! Most of the time there are always the same professionals and we all know each other!” [store owner 1 and former wholesale distributor].

“You bet! Among the store owners I have a lot of friends that I have known since before I opened my store! And it works like that! For one reason or other we keep in touch every week and I don’t have any problems in sending them customers looking for items I don’t deal with.” [store owner 2]

“We all know each other. Two store owners are really friends of mine: We play together, we go to board game fairs together and we also organize board game tournaments together.” [store owner 3]

Comments can continue to be listed as all of them converge to help in the identification of a strong connection between professionals. This connection can be reinforced by friendships, by shared interests, by the need to coordinate commercial strategies in the same geographical area but, overall, it derives from the shared passion for board games.

Other evidence can be gathered on official websites showing the joint organization of tournaments by two or more competitor board game stores working in the same city (see image 2). Coordinated activities like these imply the existence of a network connecting these professional actors together and show their willingness to cooperate with each other.

Image 2. Joint organization of a gaming tournament by three competitors’ board game stores working in the same city



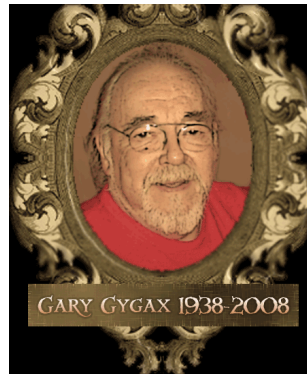
Evidence of Tribal Elements

It is extremely difficult to retrieve and show evidence of tribal elements among the different constituent groups forming part of the tribes of professionals. Not all data collection techniques turned out to be effective in examining this element. Participant observations and collection of secondary data on the environment being studied proved to be the most effective techniques of investigation in this case.

Every one of the professional and non-professional actors interviewed agreed on the importance of Gary Gygax, the inventor of Dungeons and Dragons, the most famous role-playing game in the world (see image 3). Another important figure, explicitly known as the “game guru” has been identified in Peter Atkinson (the businessman who commercialized Magic the Gathering, the most popular and revolutionary card game in the world) or Bobby Fischer, the world champion of chess. It is interesting how professionals recognized their own legendary figures: Peter Atkinson is a businessman, not a game designer or a game champion. This further differentiates the tribe of professionals from the tribe of consumers. Some important

characteristics are therefore shared with the tribe of consumers whilst others are exclusive to the tribe of professionals.

Image 3. Gary Gygax, inventor of Dungeons & Dragons: An icon in the industry as depicted by his fans



Professionals, as well as other non-professional actors, tend to adopt uniforms or more simply t-shirts to show their affiliation (see images 4, 5, and 6). Professionals have their own exclusive events, such as the Toy Fair in Nuremberg in Germany, the Friday of “Play”, or the Italian gaming Fair which happens every March in Modena, Italy. Participant observations during a gaming convention reported how many different board game associations had different t-shirts. The most important Italian board game association has assigned its branches a different color to use for their t-shirts that must exhibit the same logo in any case. During the fair there were also people playing different roles, such as demonstrators of games for board game stores (on behalf of the organizers of the event), organizers of tournaments, board game store employees and owners, and so on. Almost all of them were recognizable thanks to their different “uniforms” or t-shirts.

Image 3. Non professional actors during the organization of an Italian board game convention: different t-shirts mean different roles and affiliation.



Images 5 and 6. Uniforms of professionals of SpielBar games distributor at the gaming fair of Essen – Germany and Lego Board Game division at the Nuremberg Toy Fair



However everyone can watch the pilgrimage toward the two most important board game events in Italy and in Europe respectively: Lucca Games and Essen Spiel (see image 7). All the tribes of professionals, non-professional actors and consumers

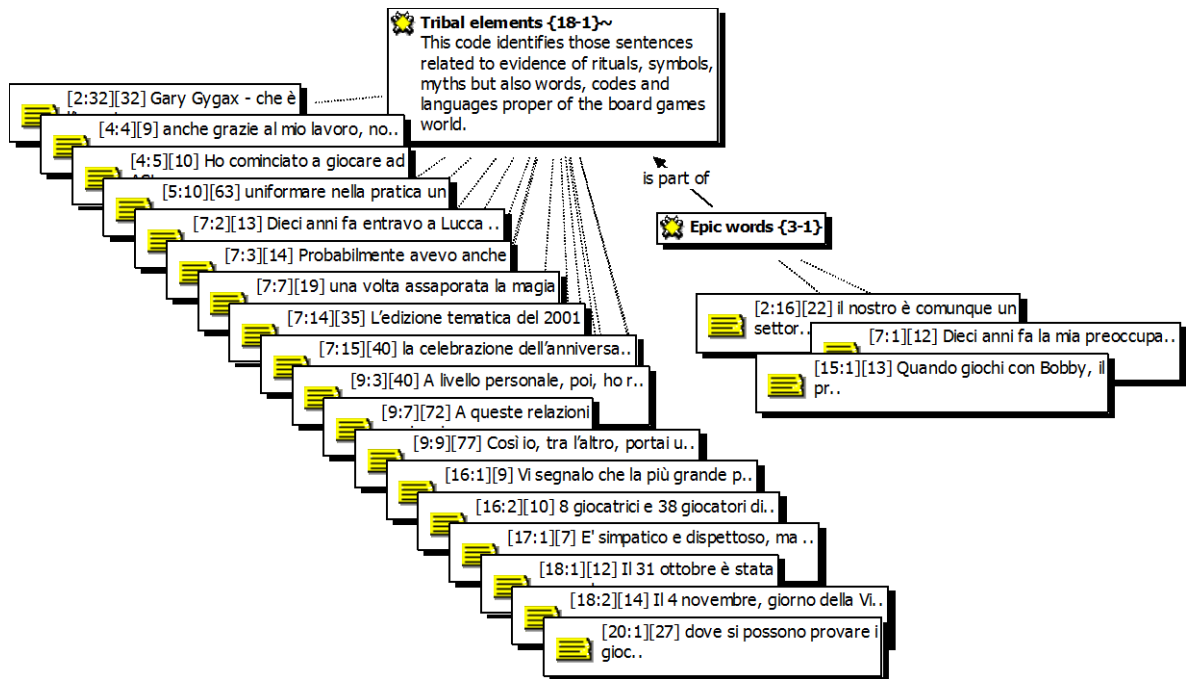
meet up there to play together, see one another, exchange opinions, knowledge, define future plans and make more or less important decisions concerning their passion and/or their activity.

Image 7. Crowd at the Essen Board Game Fair: Final destination of the great gamers' pilgrimage at the end of October each year



Further evidence of tribal elements has been gathered and analyzed through documents collected and developed with Atlas TI. Thirty-five comments pointing toward the existence of rituals and other tribal elements among professionals in the Italian board game industry have been gathered and depicted in graph 4.

Graph 4. Evidence of tribal elements: 35 comments put into a diagram using Atlas TI



The Transfer of Passion as a Characteristic Phenomenon of the Tribes of Professionals

Once it has been verified that the three main constitutive elements of a tribe of professionals have been fulfilled it is then possible to examine the other facets of the same social setting. An important characteristic is the passion contagion – that is the transfer of passion for the gaming activity – (Vallerand 2010) toward other individuals.

Again, many different sources of data converge identifying the strong presence of this phenomenon. From in-depth interviews some quotes can be provided.

“Contaminating... It's a sort of contamination toward the players. The web-site business represents almost the 80% of the total business, and varies from country to country but it's around 10%. The rest is really done in real shops. Most people come and say: “Ok, I've got to buy this gift, or I've got this party to go to, what you

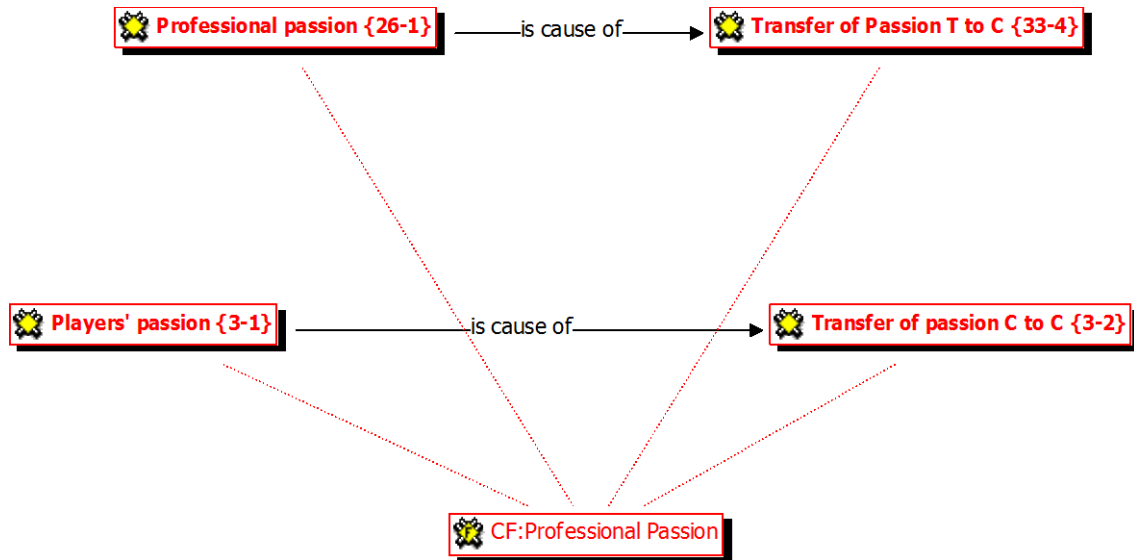
recommend?” Most of the sales come through suggestions made by people in the shop!” [Sofia – owner of Filosofia Games, publishing company]

In the above quote the transfer of passion for board games is named “contamination” by the interviewee. The informant exemplifies this phenomenon generalizing what normally takes place in a board game store, where people get “contaminated” every time they come into contact with a salesperson.

In general, the professionals’ passion for the gaming activity is a pre-requisite for the contagion to take place. This means that, more generally, if an individual is not passionate for an activity, it will not be possible to transfer the passion to another individual. The transference, by definition, presupposes the presence of what it is to be transferred by the sender. So, the transfer of passion from professionals (indicated in Graph 5 by the T of traders) to consumers (indicated in graph 5 by a C) presupposes the existence of passion for board games in the professionals.

According to evidence recorded from documents coded and analyzed through Atlas TI, a parallel phenomenon of passion contagion takes place among consumers. All together, these processes of complex emotional infection help the industry to grow, increasing the numbers of new members within the tribes. They have been put into the big family of professional passion as a phenomenon that professionals have to consider and have an interest in exploiting.

Graph 5. The family of passion graphically represented on Atlas TI



Furthermore, other research has already shown through semi-structured interviews and observation how this phenomenon takes place constantly during the service encounter (Rosin, 2011a).

An interesting questionnaire conducted among the tribe of consumers highlights the infectious nature of the industry and, more generally, of board game activities (see questionnaire 6).



As can be seen, 94.89% of the 450 respondents have “contaminated” or at least got a minimum of one person involved in board game activities. 30.22% have got more than 10 people involved in this activity.

DISCUSSION

Summary

Results from different data sources that contribute to identifying the constitutive elements of a tribe of professionals in the Italian board game industry have been presented in the “Findings” section and are briefly schematized in table 5.

Table 5. Summary: Crosstab of data source and findings concerning the constitutive elements of tribes of professionals

Data source	Passion	Network	Tribal elements
1st round of questionnaires	Yes	Yes	
In-depth interviews	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations / field notes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Polls	½	½	
Secondary data	Yes	Yes	Yes
2nd round of questionnaires	Yes	Yes	
Semi-structured interviews	Yes	Yes	

As can be seen, all the data sources support the subject of this research, showing some difficulties in retrieving evidence of tribal elements through quantitative techniques. As already stated, participant observation has proved to be the most suitable research technique for collecting data on the issue.

The Systemic perspective

The tribal approach has usually focused its attention on the tribe of consumers. The tribe of professionals here proposed as a new tribal subject can be viewed in a systemic perspective (Von Bertalanffy, 1976) as an element in symbiotic relation with the tribe of consumers. The symbiosis is given by the fact that neither of the two

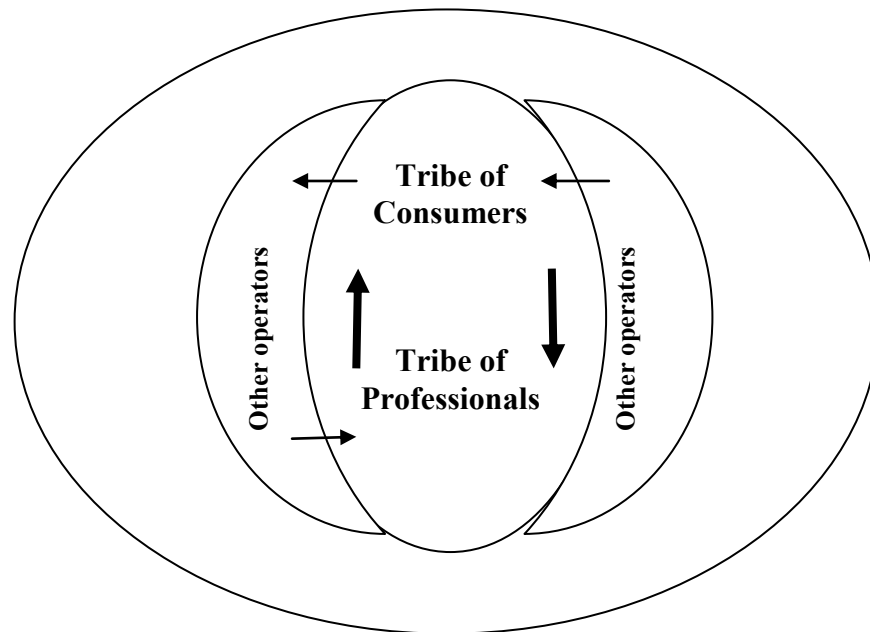
subjects can stand alone but the tribe of consumers needs the tribe of traders to survive and vice versa. As Peter Atkinson (the game guru who commercialized the revolutionary card game “Magic the Gathering”, owns GenCon – the most important convention in the American board game industry – and one of the few businessmen to become a billionaire in the board game sector) said during a dinner at Nuremberg Fair in 2008, the only manner for a convention to prosper is for it to be rooted in the multiplicity of board game communities. Once a convention has “conquered” its hard core groups of board game geeks then it can keep on growing and flourishing. “Board game communities” can here be intended as neo-tribal constellations.

The relationship is both symbiotic and osmotic if one considers that, as results from analysis of the questionnaires, the actors joining the tribe of professionals come – in general – from the tribe of consumers. Moreover they continue to play board games in spite of their new role as professionals. Even in the case of bankruptcy or handover of the commercial activity, the trader returns to his or her original tribe: the tribe of consumers.

The relationship between tribes is made possible and is supported by the common language learnt and used thanks to the shared passion for the tribal activity or the tribal product within the industry.

There is a third subject to consider when observing the phenomenon from a systemic perspective: the group of other operators and their respective role in the industry. Players other than retailers and distributors might help the tribe of traders, providing support to and enhancing the mechanism of passion transfer in the industry, by adding their own passion and playing their active role in the market. Examples of such operators are people in P.R., specialized journalists, event organizers or those who are particularly skilled in the core activity of the industry. The more passion characterizes these subjects the more their role integrates itself into the neo-tribal system.

Graph 6: The systemic perspective – symbiotic and osmotic relationships within tribes.



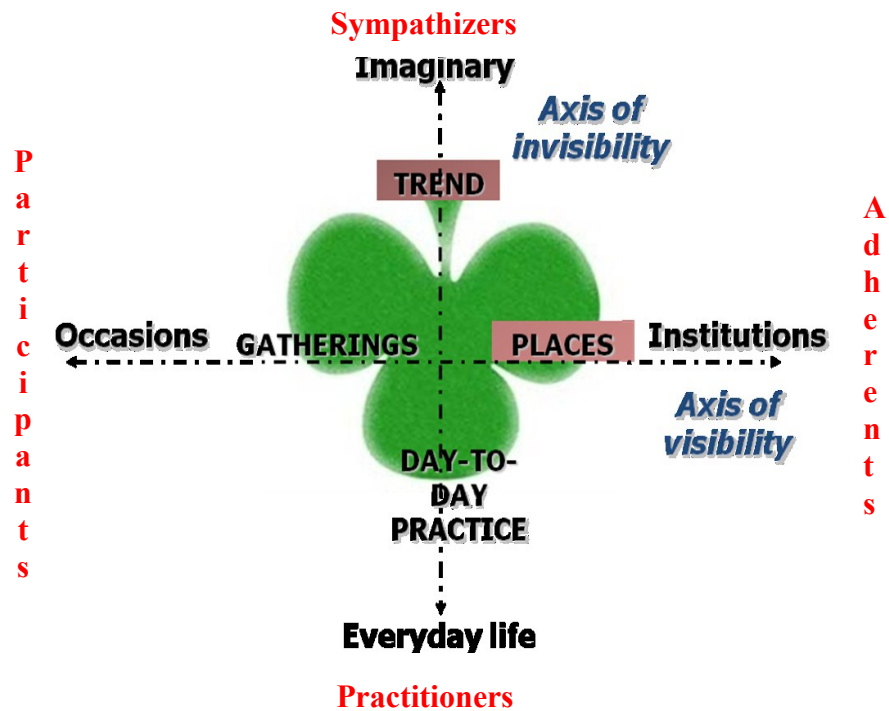
What characterizes and differentiates the tribes within the system is the different blend of passion-satisfying and profit goals exhibited by their members. It is very interesting to study what motivates the decisions taken by the actors in the industry. Some questions arise as to whether there is a neat trade-off between passion-satisfying and profit-oriented decisions and what the relationship is between these two variables in the market.

Finally, it has to be observed that the position occupied by the tribe of professionals in the industry is absolutely central, as they are not only perceived as manufacturers, retailers and designers, but also – and in fact especially – as experts to whom one might ask questions, and seek suggestions and recommendations. The effectiveness of the service encounter reported in semi-structured interviews (Rosin, 2011a) and characterizing the sales process of those products particularly liked by the vendor, shows the trust and the central position occupied by these passionate professionals within the tribal industry.

The Roles of Neo-tribal Professionals

The first and second rounds of questionnaires together with other data sources have shown how professionals are affiliated to their tribe of professionals and interact together through dedicated means of communication. Coming back to the example given by Cova (and Cova, 2002), there are two main axes along which the affiliation to the consumer tribe can be schematized (see image 1): The axis of visibility and the axis of invisibility. Along the first axis there are the gatherings (such as gaming conventions or fairs) on one end, and the attendance to institutional places (such as associations and stores) on the other end. Along the axis of invisibility there is the day to day practice (such as gaming meetings with your friends, but also gaming demo as part of professionals' job) on one end, and the imaginary area, symbolizing the trend that one can live and experience in his mind, without showing external signs. Bernard Cova places the sympathizers on this extreme of the invisibility axis. Among the tribes of professionals this role of sympathizer seems to have no significant relevance. So the four-leaf clover pictured by Cova and referring to consumer tribes (see image 1), can be adapted for the tribes of professionals just like the three-leaf clover depicted in image 2.

Image 2. The three-leaf clover as an adaptation of Cova and Cova's diagram depicting the tribes of professionals



As can be seen here, the role of sympathizers is not relevant among professionals working in the Italian board game industry. So, basically, the roles played by professionals can be schematized as indicated in table 6.

Table 6. Places and roles identified for tribes of professionals

Places	Definitions	Examples	Role played
Gatherings	Fairs, Conventions, National or International Tournaments	Lucca Comics and Games, Play, Italian Master Tournament	Participants
Institutional Places	Game Rooms, Websites, Magazines	La Tana dei Goblin, Kili,	Adherents
Day to Day Practice	Ordinary Board Game Meetings	Home or Private Clubs	Practitioners

In all these situations professionals place themselves close to consumers and other actors within the industry. Professionals, through their sales and divulging activity are characterized by their proximity toward the other tribal subjects. Being gamers they are perceived as insiders by consumers who can release their barrier toward unknown sales people. Centrality within the industry and proximity to other tribal subjects offer them a strategic position that can be exploited to rule the market.

CONCLUSION

The present research has introduced a new tribal subject into the tribal marketing framework: tribes of professionals. Through the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods and data it has been shown that the necessary conditions for defining the existence of such a new tribal concept have been fulfilled. A shared passion for the leisure-related activity, the existence of a network of professionals and evidence of tribal elements are all present. Other characteristics, such as the infective nature of the passion (which makes the process of passion transfer within the industry so frequent), the systemic relationship connecting the different tribal subjects in the board game market, and the centrality and proximity of professionals with regard to other passionate subjects, allows us to realize the strategic importance of such a new tribal setting. Further research is thus required to dig deeper into this area and take advantage of such a new element to increase and sharpen the available managerial toolkit for the tribal environment. Consumers will no longer be the only subject to think about when elaborating marketing strategies. Professionals will be the new target. Professionals will think about themselves when developing new strategies. Introspective and reflective analysis from a new perspective will thus be required for the future.

Further research is needed to include other cases beside the Italian board game industry in the group of tribes of professionals. Thus, case studies in other countries and, or in other industries may be conducted in an inductive fashion in order to enrich the empirical evidence constituting the Tribes of professionals group. Given the crucial importance of passion for leisure activities motivating professionals' choice to work in the industry, it might be particularly fruitful to look for and study tribes of professionals in high passion intensity industries (Rosin, 2011 a). Another fascinating aspect to investigate in more detail regards what encourages professionals, as competitors operating in the same market, to collaborate with one another, exchanging opinions, pieces of information and even forming friendships.

**PASSION MANAGEMENT: EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING
STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES IN NETWORKS OF PASSIONATE
PROFESSIONALS. THE CASE OF THE ITALIAN BOARD GAME
INDUSTRY**

ABSTRACT

Departing from the elements characterizing the Italian board game industry, the present case study utilizes the experiential marketing perspective to subvert the relative traditional approach. Consumers are no longer the target of marketing strategies aiming at offering them a memorable experience. Instead the main target becomes the professionals working in the industry under exam. The apparent contradiction between the positive outcomes related to the empirical context specificities - examined as expected by the literature - and its overall negative performance is identified. Adopting think, act and relate experiences as strategic experiential modules (Schmitt, 1999) a set of three general strategic solutions is proposed. Potential obstacles to the strategy implementation are identified and related solutions are proposed on the basis of positive examples found in other geographical contexts. The strategies aim at feeding passion, strengthen the network, and foster the mechanism of passion transfer among professionals, and between professionals and consumers as well. Some examples of strategic implementation are formulated for the sole purpose of providing a closer perspective to the industry. Model applicability to other empirical contexts has to be verified and tested in those industries where professional actors exhibit authentic behavior and display naturally felt emotions.

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies showed the Italian board game industry as characterized by the presence of passion pushing salespersons and professionals to start working in the industry, display of naturally felt emotions, mechanism of passion transfer among individuals during the service encounter, establishment of friendship or close relationships with customers, and networks of professionals (Rosin, 2011a; Rosin, 2011b). The same studies introduced the concept of passion for activities (Vallerand et al., 2003), and sketched its main effects together with the benefits deriving from passionate organizational environments. As an element characterized by a limited availability within organizations and able to lead to positive outcomes when properly exploited, passion can be considered an intangible resource to the industry. In spite of its benefits, the overall industry performance, when specifically observed, is very low (Rosin, 2011a). In 2008, according to key informants, 50% of specialized stores were going bankrupt every 6-7 years that is 7-8% of business failure per year on average. During the economic crisis this percentage worsened. At the same time, according to the experience of board game store owners who used to work in other industries, reaching the break-even point takes double the time with respect to other industries. When healthy, board game store gross revenues are generally low and, according to almost every interviewed people who express themselves on financial or economical matters, their goal is to survive. Store owners may expect a net profit between 1,000 and 1,500 euros per month. Considering the business risks and the average employee wages, choosing to work in almost any other industry would be much more remunerative. In other words, an extremely high business failure rate and low revenues seem to contradict what the literature suggests are positive consequences of passion, that is authentic display of naturally felt emotions during service encounter, development of friendship or close relationship with customers, and other characteristics of the industry.

Hence it seems clear that something has to be improved in the Italian board game industry. The present case study addresses the following issue: What

organizational and technical strategies might be effective to improve the exploitation of passion and facilitate the passionate industry growth? Defining the concept of passion exploitation gap as the incapacity to put value on passion as a strategic asset, another issue is further addressed: What organizational practices can help bridge the passion exploitation gap?

The contradiction between expected positive performance and poor industry results can be possibly explained by the fact that processes of passion creation, storage/retrieval, and transfer are thwarted, inhibited or prevented by environmental factors or that jeopardizing business practices do exist. This means that passion is not properly exploited to enhance organizational performance, which in turn might depend on the ability to allow the expression of passion happening during the service encounter as well as during the rest of the work experience. Thus, a first research hypothesis can be formulated:

There are some obstacles to the satisfaction of the intrinsic motivation leading professionals to work in the industry.

In other words, professionals are not working in the best conditions in order to exploit and put value on their passion as well as enjoy their passionate activity and draw the expected pleasure from it.

One of the objectives of the present case study is thus to determine potential obstacles to passion satisfaction, suggest solutions to remove them, and formulate new and more suitable procedures capable of optimizing the positive function exercised in the industry by this raw resource: Passion.

What is proposed and discussed in the end is a set of strategies aiming at improving the industry performance, through the adoption of an experiential marketing approach (Schmidt, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Varying from what is traditionally proposed by the experiential marketing literature, the target of this experiential marketing strategy set will be professionals, instead of consumers. The Italian board game industry, in fact, has been considered and treated as a traditional industry until now, but it is not. Some of the characteristics showed in previous studies (Rosin, 2011a; Rosin, 2011b) clearly distinguish this industry from traditional ones. All

strategies employed to entertain and offer memorable experiences are usually directed at customers. The present research argues that the first target of such strategies aiming at offering memorable experience and entertaining should be the very professionals working in the industry, with particular reference to salespersons.

Who can establish and implement such strategies targeting professionals? It is unconceivable that a single professional actor might plan everything, and that his or her solutions be accepted as well by all professionals within the industry as everyone might think that his or her interests will prevail over the others' interests. There is thus a problem of legitimacy. A central body is required in order to satisfactorily implement such strategies. A neutral player whose authority is recognized and accepted by all professional actors is hence one possibility.

On the other hand, once a legitimate body is established, the geographically sparse nature of the overall industry has to be considered given that its sale points are scattered all over the peninsula. How to effectively implement a centrally coordinated set of strategies toward peripheral nodes? A feasibility issue thwarts the realization of such centralized strategy. Answers to both questions of legitimacy and feasibility will be provided and discussed in further sections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics and Related Positive Implications in the Italian Board Game Industry

Hereafter are presented some of the positive implications for both salespersons and store owners deriving from being passionate. Passionate salespersons engage in professional activity because they are intrinsically motivated by their very passion for the leisure activity related to the industry. Intrinsically motivated behaviors tend to make individuals competent and self-determined, and generate positive psychological effects in the individuals, such as vitality that supports self-control (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Harmonious passion also generates vitality in passionate individuals (Vallerand et al., 2004), leading to highly adaptive cognitive functioning such as experience of flow and higher levels of concentration (Philippe et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2008).

As passion for board game playing implies, by definition (Vallerand et al., 2003), the investment of time and energy in doing the activity, this means that passionate salespersons in the industry gain a certain experience from performing this liked or even beloved activity (i.e. playing board games). Moreover, by deciding to professionally enter the board game business they will naturally come into contact with a lot of privileged information concerning costs, future or scheduled publications, and other curiosities. Given that, according to the definition of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003), they also find the activity important, they would then be encouraged to be organized or punctual. In other words, passionate gamers who work in the industry possess all the premises to exhibit competence in carrying out their job. Competence, particular attentions to please customers with unexpected and surprising extras during service encounter, empathy and mutual understanding as well as authenticity have been proved to induce positive emotional responses in customers during service encounter (Price, Arnould, and Deibler, 1995).

It has been demonstrated that the industry under exam is harmoniously passionate, exhibiting a harmonious passion value of 5.45 on a 7-point agreement Likert scale (Rosin, 2011a). Harmonious passion leads also to positive emotions during

and after engagement in the passionate activity, and to the absence of negative emotions when prevented from task engagement (Mageau et al., 2005; Grenier et al., in preparation). Harmonious passion positively influences psychological adjustment by increasing situational positive affect (Philippe et al., 2009; Rousseau and Vallerand, 2008). Further, results from studies on interpersonal effects of passion for an activity on the quality of relationships that we develop within the passionate activity reveal that the behavior of harmoniously and obsessively-passionate individuals is picked up by their partner and influences their satisfaction with the relationship (Philippe et al., in press; Lafrenière et al., 2008; Ratelle et al., submitted).

As already seen, salespersons in the Italian board game industry tend to display naturally felt emotions during service encounter (Rosin, 2011a). Previous research in psychology shows that being authentic leads to low emotional dissonance, while deep acting and surface acting behaviors produce high emotional dissonance causing negative effects on health (Zapf, 2002). In service encounters involving emotional labor, it is important that customers perceive emotional feelings displayed by salespersons as being natural and authentic (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983; Romm, 1988). Spontaneous responses to environment, social interaction, and activities are found important as well (Abrahams, 1986) especially if compared with a controlled interaction process. In extended (i.e. long lasting) and proxemically intimate (i.e. close) service encounters, service satisfaction and consumer feelings are positively influenced by salespersons' authenticity (Price et al., 1995). An interesting quote from the practitioners' world is worth to be reported: "The old [customer relationship management] agenda as a bandage should now be replaced with the new agenda of customer intimacy, that is, to make customers feel good whenever they make contact with your company. Every interaction isn't a moment to be avoided, but an opportunity for further intimacy with the customer. Your employees are closest to the action; they know what works and what doesn't work for the customers." (Steve Ballou, IBM Institute for Business Value; see IBM Global Services 2006). Given the peculiarity and the "social" nature of the gaming activity, salespersons in the Italian board game industry have demonstrated to be good at creating intimate relationships

with customers. From the literature it is known that creating strong emotional bonds with customers leads to customer loyalty (Fournier et al., 1998; McEwen, 2005). It is also maintained that good customer-staff relationships strengthen customer-firm linkages and both are, as such, important goals to pursue (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). In general, customer satisfaction will produce positive word of mouth, customer loyalty and increased purchase (Fornell, 1992; Oliver and Swann, 1989). Customers being passionate toward organizations show higher spending levels and lower attrition rate (Fleming, Coffman, and Harter, 2005), leading to a 23% premium on share of wallet, revenue, profitability and relationship growth (Edward and Day, 2005). Strong and stable customer relationships also lead to favorable word of mouth (Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra, 2003), justified premium price (Bolton, 1998), less employee turnover and training costs (Shet and Parvatiyar, 1995). All these consequences of strong and stable customer relationships bring to higher levels of profit (Yim, Tse, and Chan, 2008). The importance of relations during service encounter is confirmed in a general way by Saavedra (and Van Dyne, 1999) who maintained that when relationship develops, then interaction increases. Customers and salespersons involved in the relationship grow increasingly intimate, with a subsequent increase of attachment and positive emotional ties. Yim (et al., 2008) extends this conclusion to the specific field of service contexts.

During semi-structured interviews, passionate gamers who engaged in the board game industry work activity expressed that they were looking for the fun of playing board games, staying with friends and other gamers, being surrounded by their beloved board games, etc. High levels of fun generate low levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of job satisfaction (Karl and Peluchette, 2005). Further, the more the salespersons value having fun while they are in the workplace as being important, the stronger will be the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction (Karl and Peluchette, 2006).

Experiential Marketing Approach

According to the experience economy perspective (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), what really matters to businesses is offering memorable experiences to their customers. Memories and memorable events become the real product. According to this approach, the aim of marketing strategies is to propose those kinds of experiences that maximize the consumption process. Five types of experiential marketing strategies – named strategic experiential modules – have been proposed (Schmitt, 1999):

1. Sense experiences, realized by stimulating all five senses (smell, touch, taste, sight, and hearing), generate multi-sensorial involvement capable to offer customers a memorable experience. Product success or failure might be affected as pleasant memories will last for a long period, encouraging pleased customers to repeat the purchasing act or come back to the same point of sales.
2. Feel experiences, realized through the involvement of customers' feelings and emotions, engaging their inner world. Interpersonal interaction is a privileged fashion of generating and enhancing emotions more effectively. Emotions are divided into two sets, basic (pleasure, joy, sadness, etc.) and complex (coming from a combination of experiences, and mainly idiosyncratic and context dependent).
3. Think experiences, addressing the cognitive realm and aiming at arousing customers' imagination and developing a more creative perception of the product offered. Surprise, curiosity and provocation are the main kickers to use in think experiences.
4. Act experiences find a crucial point of reference in demographic and psychographic characteristics (lifestyles). The goal is to take note of changes in consumers' choices, understand their relative needs, and influence their future choices. This should happen by proposing behavior patterns to which customers should adapt. Interaction with customers' experiential dimension is thus possible through this way. Brand equity can

be strengthened and effective communication between brand and target fostered.

5. Relate experiences refer to group relationships and allow individuals to live a social dimension by receiving signals and stimuli from different cultural systems. Different types of experiences can be experimented, such as connection with other individuals or joining brand communities.

Overall, the purpose is to create a holistic experience utilizing three or more of the above-listed strategic experiential modules. Operatively speaking, it is to find those experiences that most correspond to the target individuals, and create an ad hoc team expressing multiple and differentiated competences to activate the strategic experiential modules (Schmitt, 1999).

FINDINGS

Observing the Italian board game industry from a close point of view and interviewing professionals, a sort of standard and recursive path, followed by many salespersons working in specialized board game stores, was identified. Among the sample of 30 salespersons interviewed through semi-structured interviews, 13 of them, when asked what motivated them to work in the industry, spontaneously reported that: In spite of the passion that motivated them to perform that work activity, it progressively became a “job” and their enthusiasm for playing crumbled down accordingly. Consequently, their fun in the workplace decreased as well as the relative beneficial effects.

1. *“In theory, I’d be able to play every day. The problem is that, being here in the store all day, surrounded by board games, I don’t have much desire to play... that’s the truth. I would play every day, all day long, also because the people around me, girlfriends included, like playing board games. However, I sincerely love playing board games but I prefer sealed boxes, explaining board games... to play them ... at the moment it causes me a sort of anxiety... after eight years closed in here! Basically, I play at least once a week. At least! Then there are times in which I happen to play a lot more!” [95]*

The assertion above exemplifies the thought of many other respondents who did not find exactly what they were expecting from their job when they chose to do it. There is a sort of anxiety toward the board game playing activity but nevertheless they still love it. According to data gathered through quantitative questionnaires, most respondents (86.1%) played board games for more than 12 years. On the consumer side, many players from online board game communities have not stopped playing board games since when they were children.

2. *“Yes, of course! I did it for passion! It was my passion. But, in the end, it becomes a job... (Sadness and melancholy in the tone of voice ☹)” [56]*

In the quotation reported above, the last words were pronounced with resignation. A sort of delusion emerges with respect to what the respondent initially expected from his job. As the previous respondent, he also did not feel the “lust” for playing board games any longer. This might explain as well the reason why the item “I spend a lot of time doing this activity”, representing one of the four criteria defining the passion construct, was also the weakest one (see Table 1).

3. *“Well, passion! It was passion! But it’s not like you think it is. You have to stay behind the counter, at the cash desk, filling modules and forms, at the PC looking at your mailbox, sending emails to your providers, preparing the mailing list to your customers, etc. In the end you won’t even have enough time to breathe...” [63].*

In the last sentence reported from the verbatim, it turns out that the job design does represent the main obstacle to enjoying the board game activity, by preventing salespersons from playing.

Mean value of 4.94 reported in Table 1 (the lowest value among the four passion criteria) indicates thus that salespersons do not have much enthusiasm (see quotation 1 and 2) or time (see quotation 3) to invest in board game playing.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics on the four passion criteria

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I spend a lot of time doing this activity	101	1	7	4,94	1,754
I like this activity	101	5	7	6,52	,657
This activity is important for me	101	2	7	5,51	1,222
This activity is a passion for me	101	2	7	6,17	1,001
Valid N (listwise)	101				

It is interesting to note that the questions asked were very general (that is: “What motivated you to work in the board game industry?”) while the respondents came out with incredible sets of assertions converging toward the same meaning, without the researcher explicitly looking for them.

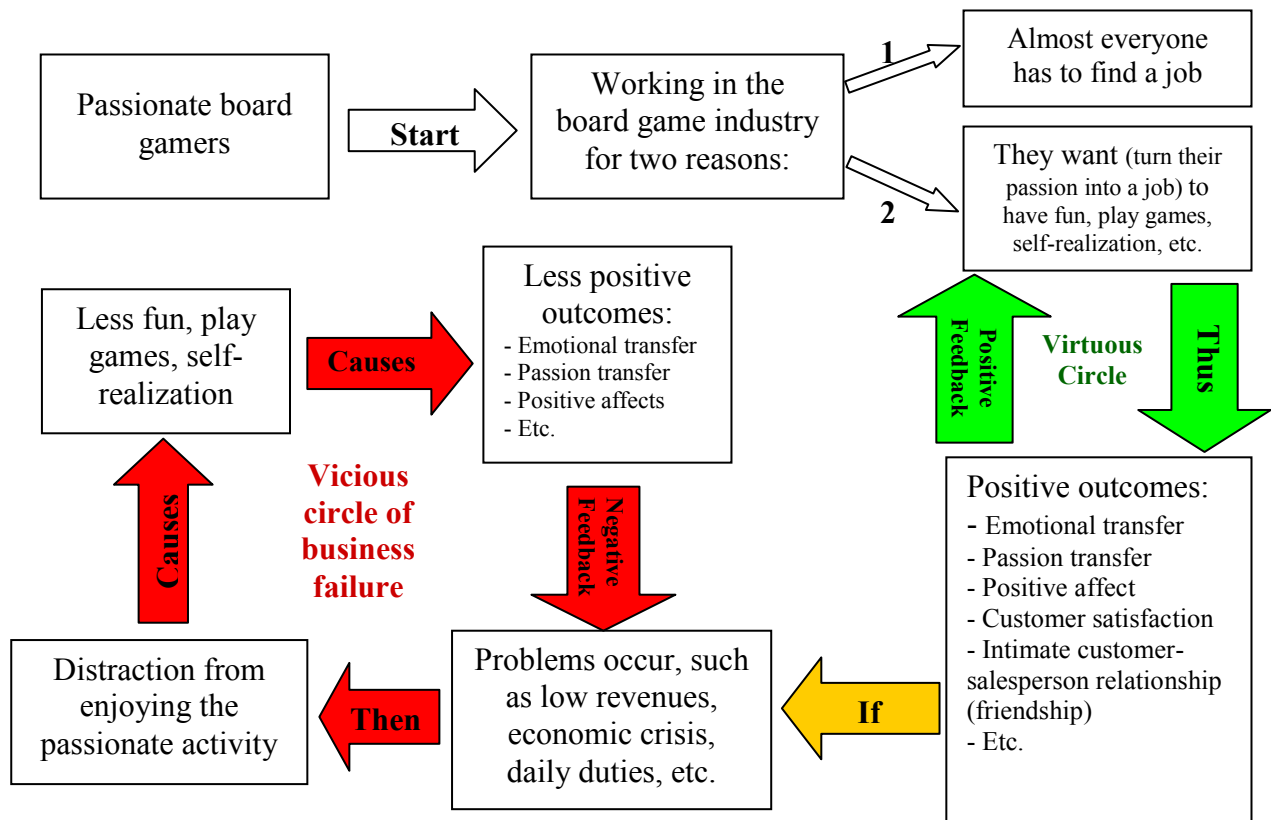
Therefore, the first findings identify a first issue characterizing the industry: Salespersons cannot satisfy the intrinsic motivation that induced them to choose to enter professionally the board game industry. They cannot satisfy their passion as they anticipated. Their expectations are betrayed by a job that has not been designed as they thought.

A recurrent behavioral path has been determined through the observations and interviews conducted with professional actors in the industry. At first passionate board gamers start working in the board game industry mainly because they want to turn their passion into a job (Rosin 2011a). Basically, they look for fun as well as for playing games and being surrounded by friends and other gamers, trying to satisfy their need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). If everything goes well, then the positive outcomes highlighted by the literature on the matter (Price, Arnould, and Deibler, 1995; Karl and Peluchette, 2005) should take place, creating a positive feedback engendering a virtuous circle reinforcing the causes. It might not be by chance that the most successful Italian store owner defines himself as the gamer that probably plays the most in Italy. This means that his job allowed him to keep on performing his passionate activity. During in-depth interviews and observation, the researcher happened to note the presence of one of the positive outcomes deriving from intrinsic motivation and harmonious passion in this observed leader: vitality (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Vallerand et al., 2004). Business success is reinforced through the positive feedback generated. The leading store owner stated in his interview that, during crowded and busy board game fairs, he can afford leaving his stand, wandering around, looking for friends, talking and gaming because he can count on his numerous collaborators. Not all store owners can afford paying employees or collaborators as most of the time they will take away most of the profit. Business success, thus, seems

to reinforce the opportunity to enjoy passionate activities, by creating a virtuous circle (see Diagram 1).

However, it does not always happen that such a virtuous circle is free to expand the business. As expressed by quotes 1, 2, and 3 something might prevent salespersons from enjoying their passionate activity and expressing themselves as desired and expected. If this condition occurs because of daily commercial duties keeping salespersons busy, economic issues that salespersons have to worry about, or other environmental factors that generate a status of anxiety and refusal toward the passionate activity (see, for example, quotation 1), then a negative feedback will affect positive outcomes depending on the satisfaction of their intrinsic motivation. Lower positive affect experienced by salespersons will decrease the positive effects of emotional contagion related to the display of naturally felt emotions. In other words, salespersons who feel less happy will display less intense and less positive emotions. Facial expression and primitive emotional contagion will be hence influenced. In turn, this negative feedback will worsen the very same conditions that gave rise to this vicious circle, being the cause of further lower revenues and greater worries about the risk of business failure (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. The Business Twofold Life Cycle in the Italian Board Game Industry



DISCUSSION

The present study adopts the experiential marketing approach, here considered suitable to be applied to the specificities of passionate industries and salespersons. In particular, this approach is appropriate to satisfy individuals' – and thus salespersons' – intrinsic motivation by connecting their job and their passion for board gaming. By employing other approaches based on extrinsic rewards there is a risk to engender motivational spill-over and crowding out effects (Frey, 1997).

As seen in the Findings section, daily duties such as delivering parcels, dealing with accounting issues, writing emails, cleaning the store, and so on, push salespersons away from satisfying their passion, therefore initiating the vicious circle represented in Diagram 1. The other vicious circle starter is represented by the routine tasks that – again – take away salespersons from performing their passionate activity. One of the available solutions to prevent the vicious circle from taking place would be to conveniently design the salespersons' job in such a way to remove the trigger conditions. In particular, it is necessary to break the routine and stimulate salespersons by offering them new experiences. At the same time, it is essential to protect the core asset of the board game store: the salespersons' passion. Once these issues are solved, the same solutions should be able to foster the overall industry's growth.

The first issue previously encountered, and briefly introduced, is the identification of a legitimate body entitled to define and implement coordinated strategies throughout the entire industry, with particular emphasis on specialized retail stores. As previously stated, the risk is that store owners might not recognize as legitimate the position of such a body, and neutralize the strategy effectiveness. Hence the constitution of a coordinated and central group of manufacturers-distributors is proposed, each one designating a store representative who would have the specific goal to pursue the interests of the entire industry. The creation of such a new body – a consortium – does not come out of the blue. Not only many other industries or job categories (i.e. wine industry, touristic guides, and so on) have their own association or consortium representing and taking care of their interests, but similar affiliations can be

found in foreign board game and game-related industries. The board game industry belongs to the wider and more general toy market. Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) and the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) are respectively a trade association and an industry association looking after the interests of their respective industry members. A more specific consortium is constituted by the Game Manufacturer Association (GAMA), a non-profit trade association led by publishers and manufacturers, promoting the interests of all people involved in the commerce of games and game-related products. The market situation in the U.S. – where GAMA is settled – is much more flourishing with respect to the Italian board game industry. GAMA, anyway, does not pay attention to the previously described issues concerning the Italian board game industry. What is proposed here as a legitimate body intended to strategically coordinate the entire industry is a sort of GAMA clone. Distributors and retailing store representatives might take part in this body. The Italian market is not very much populated by board games publishers. There are a very well-known dozen of them, which are relatively big, and another half-dozen of smaller dimensions. The small number of manufacturers makes it easier for each professional actor in the industry to know them and even easier to create a representative association of manufacturers. Actually, such a centripetal tendency can be observed in the industry by looking at one of the biggest Italian board game manufacturer, which is incorporating smaller manufacturers and presents a very meaningful and symbolic name: “Giochi Uniti” (in English: “United Games”). The idea of something unifying is already there and can be concretely found abroad.

The second important issue to overcome is to verify the implementation feasibility of wide-range strategies targeting professionals. How can a set of strategies targeting such a geographically sparse group of salespersons be effectively implemented? What are the logistic and communicative basis allowing strategies to reach their target? According to another study (Rosin, 2011b), board game professionals are well interconnected in an established network. A dedicated mailing list connecting more than 400 industry professionals and non-professional actors, dedicated forums of discussion restricted to professionals, gathering rituals at the most

important Italian gaming fairs and other means of communication shared with consumers (magazines, associations, etc.) contribute to strengthen the network. Moreover, the same study showed how an even more dense series of contacts links store owners to distributors and manufacturers (providers). The questionnaire contained an item measuring how often do salespersons contact wholesale dealers and manufacturers. A value of 5.69 on a seven-point scale was obtained, meaning that, on average, salespersons are in touch with their providers almost once a day. This also means that the platform to use in order to implement the strategies is already there. Of course, it will need to be improved and strengthened. Another aspect to take into account is the goals shared by all manufacturers, distributors and store owners that might represent for each professional an incentive to adhere to the project.

A theoretical basis to effectively implement the strategies throughout the industry may rely on the concept of supply chain contagion (McFarland, Bloodgood, and Payan, 2008). It considers the supply chain as a sequence of vertically connected actors constituted by manufacturers - on top - followed by wholesale dealers, retailers and, at the bottom, consumers. By splitting this sequence in dyadic relationships, the literature identifies a phenomenon of propagation of interfirm behaviors from one dyad to an adjacent one along the supply chain. Those who initiate the contagion may do it purposefully or not. In the same way, affected subjects can be aware or not of this phenomenon. Through a process of behavioral imitation propagating along the supply chain, a manufacturer may think to exploit traditional marketing channels to conceive and implement influence strategies (Spiro and Perreault, 1979). According to institutional theory, firms' form and behavior are deeply shaped by noneconomic motivation (Dacin, Oliver, and Roy, 2007). The satisfaction of passion for board game playing as well as other related activities might represent one of these noneconomic motivations. Best and virtuous practices might propagate from manufacturers to customers throughout distributors by designing an appropriate set of influence strategies around the concept of passion which exploit this mechanism. Managers and peripheral actors should be better able to effectively influence channel partners' behavior when aware of the supply chain contagion effects (McFarland et al., 2008).

Supposing a legitimate body inspired to the GAMA model were created, manufacturers would lead or, at least, have a strong impact on the strategic orientation. As such, manufacturers would be the first source from which the strategies might stem out to infect downward the supply chain, all the industry.

Once a legitimate body and a feasible platform to exploit, stream and implement the strategies will be found, the task to identify and delineate them will remain. The experiential marketing framework suggests the use of the so-called strategic experiential modules (Schmitt, 1999). The strategies proposed to keep the salespersons' passion for board game playing alive and active, and protecting it from other harmful duties are based on think, act and relate experiences.

1. Surprising the store owners, instilling new curiosity into their mind and developing a more creative perception of their role is a first strategy.
2. Proposing the store owners some behavioral patterns, which they can adapt themselves to on the basis of their specificities and requirements, is a second strategy.
3. Creating more intense and intimate group relationships through the establishment of a sense of belonging to a distinctive group, pooling together different store owners with their different experience.

The strategies have thus to:

- a) Constantly feed the passion to let it grow
- b) Strengthen the network of professionals as well as the network connecting professionals to consumers
- c) Foster the mechanism of passion transfer among professionals as well as between professionals and consumers

Some application of such strategies could be the creation of a dedicated website with specific forums divided according to various areas of interest. Such a social virtual network has to be charged with symbols and meanings in order to allow professionals to recognize themselves. Avatars representing members have to be representative. Secrets and privileged information on board games and related themes (such as novelties and new entries, scoops, trends, etc.) could be diffused through the network.

Hence the creation of an online community fully accessible and reserved to professionals is suggested. In order to allow the connection between professionals and consumers a limited access should be allowed to these latter, so they could receive important information and ask questions or doubts to the most influential reference. As a community of practice, professionals might share their practices on a specific forum of discussion, i.e. what they usually do to face their daily problems, how they relate with their customers, etc. Building the salespersons' image should be one of the objectives of this online community. Using a neo-tribal vocabulary, they should be recognized as masters or even shamans by the consumer community. Not only the knowledge circulating within the network should increase their competence, but also their image should be faithfully reflected outside. Mythic and epic symbols can be used to better convey the message. On the consumer side, the most important gamer community has an already well-developed and visited website, counting approximately 10,000 members. A partnership with this gamer community in order to create a spin-off website reserved to professionals, but well connected to the site of origin might provoke an immediate boost of visitors as well as direct connection to the gamer community. Considering the relatively young age of store owners (34 years old on average; S.D. 5.97; ranging from 21 to 48 years old) and the intense use of email and other computer-related tools, there should be no technological barriers to the successful implementation of such virtual network.

A further course of action might be the endorsement of the two most important Italian board game events by the legitimate body. Being present at the most important gatherings will facilitate the mechanism of passion transfer as well as the delivery of the message the community of professionals wants to communicate. Once ready, the community might think of organizing its own promotional board game event. In such happenings all members should be free to express the role they wish to play, feeling as part of the event organization and not just as an attendee. Special round tables, gathering some members debating interesting issues in front of the consumer community, should be planned. A special day reserved to professionals as well as a day for a global reunion of professionals should also be scheduled. The institution of a

ritual assembly would strengthen the sense of belonging, and attach importance to the fact of being a member.

A given set of recommendations should be defined by the proposed consortium board of directors. A list of good practices to prevent entering the vicious circle (see Image 1) such as having a gaming area to allow your customers to live through the gaming experience with the salespersons, attending at least two fairs per year, etc. should be defined.

All these applications are just examples of possible strategies capable of preventing the passion for board game playing from being harmed, supporting the mechanism of passion contagion among professionals as well as between professionals and consumers and, more generally, allowing all the positive outcomes related to harmonious passion, display of naturally felt emotions, and establishment of friendship or close relationships with customers to happen. Hence, they concur to increase the overall industry profit while reducing issues and risks of entering the vicious circle. In other words, they tend to protect the industry core asset: Passion.

CONCLUSION

The case study addresses the apparent contradiction between the positive outcomes literature associates characteristics that can be found in the Italian board game industry and its overall dramatically negative performance. The decrease of passion in time for some of the interviewed professionals has been identified as one of the causes, through semi-structured interviews and in-field participant and non-participant observations. Through semi-structured interviews, a twofold explanatory reason has been determined: 1) Routine and under-stimulating tasks might negatively affect the passion for board game playing; 2) Salespersons worry so much about issues and other job-related duties that their intrinsic motivation to play board games decreases. A need for new and centrally coordinated strategic solutions addressing the whole industry has emerged. Identifying a legitimate body entitled to coordinate strategic action represents a potential problem when it comes to implementing such general strategies. Another problem consists in whether or not a suitable connective platform capable of assuring a stable network among professionals exists. Creating a legitimate consortium based on the example of GAMA, an American association, would overcome both problems. The presence of an appropriate network that would help to effectively implement the strategies is assured by the tribal nature and the already working means of communication connecting professionals within the Italian board game industry. A set of strategies has been proposed through the adoption of an experiential marketing approach. Think, act and relate experiences have been chosen as convenient strategic experiences modules (Schmitt, 1999). The strategies aim at feeding the passion, strengthening the network, and fostering the mechanism of passion transfer among professionals as well as between professionals and consumers. Some examples of strategic implementation are formulated for the sole purpose of providing a closer perspective to the industry.

The traditional marketing perspective has been subverted and the traditional target of marketing strategies (i.e. consumers) has been abandoned in favor of a new one: the network of professionals. The first people offering a memorable experience are

the very professionals working in the industry. Consumers will come afterwards, as a consequence of strategy implementation, authenticity that normally characterizes their behavior and emotional display.

Of course, this case study is limited by the empirical context specificities, and strategic generalization or applicability of the course of action here proposed are very unlikely to work in other social settings. Nonetheless, the idea of a new reflexive perspective looking at the entrepreneurs as the first target of their own strategies might be applicable to those industries characterized by authentic behavior and display of naturally felt emotions on the offer side. Further research is thus required to test what has been proposed here.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrahams, R. D. (1986). Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience, in V. W. Turner and E. M. Bruner (eds). *The Anthropology of Experience*, p. 45-73. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Andrade, E., and Cohen, J. (2007). On the Consumption of Negative Feelings, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (October), 283-300.
- Ashforth, B. E., and Humphrey, R. H. (1993). Emotional Labor in Service Roles: The Influence of Identity, *Academy of Management Review*, 18 (1), 88-115.
- Bagozzi, R. P., Gopinath, M., and Nyer, P. U. (1999). The Role of Emotions in Marketing, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (April), 184-206.
- Barsade, S. G. (2002). The Ripple Effect: Emotional Contagion and Its Influence on Group Behavior, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47 (December), 644-675.
- Bender, T., (1978). *Community and Social Change in America*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Bolton, R. N. (1998). A Dynamic Model of the Duration of Customer's Relationship with a Continuous Service Provider: The Role of Satisfaction, *Marketing Science*, 17 (1), 45-65.
- Bonneville-Roussy, A., Lavigne, G. L., and Vallerand, R. J. (in press). When Passion Leads to Excellence: The Case of Musicians, *Psychology of Music*.
- Boscolo, P. (2002). La motivazione ad apprendere tra ricerca psicologica e senso comune, *Scuola e Città*, n. 52, p. 81-92.
- Brotheridge, C. M., and Lee, R. T. (1998). *On the Dimensionality of Emotional Labour: Development and Validation of the Emotional Labour Scale*. Paper presented at the First Conference on Emotions in Organizational Life, San Diego.
- Brotheridge, C. M., and Lee, R. T. (2003). Development and Validation of the Emotional Labour Scale, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 76 (3), 365-379.
- Brown, S. (2001). *Marketing: the Retro Revolution*, SAGE Publications.

- Cardon, M. (2008). Is Passion Contagious? The Transference of Entrepreneurial Passion to Employees, *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 18, no. 2, 77-86.
- Cardon, M. S., Wincent, J., Singh, J., Drnovsek, M. (2008). The Nature and Experience of Entrepreneurial Passion, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 34, no. 3, 511-532.
- Costantinides, E. (2006). The Marketing Mix Revisited: Toward the 21st Century Marketing, *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 22, no. 4.
- Cova, B. (2003). *Il marketing tribale. Legame, comunità, autenticità come valori del marketing mediterraneo*, Il Sole 24Ore, Milano.
- Cova, B. (1997). Community and Consumption: Toward a Definition of the Linking Value of Products or Services, *European Journal of Marketing*, 31 (3/4), p. 297-316.
- Cova, B. (1999). From Marketing to Societing: When the Link is More Important than the Thing, in Brownlie, D., Saren, M., Wensley, R., and Whittington, R. (eds). *Rethinking Marketing, Toward Critical Marketing Accountings*, Sage, London, p. 65-83.
- Cova, B., and Cova, V. (2002). Tribal Marketing: The Tribalization of Society and Its Impact on the Conduct of Marketing, *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 36, no. 5/6, 595-620.
- Cova, B., Kozinets, R. V., Shankar, A. (2007). Tribes Inc.: The New World of Tribalism, in "Consumer Tribes", Elsevier.
- Cova, B., Pace, S., Park, D. J. (2007). Global Brand Communities Across Borders: The Warhammer Case, *International Marketing Review*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 313-329.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998), *Qualitative Enquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*, London, UK: Sage.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Geirland, J. (1996). Go With the Flow, *Wired Magazine*. Available at: http://hotwired.wired.com/collections/web_development/4.09_csik_pr.html
- Dacin, M.T., Oliver, C., and Roy, J.P., (2007). The Legitimacy of Strategic Alliances: An Institutional Perspective, *Strategic Management Journal*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 169-187.
- Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. New York: Putnam's.
- Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, New York: Plenum.
- Deci, E. L., and Ryan, R. M. (2000). The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.
- Dermer, J. (1975). The Interrelationship of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation, *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 125-129.
- Diefendorff, J. M., and Richard, E. (2003). Antecedents and Consequences of Emotional Display Rule Perceptions, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 88 (2), Apr 2003, 284-294.
- Diefendorff, J. M., Croylea, M. H., and Gosserand, R. H. (2004). The Dimensionality and Antecedents of Emotional Labor Strategies, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, vol. 66 (2), April 2005, 339-359.
- Dolen, W., Ruyter, K., and Lemmink, J. (2004). An Empirical Assessment of the Influence of Customer Emotions and Contact Employee Performance on Encounter and Relationship Satisfaction, *Journal of Business Research*, 57, 437-444.
- Edwards, H., and Day, D. (2005). *Creating Passion Brands: Why It's Time to Learn From the Heart*. London: Kogan Page.
- Fabris, G. (2003). *Il nuovo consumatore: verso il postmoderno*, Gianfranco Angeli, Milano.

- Fischer, K. W., Shaver, P. R., and Carnochan, P. (1992). How Emotions Develop and How They Organize Development, *Cognition and Emotion*, 4, 81-127.
- Fleming, J. H., C. Coffman and J. K. Harter (2005). Manage Your Human Sigma, *Harvard Business Review*, 83 (7), 106-115.
- Forest, J., Mageau, G. A., Sarrazin, C., Morin, E. (2011). “Work is My Passion”: The Different Affective Behavioral and Cognitive Consequences of Harmonious and Obsessive Passion toward Work, *Canadian Journal of Administrative Science*, vol. 28, no. 1, 27-40.
- Fornell, C. (1992). A National Customer Satisfaction Barometer: The Swedish Experience, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 56, 6-21.
- Fournier, S., Dobscha, S. and Mick, D. G. (1998). Preventing the Premature Death of Relationship Marketing, *Harvard Business Review*, Jan-Feb: 42-51.
- Frey, B. S. (1997). *Not Just for the Money. An Economic Theory of Personal Motivation*. Vermont: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Gladwell, M. (2002). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Back Bay Books, Boston.
- Glaser, B. G., and Strauss, A. (1967). *Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Sociology Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam.
- Gosset, W. S. (1921). An Experimental Determination of the Probable Error of Dr. Spearman's Correlation Coefficients, *Biometrika*, vol. 13, no. 2/3.
- Gousse-Lessard, A-S., Vallerand, R. J., and Carbonneau, N. (submitted). The Role of Passion in Mainstream and Radical Behaviors: A Look at the Environmental Cause. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*.
- Grandey, A. A., Fisk, G. M., Mattila, A. S., Jansen, K. J., and Sideman, L. A. (2005). Is “Service With a Smile” Enough? Authenticity of Positive Displays during Service Encounter, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 96, 38-55.

- Grandey, A. A. (2003). When "The Show Must Go On": Surface Acting and Deep Acting as Determinants of Emotional Exhaustion and Peer-Rated Service Delivery, *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 46, no. 1, 86-96.
- Grenier, S., Lavigne, G. L., and Vallerand, R. J. (in preparation). *Passion for Collecting: A Look at Determinants and Outcomes*.
- Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., and Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 5th ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., and Rapson, R. L. (1994). *Emotional Contagion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., and Rapson, R. L. (1992). Primitive Emotional Contagion, Emotions and Social Behavior, *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*, 14, 151-177.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., and Rapson, R. L. (1993). *Emotional Contagion*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England.
- Hebdidge, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of Style (New Accents)*, NY: Routledge.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Groth, M., Paul, M., and Gremler, D. D. (2006). Are All Smiles Created Equal? How Emotional Contagion and Emotional Labour Affect Service Relationships, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 70 (July), 58-73.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton.
- Inglehart, R., and Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy. The Human Development Sequence*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jupp, V. (2006). *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research*, London: Sage.
- Keeling, K. B. (2000). A Regression Equation for Determining the Dimensionality of Data, *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, vol. 35, no. 4, 457-468.

- Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The Field behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 39, no. 1, p. 61-72.
- Kozinets, R.V. (1999). E-Tribalized Marketing? The Strategic Implication of Virtual Communities, *European Management Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 252-264.
- Kozinets, R.V. (2001). Articulating the Meanings of Star Trek's Culture of Consumption, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 67-88.
- Lafrenière, M-A. K., Vallerand, R. J., Donahue, R., and Lavigne, G. L. (2009). On the Costs and Benefits of Gaming: The Role of Passion, *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 12, 285-290.
- Laran, J., and Janiszewski, C. (2011). Work or Fun? How Task Construal and Completion Influence Regulatory Behavior, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 37 (6).
- Lau-Gesk, L., and Meyers-Levy, J. (2009). Emotional Persuasion: When the Valence Versus the Resource Demands of Emotions Influence Consumers' Attitudes, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (4), 585-599.
- Maffesoli, M., (1988/1996), "*The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*", London, SAGE.
- Mageau, G. A., Vallerand, R. J., Charest, J., Salvy, S.-J., Lacaille, N., Bouffard, T., and Koestner, R. (2009). On the Development of Harmonious and Obsessive Passion: The Role of Autonomy Support, Activity Specialization, and Identification with the Activity, *Journal of Personality*, 77, 601-645.
- Mageau, G. A., Vallerand, R. J., Rousseau, F. L., Ratelle, C. F., and Provencher, P. J. (2005). Passion and Gambling: Investigating the Divergent Affective and Cognitive Consequences of Gambling, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35, 100-118.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954/1987), *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper and Row.

- McBane, D. A. (1995). Empathy and the Salesperson: A Multidimensional Perspective, *Psychology and Marketing*, 12, 394-369.
- McEwen, W. J. (2005). *Married to the Brand: Why Consumers Bonds with Some Brands for Life*, Princeton, NJ: Gallup Press.
- McFarland, R.G., Bloodgood, J.M., Payan, J.M., (2008). Supply Chain Contagion, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 72, pp. 63-79.
- Middleton, R. (1990/2002). *Studying Popular Music*, Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Morey, N. C., Luthans, F. (1984). An Emic Perspective and Ethnoscience Methods for Organizational Research, *The Academy of Management Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan., p. 27-36.
- Muniz, A. M., and O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand Community, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 27, 412-432.
- O'Tool, J., and Lawler, E. E. III (2006). *The New American Workplace*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Oliver, R. L., and Swan, J. E. (1989). Consumer Perception of Interpersonal Equity and Satisfaction in Transactions: A Field Survey Approach, *The Journal of Marketing*, vol. 53, no. 2, pp. 21-35.
- Olshavsky, R. (1973). Customer-Salesmen Interactions in Appliance Retailing, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 10, 208-212.
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, Sage, 3rd ed.
- Philippe, F., and Vallerand, R. J. (2007). Prevalence Rates of Gambling Problems in Montreal, Canada: A Look at Old Adults and the Role of Passion, *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 23, 275-283.
- Philippe, F., Vallerand, R. J., and Lavigne, G. (2009). Passion Does Make a Difference in People's Lives: A look at Well-Being in Passionate and Non-Passionate Individuals, *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 1, 3-22.

- Philippe, F., Vallerand, R. J., Andrianarisoa, J., and Brunel, P. (2009). Passion in Referees: Examining Affective and Cognitive Experiences in Sport Situations. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 31, 1-21.
- Pike, K. L. (ed.) (1967). *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure of Human Behavior* (2nd ed.), The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton.
- Pine, J. and Gilmore, J. (1999). *The Experience Economy*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 1999.
- Price, L. L., Arnould, E. J., Deibler S. L. (1995). Consumers' Emotional Responses to Service Encounters. The Influence of the Service Provider, *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 34-63.
- Pugh, S. D. (2001). Service with a Smile: Emotional Contagion in the Service Encounter, *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (5), pp. 1018-1927.
- Ratelle, C., Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G., Rousseau, F. L., and Provencher, P. J. (2004). When Passion Leads to Problematic Outcomes: A Look at Gambling, *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 20, 105-119.
- Reynolds, K. E., and Beatty, S. E. (1999). Customer Benefits and Company Consequence of Customer-Salesperson Relationships in Retailing, *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 75 (1), 11-32.
- Richins, M. L. (1999). Possessions in the Expression of Self, in M. B. Holbrook (ed.), *Consumer Value: A Framework for Analysis and Research* (pp. 85-104). New York: Routledge.
- Rip, B., and Vallerand, R. J. (2007). *Passion and Politics: The Quest for Québec Sovereignty, Identity Threat, and the Politics of Reconciliation and Revenge*, Paper presented at the Canadian Psychological Association Convention, Ottawa, June 2007.
- Rip, B., Fortin, S., and Vallerand, R. J. (2006). The Relationship between Passion and Injury in Dance Students, *Journal of Dance Medicine & Science*, 10, 14-20.
- Romm, D., (1988). Restauration Theater: Giving Direction to Service. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Association Quarterly*, February, pp. 31-49.

- Rosin, U. (2011a). *High Passion Intensity Industries: Toward the Economy of Passion*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
- Rosin, U. (2011b). *Tribes of Professionals: Toward a New Tribal Marketing Approach*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
- Rosin, U. (2011c). *Passion Management: Experiential Marketing Strategies and Practices in Networks of Passionate Professionals. The Case of the Italian Board Game Industry*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
- Rousseau, F. L., and Vallerand, R. J. (2008). An Examination of the Relationship between Passion and Subjective Well-Being in Older Adults, *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 66, 195-211.
- Rousseau, F. L., Vallerand, R. J., Ratelle, C. F., Mageau, G. A., and Provencher, P. J. (2002). Passion and Gambling: Validation of the Gambling Passion Scale (GPS), *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 18, 45-66.
- Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being, *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.
- Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2003). On Assimilating Identities to the Self: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Internalization and Integrity Within Cultures, in M. R. Leary and J. P. Tangney (eds.), *Handbook on Self & Identity* (pp. 253-274). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ryan, R. M. and Deci E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, no. 25, p. 54-67.
- Schmitt, B. H. (1999). *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Companies to Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate to Your Company and Brands*, Free Press.
- Schoenewolf, G. (1990). Emotional Contagion: Behavioral Induction in Individuals and Groups, *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 15, 49-61.
- Schouten, J. W., and McAlexander, J. H. (1995). Subculture of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 22, 43-61.

- Shet, J. N., and Parvatiyar, A. (1995). The Evolution of Relationship Marketing, *International Business Review*, 4 (4), 397-418.
- Shields, R. (1996). *Foreword to Michel Maffesoli 'The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society'*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 3-18.
- Spiro, R.L., and Perreault, W.D.Jr., (1979). Influence Use by Industrial Salesmen: Influence-Strategy Mixes and Situational Determinants, *The Journal of Business* vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 435-455
-
- Spiro, R. L., and Weitz, B. A. (1990). Adaptive Selling: Conceptualization, Measurement and Nomological Validity, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29, 61-69.
- Stein, N. L., and Oatley, K. (1990). Special Issue: Basic Emotions, *Cognition and Emotion*, 6, 161-319.
- Tassinari, L. G., Cacioppo, J. T., and Geen, T. R. (1989). A Psychometric Study of Surface Electrode Placements for Facial Electromyographic Recording: I. The Brow and Cheek Muscle Regions, *Psychophysiology*, 26, 1-16.
- Vallerand, R. J. (2008). On the Psychology of Passion: In Search of What Makes People's Lives Most Worth Living, *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 1-13. (Invited paper, CPA Presidential Address).
- Vallerand, R. J. (2010). On Passion for Life Activities: The Dualistic Model of Passion, in M. P. Zanna (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 42, pp. 97-193, New York: Academic Press.
- Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C. M., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., Gagné, M., and Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On Obsessive and Harmonious Passion, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 756-767.
- Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Elliot, A., Dumais, A., Demers, M-A., and Rousseau, F. L. (2008). Passion and Performance Attainment in Sport, *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 9, 373-392.

- Vallerand, R. J., Ntoumanis, N., Philippe, F., Lavigne, G. L., Carbonneau, C., Bonneville, A., Lagacé-Labonté, C., and Maliha, G. (2008). On Passion and Sports Fans: A Look at Football, *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 26, 1279-1293.
- Vallerand, R. J., Rousseau, F. L., Grouzet, F. M. E., Dumais, A., and Grenier, S. (2006). A Look at Determinants and Affective Experiences, *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 28, 455-478.
- Vallerand, R. J., Salvy, S. J., Mageau, G. A., Elliot, A. J., Denis, P., Grouzet, F. M. E., and Blanchard, C. B. (2007). On the Role of Passion in Performance, *Journal of Personality*, 75, 505-534.
- Verbeke, W. (1997). Individual Differences in Emotional Contagion of Salespersons: Its Effect on Performance and Burnout, *Psychology and Marketing*, 14 (6), 617-636.
- Verhoef, P. C., Franses, P. H., Hoekstra, J. C. (2002). The Effect of Relationship Constructs on Customer Referrals and Number of Services Purchased from a Multiservice Provider: Does Age of Relationship Matter?, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30 (3), 202-226.
- Von Bertalanffy, L. (1976). *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*, New York: George Braziller.
- Weitz, B. A. (1981). Effectiveness in Sales Interactions: A Contingency Framework, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 45, no. 1, p. 85.
- Willet, R., and Pennington, A. (1966). Customer and Salesman: The Anatomy of Choice and Influence in a Retailing Setting, in R. Hass (ed.), *Technology and Marketing*, pp. 598-616, Chicago: AMA.
- Wind, J., Mahajan, V., Gunther, R. (2001). *Convergence Marketing: Strategies for Reaching the New Hybrid Consumer*, Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Yim, C. K. B., Tse, D. K., Chan, K. W. (2008). Strengthening Customer Loyalty through Intimacy and Passion: Roles of Customer-Firm Affection and Customer-Staff Relationship in Services, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. XLV, pp. 741-756.

- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (rev. ed.), Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Zapf, D., (2002). Emotion Work and Psychological Well-Being: A Review of the Literature and Some Conceptual Considerations, *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 237-268

APPENDIX 1. SCALES AND SUBSCALES OF MEASUREMENT

Deep acting and Surface acting subscales from Emotional labor scale (Brotheridge and Lee, 1998)

I – never (1) – rarely (2) – sometimes (3) – often (4) – always (5)

Deep acting

Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others

Really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job

Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show

Surface acting

Hide my true feelings about a situation

Resist expressing my true feelings

Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have

Passion Scale – Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003)

Describe an activity that you like, that is important for you, and in which you spend a significant amount of time.

While thinking of your favorite activity and using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement with each item.

Obsessive passion

1. This activity is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.
2. I have the impression that my activity controls me.
3. If I could, I would only do my activity.
4. This activity is the only thing that really turns me on.
5. I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity.
6. I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my activity.

Harmonious passion

7. This activity is in harmony with the other activities in my life.
8. The new things that I discover with this activity allow me to appreciate it even more.
9. This activity reflects the qualities I like about myself.
10. This activity allows me to live a variety of experiences.

11. My activity is well integrated in my life.
12. My activity is in harmony with other things that are part of me.

Passion criteria

13. I spend a lot of time doing this activity.
14. I like this activity.
15. This activity is important for me.
16. This activity is a passion for me.