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„I Identify, I Engage: Three Types of Consumers' Identifications as Antecedents of Brand-Related Online Activities on Instagram"

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Social media, Internet-based applications that allow users to create content and interact with each other by sharing, liking, or commenting on it (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, & Pauwels, 2013) play an active role in contemporary marketing. The increasing investment in social media marketing strategies, which reached over $70 billion in April 2019 (Enberg, 2019), requires companies and academics to understand what motivations and antecedents lay behind consumers' social media engagement that brings the desired profit. Customer engagement on social media goes beyond purchase, it is a behavioral manifestation towards a brand or a company (van Doorn et al., 2010) and can be explained as an experiential process of interaction with specific brands (organizations) and their elements (Brodie, Ilic, & Hollebeek, 2013). Brands on social media are attractive for consumers as over approximately 50% of social media users follow brands on social media platforms (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009). Nevertheless, the highest interest and the biggest benefit to companies comes from those specific brand-related interactions on social media where consumers directly engage with the brand by either creating their original content or by contributing to the content already created by others (de Vries, Peluso, Romani, Leeflang, & Marcati, 2017; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010). That is because higher engaged people feel in fact more connected to the brands, trust the brand more, feel stronger brand commitment and brand satisfaction, and score higher on the levels of brand loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013; Jahn & Kunz, 2012). The promising advantages through a proper understanding of engagement brought various researchers to an extended investigation of the topic. Yet, the complexity of this important construct leaves unanswered questions that need to be addressed in order to broadly capture consumers' online behavior. The present paper consults existing literature related to consumers' engagement in brand-related online activities and proposes that antecedents of it are anchored in social identity theory and consumers' need for self-identification.

In general motivations such as a need for entertainment, self-expression, social interaction and information seeking were found to be the main drivers of online engagement (e.g. Chen, 2011; Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Further, researchers focused on motivations specific to brand-related activities and found that self-expression, socializing, obtaining information, entertainment, and remuneration trigger higher interest in consumers to interact with brands (de Vries et al., 2017). In this paper, various levels of identification were put forward as possible antecedents of engagement in brand-related online activities. The proposed assumption comes from the theory that one of the main motivations for brand-related engagement, self-expression, as such has effects on self-esteem which going even further has an effect on identity formation (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). It is fundamental to humans to seek for a sense of self and answer the question "Who am I?" (Belk, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). In consumer society, people define their personalities based on what they buy, own, and consume (Belk, 1988). Brands function as important components of people's social identification (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003), provide people with meaningful social identities and help them self-define their own selves (He & Li, 2010). Building on this inference, the present paper considers people's desire for self-identification as an antecedent of engagement in brand-related online contributing and creating activities since they define their own selves within the brands and thus are expected to self-express themselves within brands' social media profiles. Therefore, three consumer identifications derived from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) were used as the recourse of the paper's relationships, those which are the following, consumer brand identification, national identity, and consumer brand community identification. All of these items in the past research indicated to increase several aspects of the consumer-brand relationship such as consumer loyalty, improved relationships with the brand and its products, brand commitment, or other highly relevant brand preference indicators (Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018; de Vries et al.,

2017; Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2014; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012). Even though the importance of these identifications in consumer-brand relationships is admitted, little is known about their influence on engagement in brand-related social media activities. In the present paper, this gap is addressed and empirically tested to provide academia and managers with valuable advanced insights.

The tested relationships of identifications and engagement in brand-related online activities were analyzed on the social media platform Instagram. The majority of researchers in the field of social media target in their researches Facebook which with more than 2 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2019a) is and will be undoubtedly the most influential social media platform of this decade. Nonetheless, at this moment, Facebook's subsidiary company – Instagram, is the sixth most popular social media platform after Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and WeChat (Statista, 2019b) and should not be omitted from the interest of researchers. In June 2018, Instagram broke the mark of 1 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2019c) which shows the rise of its importance. The current stage of Instagram research proposes that Instagram is an empowering, self-presentation medium, especially among young users (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). The most common age groups on Instagram are between 18-24 and 25-34 years old what makes Instagram a rather adolescent oriented medium (Statista, 2019d). Instagram as a special "picture only" social media platform has been increasingly more attractive for brands and their brand communities since the components that are incorporated on Instagram serve brands for creating new relationships and special interactive kinds of collaboration between a brand and customers. To be able to engage with the content on Instagram, a mobile app is required. Even though this may seem as a limitation to some extent, statistics show that the most popular way to access social media is via a smartphone (Lunden, 2014). Moreover, a distinct characteristic of the content shared on this platform is the usage of a hashtag (#). Hashtags serve on Instagram as keywords used

for searching and helping users find content that is relevant to them. Those may provide companies with an ability to boost their profiles and posts by selecting relevant keywords. Consumers on Instagram produce user generated content which can be reposted and used as a valuable contribution to brands' Instagram profiles (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Brands which are able to select this content have higher control over the brand's messages and give consumers the feeling of being a part of product's or services' development (Geurin & Burch, 2016). The increasing amount of Instagram users and thus the impact on society and the market requires a better understanding of Instagram by academics and managers. Similarly, the uniqueness of Instagram features might trigger different user behavior, user patterns and motivations to engage and should be studied distinctly from Facebook or other social media platforms. This paper provides insights into the topic and opens up new space for future discussions.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First, the theoretical background of social media engagement and consumer online brand-related activities (COBRAs) is reviewed. This is followed by the introduction of so far known antecedents and motivations of COBRAs. To familiarize the concepts of consumer-brand identification, brand community identification and national identity, the literature from social identity theory and former studies is consulted. These theoretical sections are followed by an empirical study conducted within a sample of Slovak consumers. The study examined the anticipated relationships and that is how three different consumers' identifications affect the engagement in brand-related contributing and creating online activities on Instagram. Results of the empirical study are later presented in the paper. The final section of this paper discusses the findings, concludes the limitations and proposes further research directions.

Theoretical considerations

Engagement and Consumers Online Brand-Related Activities

Social media has brought a shift in power wielded by consumers, who moved from being passive receivers of marketing content to active participants in brand-related messages (Mangold & Fauld, 2009). They are now provided with various opportunities for sharing their views, experiences, or preferences of brands with others and that either in textual, visual, or audio form. The interactive nature of social media grants consumers competence to engage with their favorite brands and be active creators of brands' content as well. Companies are, on the other hand, given the advantage of using this close connection in a form of, e.g., WOM marketing (Godes & Mayzlin 2004; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010) and allowance to further publish user generated content for brand purposes (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). Social media is not anymore only a networking space but also a relationship centric and participatory platform (Tsai & Men, 2013) that serves companies to interact with their customers and customers to interact with brands. This is a totally new and unique form of a customer-brand contact that has not been omitted in the studies of the last decade.

Various researchers have tried to understand the nature and the origins of social media activities related to brands. A very common classification of different types of social media brand related activities is based on customer engagement. In general, Brodie et al. (2013, p. 107) defines engagement as "an interactive, experiential multidimensional process, based on cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral dimensions and individuals' interaction with specific objects (e.g. brands, organizations), and/or other brand community members". Hollebeek's work (2011, p. 560) further characterizes individuals' interactions with brands and defines customer brand engagement as "the level of a customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in brand interactions." The behavioral part of customer engagement is indeed

what matters most to companies on social media. Van Doorn et al. (2010) address the behavioral nature of customer engagement and express that transactions do not play a role, but customer engagement goes instead rather beyond purchase, results from different motivational drivers and is a behavioral manifestation towards a brand or a company. The behavioral part of consumers' engagement divides social media users into less and more active participants who either contribute to the content created by others or create their own original content. Active participation of a consumer on social media therefore provides brands with direct interaction with consumers and with unique content created by their followers (de Vries et al., 2017).

According to previous studies, there are three ways in which people engage with brands on social media: by consuming brand-related content, by participating in brand communities, and by producing their own unique brand-related content (Shao, 2009). For addressing each of the possible ways of engagement, Muntinga et al. (2011) created a framework called COBRA which refers to Consumer's Online Brand-Related Activities. COBRAs have been defined as "a set of brand-related online activities on the part of the consumer that vary in the degree to which the consumer interacts with social media and engages in the consumption, contribution, and creation of media content," (Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski, 2016, p. 66). The level of engagement differs for each of these activities. *Consuming activities* require the smallest level of engagement and refer to consumers who are only passively consuming brand-related media (Muntinga et al., 2011). This can be for example seeing a picture, watching a video, or following a profile of their favorite brand. *Contribution* requires peer-to-peer and peer-to-content interactions about brands (Shao, 2009) and is moderately engaging depending on the amount of effort and time (de Vries et al., 2017). An "observer" becomes a "contributor" by direct interaction with the brand-related content, for example commenting on or liking a brand-related post (Schivinski et al., 2016). Lastly, *creat-*

ing activities entail the most engagement because of the time and effort required (de Vries et al., 2017). Creating activities involve consumers' creation of user generated brand-related content (Schivinski et al., 2016), such as uploading a picture of their new Converse sneakers, which can be later consumed or contributed to by other consumers. Because of its further engaging nature, creating activities and especially their outcome (user generated content) have been growingly in the center of the academic and managerial attention (e.g., Christodoulides, Jevons, & Bonhomme, 2012; Hautz, Füller, Hutter, & Thürridl, 2013; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Research suggests that for brands the most important consumer activities on social media are those which require high or moderate levels of consumer engagement, namely contributing and creating activities (Hollebeek et al., 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010). On these levels, a consumer experiences a positive psychological state that comes from engagement in interactive or co-creating activities and requires cognitive, emotional and behavioral involvement (Brodie, Hollebeerk, Juric, & Ilic, 2011). It is in the scope of this research to understand *moderately* and *highly* engaging brand-related online activities (i.e. contributing and creating activities) as they have significant implication for marketing and an impact on corporate reputation, sales, profitability, and store visits (Rishika, Kumar, Janakiraman, & Bezawada, 2013; Zhu & Zhang, 2010).

Antecedents and Motivations for Engagement in Brand-Related Online Activities

Understanding the business potential of moderately and highly engaged consumers is crucial for companies in order to monetize their online efforts. Research suggests that customers engaged with brand communities score higher on various important aspects of brand relationships such as brand trust, brand loyalty, or brand satisfaction (Brodie et al., 2013; Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Engagement in fact reflects a motivational state (van Doorn et al., 2010), meaning that consumers engage depending on different motivations and antecedents. A significant amount of work has been done in order to understand the motivations of consumers to

participate in the online world and on social media. First of all, the main aim of social media is to facilitate social relationships by providing an opportunity to users to stay in touch with their close ones (Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Wiley & Sisson, 2006). Accordingly, the need for social interaction followed by the exchange of information has been found to be the main motivation to use social media (e.g. Chen, 2011; Sheldon et al., 2011). Furthermore, enjoyment granted by social media providers has been suggested as another crucial motivation for the users (Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009). Users' interest increases by strengthening fun and entertainment in various forms, such as uploading photos and videos or sharing links on their profiles (Powell, 2009; Tapscott, 2008). Self-expression or the aim to let others "know about me" are social media usage attracting devices mainly for adolescents (Wiley & Sisson, 2006). In this case, social media may have an effect on self-esteem and consequently shape ones identity and personal well-being (Valkenburg et al., 2006). Additional driving motivations such as desire for economic incentives, well-being, or concern for other consumers can be found in the scope of social media usage research (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Hoffman & Novak, 2012).

While a lot of researchers reveal a wide range of motivations and antecedents in general usage of social media, only a small amount of attention has been paid to the antecedents and motivations for especially brand-related activities that consumers engage in. Recently, Gao and Feng (2016) find motivations for engagement in brand-related activities in uses and gratification theory (U&G) which assumes that users search actively for the media that satisfy their needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). They suggest, consistently with other studies (Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Muntinga et al., 2011; Yoo, Sanders, & Moon, 2013), that people who use social media as a self-representing tool are more likely to be inclined to an increased engagement with brands and brand content. Muntinga et al. (2011) explored motivations behind brand-related social media use and participation in COBRAs also depending on U&G theory.

Respectively, the results of the qualitative research suggested that *consumption* of brand-related content is driven by information, entertainment and remuneration motivations, *contribution* to brand-related content is driven by personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment, and *creating* brand-related activities on social media were described by four motivational dimensions, namely personal identity, integration and social interaction, entertainment, and empowerment. Personal identity stands as an important motivation for both contributing and creating activities which already suggests that consumers' identification serves as a possible antecedent of engagement in brand-related online activities. Further, similar to the present paper, researchers specifically focused on brand related activities that require moderate and high levels of engagement (i.e. contributing and creating activities). De Vries et al. (2017) presented their findings of five underlying motivations (self-expression, socializing, obtaining information/knowledge, entertainment, and remuneration) within self-determination theory. Results of the study suggested that a moderately autonomous motivation for self-expression is related to creating activities, while socializing which is also moderately autonomous motivation rather predicts engagement in contributing activities.

The focus of this research paper is inspired by previous studies. Due to the lack of analysis related to motivations and antecedents of social media engagement with brands specifically and the promising contribution of this concept for marketing as well as academic literature, this paper is built strictly upon engagement in brand-related social media activities. In line with previous studies (de Vries et al., 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010), only those activities that require moderate and high levels of engagement (contributing and creating) are within the scope of this paper's interest as they bring the highest value to the companies and are reflected in sales, corporate reputation, and other behavioral properties of consumers (Rishika, Kumar, Janakiraman, & Bezawada, 2013; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Furthermore, since one of the main motivations for social media usage is the need for self-

expression which leads to effects on self-esteem and further to identity formation (Valkenburg et al., 2006), social identity theory was chosen to help us understand what possible antecedents of engagement in brand-related contributing and creating activities are, depending on the consumers' identifications related to brands. Other researchers also support the notion that consumers' personal needs for identifications are reflected in their motivations for brand-related engagement (Muntinga et al., 2011). The extended literature review noticed a lack of literature concerned with brand engagement on Instagram, therefore it has been chosen as the representative social media platform. In total, this paper attempts to answer a research question that shows *how different types of consumer identifications influence consumers' tendencies to engage in contributing and creating activities on a brand's Instagram profile.*

Three Types of Consumer Identification: Directions from Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) explains relationships of an individual with a group and suggests explanations when and why people identify and behave as a part of the group. According to the theory, people's self-image is a combination of both an individual and a group component, which represent forms of a personal identity and a social identity. Seeking for a sense of self and answering the question "Who am I?" is fundamental to humans (Belk, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Social identity partially answers this question. People define their social identity depending on their own categorization as members of different social groups or organizations. The identities are then a composition of self-views and self-categorization in terms of membership in by them selected groups. Once having a certain social identity, people behave accordingly – they feel one with the group, are like others in the group, and evaluate and see things from the perspective of the group (Stets & Burke, 2000). Moreover, people evaluate this group more positively and feel a stronger attraction to the group comparing to other groups (Hogg & Hardie, 1992). Consequently it leads to a greater commitment to the group and it lowers the desire to leave the group even at the times of unfa-

vorable group status (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997) meaning that the identification leads to the support of the institutions that represent the identity and to the performance of those activities that are congruent with the identity. Moreover, it motivates people to an increased engagement in group activities that bring successes and improve the status of the group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

In today's consumer society, this goes beyond traditional social groups as were known before. Buying, owning, and consuming of products is what defines personalities of modern consumers (Belk, 1988). Nowadays also certain brands provide people with attractive and meaningful social identities, which help them satisfy their self-defined needs (He & Li, 2010). People are creating their identities within brands that are perceived to have strong identities and represent their beliefs and consequently act in order to be a part of this group and to protect its status. Therefore, when understanding today's people social identification, brands are important components of the analysis (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

Social identity theory provides us with different types of identifications that are related to consumer's personal and brand-related identity. Despite different characteristics of each, social identity theory suggests that the overall consumers' brand attachment is explained in a satisfactory way by their combination. Accordingly, this paper attempts to explore *consumer brand identification*, *national identity*, and *brand community identification* as three types of consumer's self-presentation that drives them towards brands and brand-related interaction on social media.

Consumer-brand identification. Various researchers have noticed that in relation to consumers, brands embody, inform, and communicate their consumer identities (Bharracharya & Sen, 2003; Lam, Ahearne, Hu, & Schillewaert, 2010; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) and represent social categories which are self-relevant to identify with (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998). It is what people buy, consume and own that assists them in identifying their personali-

ties in front of others as well as themselves (Belk, 1988). Consequently, academics and brand managers pay attention to understanding what this type of identification means and what utilization of identification between a consumer and a brand there is for an effective brand management and consumer brand-related behavior.

The concept of *consumer-brand identification* (CBI) was developed in social psychology and organizational behavior and is a part of social identity theory. In this context, identification typically refers to a perception of oneness with or belongingness to a particular group (e.g. alma maters of students) (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) define customer company identification, which was applied to CBI by various other researchers (e.g. Donavan, Janda, & Suh, 2006), as the extent to which consumers consider their and company's (brand's) self-definitional characteristics to be the same. CBI is perceived as an expression of consumers' seeking for identity-fulfilling meaning in the marketplace of brands (Stockburger-Sauer et al., 2012) and a customers' psychological state with a brand when they perceive, feel, and value their belongingness to it (Lam et al., 2010). The need for identification is derived by three higher-order self-definitional needs where consumers have to (1) know themselves, (2) feel relatively unique, and (3) feel good about themselves. Depending on that, brand identification is the extent to which a person perceives the brand to be similar to him/her in personality, to be unique or distinctive and to be prestigious (Stockurger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Moreover, CBI is a specific type of consumers' associations with one's self and an in-group of customers who identify with the same brand (Lam et al., 2010). It has been found that CBI triggers important brand responses such as brand commitment, loyalty, and advocacy (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) derive the characteristics of CBI from social identity theory where the consumers' self-defining and enhancing motives are the main drivers of identification. They found out that consumers with stronger brand identifica-

tion are more likely to engage in pro-brand related activities. This can be anything ranging from supporting the company goals and protecting its reputation, to supporting its products, or other activities including brand loyalty (He & Li, 2011). This phenomenon in the literature divides consumer behavior into in-role behavior (such as loyalty) and extra-role behavior that is not related to self-interest but rather to an improvement of the general brand attitude (such as brand advocacy, recommendation, or resilience to negative information) (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bharracharya & Sen, 2003; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). In relation to social media, a strong identification with a brand transforms social media engaged consumers into effective brand engaged consumers, by creating positive attitudes of a consumer towards a brand (Coelho et al., 2018).

Literature confirmed that consumers who identify stronger with a brand are inclined to contribute to the success of the company. CBI in this case triggers supporting behavior such as increased use and purchase and repurchase of the products (Kuenzel & Vaux Halliday, 2008; Ahearne et al., 2005), higher spending (Carlson, Donovan, & Cumiskey, 2009) or positive word-of-mouth (Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Furthermore, Lam, Ahearne and Schillewaert (2011) expand consumer brand-related behavior to the online world and suggest that CBI has a positive effect on online identity-promoting behavior and the tendency to voluntarily participate in brand-related online activities. Moreover, results of a study conducted by Tuškej and Podnar (2018) imply that strong CBI with a corporate brand results in active brand-related online behavior and an active engagement in corporate brand's activities on social media. Drawing on previous research, this paper proposes that CBI is a promising concept that should be considered as one of the antecedents of brand-related online engagement. To advance the existing literature, the present paper investigates the relationships of CBI, brands and identification in the context of Instagram. Concluding from previous research, it is supposed that more brand engaged consumers might be higher motivated to contribute to and

create content related to the brands in order to express their positive relationships to the brand and express their identification with it.

H1. A higher level of consumers' brand identification increases the likelihood of a consumer to participate in a) contributing and b) creating activities on a brand's Instagram profile.

Brand community identification. When thinking about a brand on social media, it is the brand community that is an inseparable part of brand's profiles which provides brand-loyal consumers with direct brand interaction and interaction with other consumers and thus has to be considered while trying to understand relationships of a consumer and a brand. By a definition, a brand community is a place for people that adore a certain brand in order to so-cialize with other individuals in the context provided by the brand (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002). Social identity theory assumes that consumers are keen to join a brand community to fulfill their need for identification with symbols and groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A brand community is constructed so that community members may establish and de-velop relationships with the brand, product, marketer, or other customers (McAlexander et al., 2002). By sharing their passion, consumers receive pleasure from participating in brand communities (Zaglia, 2013). A sense of "belonging" to the brand community is in literature called brand community identification (BCI). The identification means in this case that the consumer regards himself/herself to be a member of the brand community (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005) and agrees with the community's norms, traditions, rituals and objectives while trying to follow them (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995). Various re-searchers have been interested in the topic of brand communities and the identification with them. It has been established that identification with a brand community increases consumers' attachment to the product (McAlexander et al., 2002) and resilience to negative information about the brand (Muniz & Schau, 2007). Moreover, consumers like to be a part of the brand-

community, as it provides them with some advantages in return. For example, people joined in brand communities help each other by sharing information about the functionality and quality of the product (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) which consecutively improves the relationship with the brand as well as with other community members. Especially more engaged customers form stronger relationships with the brand community elements and other brand community members (Habibi et al., 2014). The increased product attachment, resilience to negative information and information sharing between the consumers are general advantages of well-developed BCI (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Muniz & Schau, 2007). A more identified individual demands and expects more from the brand (Fournier & Avery, 2011) and in turn provides the brand with various insights and new generated ideas (Moran & Gossieaux, 2001) which he/she shares further with other community members or new potential customers.

Due to the interactive nature of social media, brand communities have been embedded in social media profiles of brands. In fact, building a valuable brand community and gaining customers' engagement is one of the crucial elements in social media branding (Habibi et al., 2014). Through social media, consumers feel bonded and empowered and thus demand and expect more from the brands (Fournier & Avery, 2011). On the other hand, the open conversation with customers brings brands direct feedback and may bring valuable content. The main goal of establishing brand communities is in the end enhanced by loyalty, trust, market insights, and idea generation (Moran & Gossieaux, 2001). Moreover, brand-community-identified consumers are generally more enthusiastic to participate in discussions about the brand and in brand-related activities. Algesheimer et al. (2005) found that BCI causes increased engagement in brand community. Community identified consumers like to interact with the brand and other members of the brand community and together co-create value for themselves, other members and/or companies (Porter & Donthu, 2008). The research already

suggests that BCI has an effect on brand-related engagement. The promising concept is, however, understudied in literature related to social media. Therefore, based on previous research, the aim of this paper is to understand how brand-community-identified consumers engage in brand-related activities with brands on Instagram. This paper assumes that more identified customers score higher on tendencies to engage with brand-related contributing and creating activities, as they want to bring positive advantages to the brand that represents their set of values and norms.

H2. A higher level of consumers' brand community identification increases the likelihood of a consumer to participate in a) contributing and b) creating activities on a brand's Instagram profile.

National identity. To further understand individual and her/his identifying needs that affect social media usage, the concept of one's origins reflected in national identification is included in this paper. The conceptual roots of national identity (NI) are outlined in social identity theory which in this relation makes a distinction in identified and dis-identified persons depending on their behavior towards the "in-group" (home country) and the "out-group" (foreign country) (Verlegh, 2007). In general, NI is the intensity of the identification with one's own nation, the extent of a positive feeling about this affiliation and the level of importance that people attach to this feeling (Feather, 1981; Tajfel, 1974). With an implication to branding, the concept is related to the idea that consumers' favorableness or unfavorableness towards a brand varies according to the brand's specific origins (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). Some national iconic brands are encoded with national associations, regardless of their global success (Holt, 2006; Cormack, 2008). Purchasing these products is linked to so called "product patriotism", which basically explains the way of how an individual lives and expresses his/her NI by the consumption of a nationally-iconic product (Spielmann, Maguire, & Charters, 2018). Social identity theory distinguishes three concepts related to the consumption

of foreign and national products – national identity, consumer ethnocentrism, and consumer cosmopolitanism. NI, and similarly consumer ethnocentrism, in the relation to consumer behavior are based on the economic motive to prioritize domestic companies over foreign through the purchase of domestic products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). While NI is more pro-in-group oriented, meaning that a person would prioritize a product solely because of a feeling of attachment to the group (his/her own nation) (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015), consumer ethnocentrism concept talks especially about anti-out-group base that considers the purchase of foreign products as inappropriate and unacceptable (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Consumer cosmopolitanism is rather related to consumers' intention to purchase global brands, and consumers' tendencies to search for the same (global) brands both at home and abroad (Riefler, Diamantopoulos, & Siguaw, 2012), it is a pro-out-group concept. For the purpose of this research, NI was chosen as an antecedent of consumers' brand-related engagement in online activities on Instagram, as it is an in-group based identification just like CBI and BCI.

A study by Zeugner-Roth et al. (2015), which together with NI explores consumer ethnocentrism and consumer cosmopolitanism, reveals that all three concepts have an impact on consumer behavior. NI was found to have the strongest effect on domestic products judgement and on willingness to buy domestic products. Information processing related to the product's country of origin is affective and as a result people buy national products in order to reflect their own national heritage in their purchase intentions and social identification (Fournier, 1998; Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008). Moreover, due to a desire of creating a positive social identity, nationally identified consumers' attempt to strengthen group and self-esteem (Verlegh, 2007) by engaging in behaviors that improve the status of the group they belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Concluding from the previous research, NI has an effect on creating positive attitudes towards national brands and triggers behavior that adds to the posi-

tive status of a national brand and a national brand's community they belong to. NI is a promising in-group type of identification that could trigger similar behavioral patterns as CBI and BCI in online brand-related activities. Until today, NI has been studied in regard to the selection of preferred products and brands. There is an obvious lack of understanding of effects that NI has on online behavior of consumers. A study that considers NI as an antecedent of online brand-related behavior in a favor of a national brand could provide valuable insights and widen the theory of NI and its impact on brand preference and brand-related behavior. The proposed study takes the concept into consideration and suggests that it is a possible antecedent of engagement in (national) brand-related activities on Instagram. In line with research of other two types of identifications, it is proposed that more nationally identified individuals will engage more with national iconic brands.

H3. A higher level of consumers' national identification increases the likelihood of a consumer to participate in a) consuming and b) creating activities on a *national* brand's Instagram profile.

Methodology

Method

A quantitative approach of an online survey was used to tackle the research problem and analyze the proposed relationships empirically. All recruited participants were asked to fill in an approximately 10-15 minutes long questionnaire that included a stimulus of a national brand and its Instagram profile. The survey was spread through online channels (messengers, Facebook, and Instagram) and respondents were asked to follow a link that led them to the online survey created on the platform SoSciSurvey.de. A total number of 189 participants (73% females, 27% males) were included in the study and the final analysis.

Sample

The proposed relationships were tested on Instagram users from Slovakia who partici-
pated based on non-probability convenience sampling. Due to the characteristics of a chosen
product (alcoholic beverage), the required age limit was above 18 years old, as it is the legal
age for alcohol consumption in Slovakia.

The average age of the respondents was 24 years old (within the age range of 18 to 34
years old). According to statistics, the age group between 18-34 years old is the most common
and active group of Instagram users (Statista, 2019d) and has been a subject of other research-
ers in social media field. Among the participants, 39.7% had finished their high school, 31.2%
experienced Bachelor's and 27% Master's degree or comparable qualification as the highest
level of education. In terms of Instagram usage, 40.2% have had their accounts between 1-3
years, 30.7% between 3-5 years and 19.6% for more than 5 years and 9.5% for less than a
year. Approximately 40.7% spends 31 seconds to 2 minutes per visit on Instagram, 36.5%
spends between 2 to 5 minutes, 21.2% spends more than 5 minutes per visit and only 1.6%
spends less than 30 seconds per visit on Instagram. More than 33% use hashtags every time
they write a post. However, only 9.5% of the respondents follow the chosen brand's Insta-
gram profile - @tatrateaofficial.

Stimulus

TATRATEA, a Slovak brand of natural tea-based liqueurs, serves this study as a stim-
ulus for measuring anticipated effects of identifications on brand-related online activities on
Instagram. The brand was chosen because of its long tradition in Slovak history, its, to this
date active, manufacturing in Slovakia and its active presence on Instagram. The products of
this brand in their design incorporate unique symbols of national folklore by including the
traditional pattern into the logo in a shape of the letter T with a heart in the middle (appendix
A). Similarly, the communication with the potential clients appeals on the connection to the

Slovak nation where it refers to TATRATEA as a thing of the heart (Tatratea, 2019). The brand has received several high quality awards from various countries, thus it positions its consumers into a distinct category of consumers and creates a brand community within consumers. The brand's official Instagram page, @tatrateaofficial, has approximately 260 posts, 15 categories of highlights (permanent stories) and over 18 thousand followers. Posts on the Instagram profile incorporate user generated content actively, while still keeping a specific design of each post where the iconic bottle is in the middle of the picture and placed in different travel destinations. Travelling is the main topic of the communication on Instagram that encourage the followers and consumers to take the bottles of TATRATEA on their travels, take a picture of the bottle in various iconic places, post it on their profile and tag it with a #tatratea.

In the survey, after answering a series of demographic questions and questions measuring their level of NI, participants were introduced to the brand TATRATEA. The stimulus material used for the short introduction of the brand depicted the logo of the brand (appendix A) and a picture of iconic colorful bottles of TATRATEA (appendix B) accompanied by a short description of the brand. Afterwards, series of brand attitude related questions and questions measuring the level of CBI were executed. In the next section, participants were exposed to an authentic depiction of @tatrateaofficial. A picture of the complete profile (appendix C), one concrete post including description, hashtags and location (appendix D) and three pictures of Instagram highlights (appendix E) were provided to the participants with the aim to introduce them to the Instagram profile of the brand. A short description of each picture was used in order to ensure better understanding. Follow up questions in the questionnaire were related to the dependent variables (contributing and creating activities), measurements of BCI, Instagram usage and control variables.

The collected data provides information that 75.1% of the respondents have bought the products of the brand at least at one point in their past, from which 12.1% state that they did so often or very often. 84.7% of people questioned have already consumed the brand at some point in their lives, 13.7% of them often and very often. More than 43% respondents would likely and most likely buy the brand in the future. To check whether the brand is perceived as a nationally relatable brand, a measurement model for perceiving a brand as a local icon from E M Steenkamp, Batra and Alden (2002) was applied. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point semantic differential scale whether they a) associate this brand with things that are Slovak, b) think that this brand represents what Slovakia is all about, c) perceive this brand as a very good symbol of Slovakia. These three items represent a reliable construct (α=.80) where the mean value is of 3.57 (SD=.93, N=189), saying that the brand is rather perceived as a local icon. Moreover, general brand attitudes were measured on a 5-point semantic differential scale which was adapted from Berger and Mitchel (1989) and Sood and Keller (2012). The measurement shows that TATRATEA is generating rather positive brand attitudes and is perceived as good (M=4.21, SD=.89, N=189), pleasant (M=4.19, SD=.89, N=189), of a high quality (M=4.31, SD=.80, N=189) and likable (M=4.10, SD=.81, N=189).

Measurements

The proposed relationships of this work were empirically tested using an online-survey design. All measurements of the presented study were derived from already existing literature and adapted to fit the context of Instagram research. Measures for the CBI were adopted from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012). Respondents had to express through a 5-point Likert scale (1=absolutely disagree, 5=absolutely agree) their level of agreement with five items (α=.95) that explained 83% of the variance with factor loadings ranging from .89 to .92. Measurement of NI were derived from studies of Mlicki and Ellemers (1996) and Verlegh (2007) and the participants were asked to express their level of agreement with several listed

sentences on a 5-point Likert scale (1=absolutely disagree, 5=absolutely agree). Factor analysis revealed that 6 out of 8 proposed items measure this construct reliably with the Cronbach's α equal to .88, explaining 54% of the variance with factor loadings ranging from .61 to .85. For measuring the independent variable BCI 5 items were adopted from the research of Algesheimer et al. (2005) and served as a reliable construct (α=.93) (explaining 78% of the variance, factor loadings from .86 to .92) (see Table 1).

Table 1
Contents of IVs' measurements, their descriptives and psychometric properties.

	Factor loading
Consumer-brand Identification (CBI) - Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) α=.95, M=1.65, SD=.95, N=189	
I feel a strong sense of belonging to brand TATRATEA.	.89
I identify strongly with brand TATRATEA.	.92
Brand TATRATEA embodies what I believe in.	.91
Brand TATRATEA is like a part of me.	.92
Brand TATRATEA had a great deal of personal meaning for me.	.91
Brand Community Identification (BCI) – Algesheimer et al. (2005) α=.93, M=1.77, SD=.89, N=189	
I am very attached to the community.	.86
Other brand community members and I share the same objectives.	.86
The friendships I have with other community members mean a lot to me.	.90
If brand community members planned something, I'd think of it as something "we" would do rather than something "they" would do.	.92
I see myself as a part of the brand community.	.90
National Identity (NI) - Mlicki and Ellemers (1996) and Verlegh (2007) α=.88, M=3.89, SD=.86, N=189	
I see myself as Slovak.	.78
I am glad that I am Slovak.	.81
I feel strong ties with the Slovaks.	.61
Being Slovak means a lot to me.	.70
I am proud to be Slovak.	.85
When a foreign person praises Slovakia, it feels like a personal compliment.	.66

Notes. All items were measured on 5-point Likert scales, anchored at 1="absolutely agree" and 5="absolutely disagree"
α: Cronbach's alpha, M: mean, SD: standard deviation, N: number of cases.

In addition, measurements of the dependent variables of this study, contributing and creating activities, were adopted from the works of de Vries et al. (2017) and Schivinski et al. (2016) and adapted into the Instagram concept. Contributing activities represented a reliable construct (α=.90) of 5 items, explaining 73% of the variance with factor loadings of .67 until .92, where respondents had to express on a 5-point likert scale (1=Never, 5=Very often) the frequency level of probable engagement in following activities: engaging in brand-related conversations, commenting on videos related to the brand TATRATEA, commenting on posts related to the brand TATRATEA, sharing TATRATEA related posts and liking pictures related to TATRATEA.

Table 2
Contents of DVs' measurements, their descriptives and psychometric properties.

	Factor loading
Contributing activities - de Vries et al. (2017) and Schivinski et al. (2016) α=.90, *M*=2.26, *SD*=.97, *N*=189	
Engaging in brand-related conversations.	.88
Commenting on videos related to the brand TATRATEA.	.92
Commenting on posts related to the brand TATRATEA.	.91
Sharing TATRATEA related posts.	.86
Liking pictures related to TATRATEA.	.67
Creating activities – de Vries et al. (2017) and Schivinski et al. (2016) α=.95, *M*=2.53, *SD*=1.09, *N*=189	
Uploading brand-related picture.	.90
Uploading brand-related video.	.82
Uploading brand-related stories.	.85
Uploading brand-related highlights.	.84
Writing brand-related posts.	.84
Writing product reviews.	.82
Moderating brand-related discussions.	.74
Arbitrating brand-related discussions.	.71
Posting a selfie with TATRATEA on Instagram.	.86
Sharing a picture depicting TATRATEA with a friend in messages on Instagram.	.76
Putting a #tatratea to pictures on Instagram.	.84

Notes. All items were measured on 5-point Likert scales, anchored at 1="never" and 5="very often".
α: Cronbach's alpha, M: mean, SD: standard deviation, N: number of cases.

Creating activities consisted of 8 elements and were expressed likewise on a 5-point Likert scale. Moreover, due to the specific features of Instagram (hashtags, instant messaging directly within the app and popularity of selfies), a formative measurement including three additional questions was created in order to fully capture the potential of creating brand-related content on Instagram ("I would post a selfie and a TATRATEA on my Instagram", "I would share a picture depicting TATRATEA with a friend in messages on Instagram", and "I would put a #tatratea to my pictures on Instagram"). Reliability check confirms that all 11 items provide a reliable construct for measuring intentions to participate in creating activities related to brands on Instagram (α=.95) and explained 67% of the variance with factor loadings ranging from .71 to .90. Table 2 presents descriptives, contents of measurements and psycho-metric properties of dependent variables.

To ensure even better understanding of proposed relationships, several control varia-bles were included in the analysis. As proposed by previous researchers, usage of social net-working sites can be an effective method of decreasing feelings of social disconnection (Shel-don et al., 2011). In this sense, one of the major motivations for social media use is the need to fulfill the feeling of belongingness (Seidman, 2013). Similarly, self-presentation and ac-complishment of self-presenting goals influence users' engagement on social media (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Therefore, in this paper, belongingness and self-presentation were included as control variables. Measurements of belongingness and self-presentation were applied from a study of Seidman (2013). Two belongingness motives (acceptance-seeking and connection/caring) were included in the construct measurement, including 5 items with the Cronbach's α=.75 representing reliability, explaining 39% of the variance and factor loadings range from .63 to .76. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never, 5=Very often) how frequently they engage in the Instagram activities such as posting to feel included, posting to make others feel closer to oneself (to figure out the level

of "acceptance seeking") and posting to feel closer to others, show caring for others and support others (to measure the levels of "connection/caring"). A self-presentational behavior (general self-disclosure) and self-presentational motivations (expression of actual, ideal and hidden self, and attention seeking) were examined and represent a reliable measurement (α=.68, 61% variance explained, factor loadings ranging from .73 to .82). Furthermore, previous research indicated that individual differences influence motivations to engage on social media (Katz et al., 1973). So called "contextual age", a construct consisting of different elements such as e.g. interpersonal interaction, life satisfaction, social activity, but also physical health and mobility, has been found to influence Internet use by various researchers (e.g. Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce, 2012; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). In this paper, contextual age was measured as a control variable by analyzing elements of interpersonal interaction, life satisfaction and social activity. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Absolutely disagree, 5=Absolutely agree) how strongly they agree with following expressions - *interpersonal interaction:* "I get to see my friends as often as I would like", "I spend enough time communicating with my family and friends by telephone, e-mail, or social media", "I have ample opportunity for conversation with other people", *life satisfaction:* "I have been very successful in achieving my aims or goals in life", "I am very content and satisfied with my life", and *social activity:* "I often travel, vacation, or take trips with others", "I often visit friends, relatives, or neighbors in their homes", and "I often participate in games, sports, or activities with others". Factor analysis revealed that all items serve to measure one component with the Cronbach's α=.88 and factor loadings from .60 to .81 explaining 47% of the variance. The questionnaire also collected respondents' demographic information (e.g. age, and education) and the duration and frequency of Instagram usage. Table 3 depicts descriptive statistics for applied measurements of control variables.

Table 3
Descriptives for measurements of control variables.

	α	M	SD	N
Belongingness	.75	2.66	.78	189
Contextual Age	.88	3.79	.69	189
Self-presentation	.68	2.43	.68	189

Notes. Items of the variable "contextual age" were measured on 5-point Likert scale, anchored at 1="absolutely agree" and 5="absolutely disagree".
Items of variables "belongingness" and "self-presentation" were measured on 5-point Likert scales, anchored at 1="never" and 5="very often".
α: Cronbach's alpha, M: mean, SD: standard deviation.

Results

All items for respective constructs were subjected to factor analyses and reliability

checks and dependently on the results computed into new variables. Subsequently, in order to

investigate the proposed relationships, a series of multiple regressions were carried out using

SPSS. Results of the analysis are described below and presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of DVs including Demographics and Control Variables.

IV	DV: Contributing Activities			DV: Creating activities		
	R^2	β	p	R^2	β	p
Model	.44		**.000*****	.438		**.000*****
Gender		-.09	.118		-.20	**.001*****
Age		-.01	.845		-.10	.142
Education		.004	.952		.002	.971
Contextual age		.10	.115		.07	.237
Belongingness		-.003	.968		-.05	.532
Self-presentation		.14	**.046***		.16	**.031***
CBI		.38	**.000*****		.47	**.000*****
BCI		.26	**.000*****		.12	.083
NI		.03	.673		-.02	.762

Note: N=189, DV: dependent variable, IV: independent variables
*$p<.05$, ***$p<.001$

Firstly, the analysis was run to understand whether the three independent variables

(CBI, BCI, and NI) significantly predicted participants' intentions to participate in brand-

related contributing activities on Instagram. The effects were executed under the control of

demographics (age, gender, and education) and three additional control variables (contextual age, belongingness, and self-presentation). The results of the regression analysis indicate that these predictors explained 44% of the variance (R^2=.44, F(9,179)=15.60, p<.001) where the block with the independent variables explains 26.4% of the variance. The analysis reveals that CBI significantly predicts participation in contributing activities (β=.38, p<.001), thus confirming the hypothesis H1a. Similarly, it was found that BCI significantly predicts participation in contributing activities with β=.26, p<.001 which confirms the hypothesis H2a. NI has, however, no significant effect on predicting participation in contributing activities (β=.03, p>.05). Self-presentation as a control variable is the only one that has a significant effect on the proposed relationship (β=.14, p<.05). The first analysis revealed that two of the hypotheses can be confirmed and it can be concluded that CBI and BCI are antecedents of engagement in brand-related *contributing* activities on social media while NI was not proved to have such an effect what rejects the hypothesis H3a.

In the second run of the analysis, the effects of the three independent variables (CBI, BCI, and NI) were tested as antecedents of brand-related creating activities on Instagram. Controls of demographics (age, gender and education) and contextual age, belongingness and self-presentation were included in the multiple regression analysis. The results of the regression indicated that this model explains 43.8% of the variance (R^2=.44, F(9,179)=15.522, p<.001). While CBI identification contributed significantly to the model (β=.47, p<.001), BCI and NI remained insignificant (β_{BCI}=.12, p>.05; β_{NI}=-.02, p>.05). The analyzed data supported the hypothesis H1b and it confirmed that CBI is in fact an antecedent of engagement in brand-related *creating* activities. Hypotheses H2b and H3b in this case have to be rejected. The control variable of gender was measured as a dichotomous variable, where female gender was coded as a 1 and males were coded as a 2. Gender in this case performed as a significant

control variable and predicted the proposed relationships negatively (β=-.20, p<.001) meaning that female participants are more likely to participate in creating activities.

General Discussion

This paper attempted to empirically understand how identifications developed in a scope of brands actually influence participation and activities related to brands. Based on the synthesis of previous findings, the study aimed at exploring three different identifications derived from the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) as reasons of consumers' engagement in brand-related activities on Instagram. Consumer brand identification, brand community identification and national identity were considered as the antecedents that motivate consumers to peer-to-peer or peer-to-content interactions, referred to as contributing activities (Shao, 2009), and/or drive them to the creation of unique user generated brand-related content – to creating activities (Schivinski et al., 2016). In agreement with previous researchers (e.g., de Vries et al., 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010), the focus was put on those brand-related activities that require moderate (contributing) and high (creating) levels of engagement since they are of the highest value to companies.

The results indicate that depending on the type of the identification, respondents would be actively engaged with brands on their Instagram profiles. First of all, the three identifications together with control variables and demographics accounted for almost half of the variance explaining both consuming and creating activities. As expected, CBI proved to be the hypothesized antecedent of the studied engagement in brand-related online activities on Instagram. The results showed that H1 can be confirmed and that a higher level of consumers' brand identification increases the likelihood to participate in both contributing and creating activities on brand's Instagram profile. Further, the data analysis provides positive evidence that the higher level of BCI increases the likelihood to participate in contributing activities, thus confirms the hypothesis H2a. On the other hand, no significant effects were found within

the relationship of BCI and creating activities and thus the hypothesis H2b was declined. This can be due to the fact of the random sample and therefore missing on highly brand-community identified respondents. Further investigation aimed specifically at respected brand communities would be required in order to explore the theorized relationship and confirm or possibly decline them. Interestingly, no significant statistical support was obtained for the hypothesized ties between NI and national-brand-related contributing and creating activities, accordingly the hypothesis H3 was rejected. Aside from the most possible reason for this result, that the NI does not influence consumers' engagement in brand-related online activities on Instagram, it is plausible that the provided brand does not trigger a nationally-related connection that would be strong enough to generate increased engagement. In future studies, a different brand could possibly result in more significant outcomes. Moreover, in order to gain more significant results within each hypothesis, moderation effects could have been included. This could possibly result in confirmation of the proposed relationship of each engagement antecedent and it is advised to further investigators to consider it in their studies.

The results also provide support for two control variables and their effect on dependent variables namely self-presentation which has an effect on both contributing and creating activities and gender. Aligned with the previous research of Zhao et al. (2008), self-presentation does influence users' engagement on Instagram. When it comes to gender, female participants seemed to be more engaged in creating activities as their male opponents. The empirical results attest to the important role of identifications in driving consumers' engagement with brands on Instagram. Despite the fact, that not all hypotheses were confirmed, the presented paper is a valuable contribution to academic and managerial literature.

Implication for Research

The present study is the first that examined the relationships between CBI, BCI and NI and the consumers' engagement in brand-related online activities on Instagram. The study

contributes to the existing literature on social media, engagement and brands and to the growing body of theoretical background that considers Instagram as one of the most important social media channels. The work builds upon the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and offers an explanation why consumers engage with brands on social media. CBI was found to be the antecedent of both contributing and creating activities. BCI was a predictor of increased likelihood to engage in contributing activities. NI did not trigger any significant differences in engagement in any of the brand-related online activities on Instagram. Current findings show that considering customers' ways of identification as antecedents of Instagram engagement may aid in understanding the consumer brand-related activities on Instagram. Additionally, confirming theories of previous researchers, it was found that self-presentation has a significant effect on increased engagement, thus that one of the people's main motivations for social media use is anchored in the need for self-expression (Wiley & Sisson, 2006).

Implications for Practitioners

Previous studies already confirmed that engaging consumers in contributing and creating activities online creates a vital potential for increased positive WOM, brand popularity, sales, and profitability (de Vries et al., 2017). The results of this work provide companies with genuine insights into the consumer world. Companies could benefit from the provided outcome and modify their communication strategies in order to activate a feeling of identification in consumers within the brand and brand community. To specifically motivate people to engage in contributing activities, companies should put effort into creating an environment where the brand provides a space for identification and where brand communities are supported and well developed. This could be done by, for example, opening a space for brand related discussions on Instagram profiles. To gain the valuable user generated content, firms need to appeal to the characteristics of their brand that can serve as identity creators for their consumers. Mangers of Instagram profiles should keep in mind that Instagram profiles of their brands

should be designed in such a way that consumers easily understand it and are able to upload photos or write comments about the respected brand. Instagram is the future of social media and brand managers, academics and the general public need to keep up the pace with its constant development.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is a sign of strength to admit limitations that occurred within this study and derive possible future research directions that could eliminate them. First of all, the data was collected using a convenient sample of Slovak consumers who only represent a small group of eastern-thinking consumers. Including other nations and/or comparing western and eastern consumers could bring forth interesting insights and contribute to this area of study. Similarly, the chosen convenient sample brings difficulties to the generalization of the results. Future studies should choose a more representative sample that could provide valuable insights and advance the proposed relationships.

Second, all our hypotheses were addressing the antecedents and activities on Instagram only. There was no distinction made within other types of social media, such as social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter) or other types of social media. Despite the importance of understanding Instagram as a social media platform and its users as engaged individuals, future research could investigate a potential role that the type of social media may play and thus vary the results. Previous researchers already proposed that different networks lead to different effects (Babic Rosario, Sotgiu, de Valck, & Bijmolt, 2016) and thus such investigation could further develop the results.

Third, a brand of alcohol was used because of its own way of communication that tries to trigger national pride, because of its active presence on Instagram and because of observed attitudes of Slovak people related to the brand. An alcoholic beverage can be seen as a special case of a brand and respondents might have experienced difficulties while deciding whether

they would like to be linked to alcohol consumption. Moreover, the brand was perceived as a local icon with the mean score of 3.57 (SD=.925, N=189) that might not be high enough to trigger NI as the driver of engagement. The research also did not have a control variable for alcohol consumption as a potential confounding variable. Therefore, future studies could examine other brands that could potentially generate different levels of engagement and provide academia with valuable results.

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Appendices
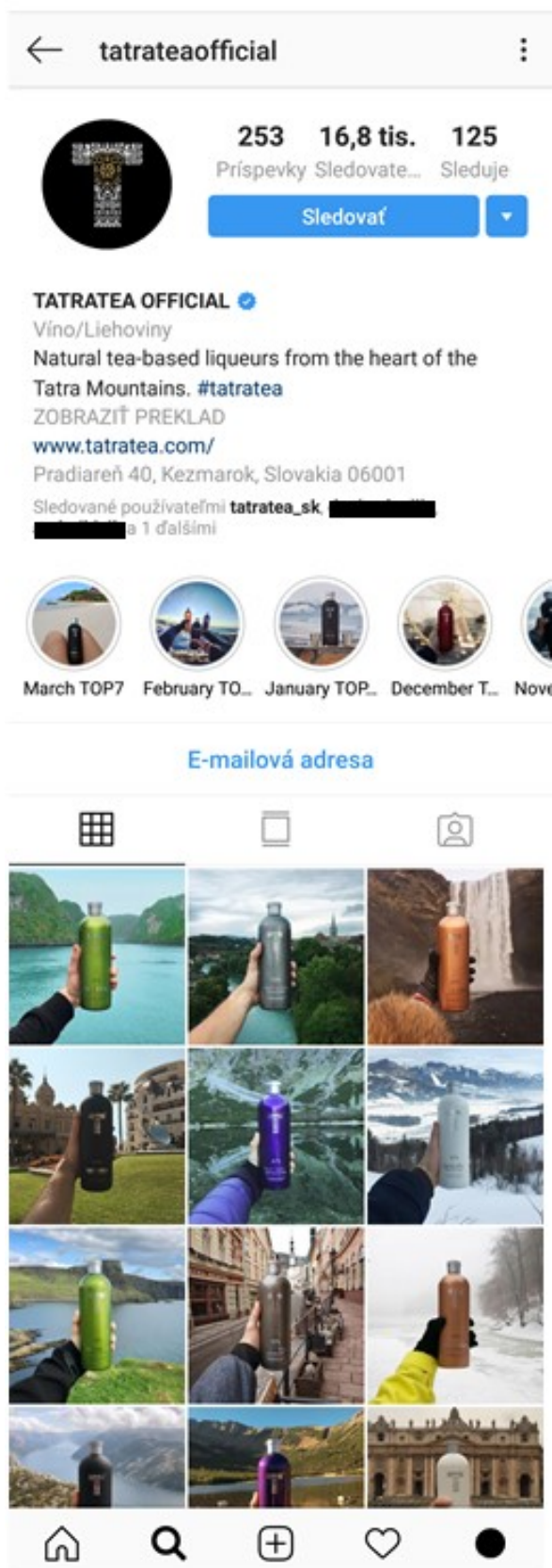
Appendix A

Logo of the Brand TATRATEA

Appendix B

Bottles of the Brand TATRATEA

Appendix C

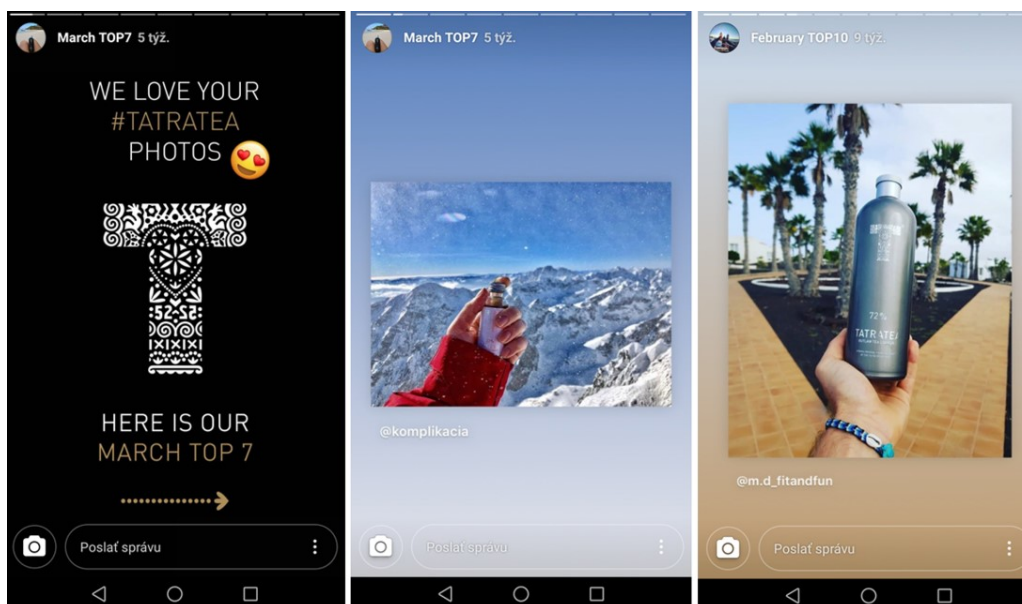Profile of the @tatrateaofficial on Instagram

Appendix D

Close up Look at a Post on @tatrateaofficial Instagram Profile

Appendix E

Highlights on @tatrateaofficial Instagram Profile

Abstract

Due to the existence of social media, the relationship between brands and their consumers has in recent years developed further in its interactive nature. Nowadays' consumers are provided with an opportunity to actively engage with a brand and contribute to or create their own brand-related content. To effectively use the special connection between the brands and consumers on social media, it is crucial to understand what the antecedents of brand-related social media engagement are. Specifically, Instagram has in recent years increased its importance in the society as well as the commercial world and the need to understand consumers and brands relationships on this social media platform is undeniable. Based on the social identity theory, the present paper proposes three types of consumers' identifications as antecedents of engagement in contributing and creating brand-related activities on Instagram. The data collected through an online survey suggest that depending on a type of the identification, consumers would be more engaged in contributing and/or creating activities on a brand's Instagram profile. The presented paper provides both theoretical and practical implications for academics and managers and suggests possible future research directions.

Abstrakt

Die Beziehung zwischen Marken und Ihren Konsumenten hat sich seit der Existenz sozialer Netzwerke in den vergangenen Jahren in ihrer interaktiven Natur weiterentwickelt. Konsumenten werden heutzutage mit der Möglichkeit konfrontiert, direkt mit Handelsmarken in Kontakt zu treten, mit Ihnen aktiv zu interagieren und eigenen Handelsmarken ähnlichen Inhalt (Content) zu erschaffen oder diesem beizutragen. Um sich effektiv der besonderen Verbindung zwischen Handelsmarken und Konsumenten in sozialen Netzwerken zu bedienen, ist es entscheidend, die Antezedenzien der Handelsmarken und ihren Beziehungen zu sozialen Netzwerken zu verstehen. Im speziellen hat Instagram in den letzten Jahren seine Präsenz in der Gesellschaft wie auch in der kommerziellen Welt erweitert, wodurch die Wichtigkeit der Beziehungen zwischen Handelsmarken und ihren Konsumenten auf diesem sozialen Netzwerk unbestreitbar wird. Basierend auf der Theorie der sozialen Identität schlägt diese Arbeit drei Arten der Identitäten von Konsumenten vor, als Antezedenzien der Interaktion, in Form von Erschaffen und Beitragen Marken bezogenen Inhalts auf Instagram. Durch die in einer Online Umfrage gesammelten Erfahrungswerte zeigen, dass abhängig von der Art der Identifikation, sind Konsumenten mehr aktiv im Erschaffen beziehungsweise Beitragen von Inhalten zu dem Instagram Profil einer Handelsmarke. Diese Arbeit bietet theoretische und praktische Implikationen für Akademiker und Manager und schlägt zukünftige Forschung Richtungen vor.