



Brand Communities on Instagram

Consumers' Motives for Following Brands

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Abstract

This thesis aims at understanding consumers' motives for following brands on Instagram. Brand communities embedded in social networks provide companies an efficient and important channel for marketing. This study is the first attempt to shed light on the antecedents for consumers' brand community participation on Instagram. The empirical analysis is based on an online survey with 99 participants. The findings suggest that functional value, entertainment, and self-presentation drive brand community participation. Consumers follow brands in order to gain information on new products and trends, but also to have fun. Brand community participation is also used as a tool to strengthen one's individual self-perception. Previous studies also point to social enhancement and interaction as motives for brand community participation. However, this study does not find a positive association between these factors and consumers' intention to continue following brands on Instagram. The findings of the study provide implications for social media marketing.

Keywords: Brand community, Brands, Social media, Social networks, Instagram, Consumer participation, Following

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1. Introduction

Most companies use social media to connect with consumers. Firms seek to build and maintain a relationship with their customers in order to gain loyalty and engagement. Today the best part of relationship management and customer engagement practices takes place on brand communities hosted by companies on social media. Although social network based brand communities are increasingly important channels for marketers, they have not yet been studied thoroughly by academics. This thesis seeks to contribute to the emerging research in this field.

The novelty of social media explains the lack of research on the topic. Only during the past few years some articles have been published on social media based brand communities (e.g. Zaglia 2013; Habibi et al. 2013; Kaur et al. 2018). However, most of these studies are focused on Facebook, while the slightly newer social network application, Instagram, has not been studied. According to the Instagram's homepage, 80 percent of the 800 million Instagram users follow at least one business account (Instagram 2018b). This means that there are hundreds of millions of brand community members on the platform.

In this master's thesis I will study brand communities on Instagram. A brand community is defined by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) as 'a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand'. Brand communities are specialized as they are organized around one brand. They have many of the same markers as other communities, such as shared consciousness, rituals and traditions and a sense of moral responsibility. Yet, these communities appear in a commercial setting and contain a mass-mediated ethos. The brand community is part of the brand's social construction and can be important for the brand's legacy in the consumers' minds (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

Companies benefit from brand communities, which are an efficient channel for reaching out to consumers and sharing information with them directly, with a low cost, and in no time. Therefore marketers are very interested in learning about, organizing, and facilitating brand communities (Laroche et al. 2012). Marketing communication via brand communities is ideal from the firms' perspective, as the

consumers have subscribed to the messages by becoming a community member. This means that companies do not have to push to deliver their message, because it is pulled in by the customers themselves. Brand communities also function as platforms for creating and rooting the brand identity. They enable the creation of brand meaning and allow customers to share their experiences and to tell their stories about the brand (Habibi et al. 2014).

According to the previous research, the main purpose of brand communities from the companies' perspective is to increase customers' loyalty towards the brand (e.g. Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Brand communities also provide a platform for companies to connect and collaborate with the most loyal customers and to impact their evaluations and actions (Laroche et al. 2012). Firms can learn what their customers' perceptions of new products and competitive actions are (Laroche et al. 2012). Moreover, through brand communities, consumers provide valuable market research data for innovation and product development (Von Hippel 2005). Consumers can thus be co-creating value beside the firms. In addition, brand communities embedded in social media allow companies to gather enormous amount of information about the users and target their marketing accurately.

While firms' intentions and motives regarding online brand communities may be clear, it is much less obvious why consumers choose to participate in them. Instagram is the major marketing channel for many companies, especially when they want to reach younger consumer groups. Thus, it is important to understand what motives consumers have for brand community participation. Previous research on antecedents for brand community participation has focused on functional benefits such as information seeking, the social aspects such as interacting with other participants, and the emotional connection that the consumer has with the brand or the product.

However, Kaur et al. (2018) argue that prior studies have been limited to more traditional information technologies and that the previous theories are not necessarily applicable for explaining the consumer behavior in the context of hedonic technologies like social media. As per Kaur et al. (2018) it is possible that especially young consumers are interested in online social media brand communities merely for

reasons such as impression management, online self-identity, and social enhancement, rather than information seeking and social interaction.

In this thesis I will apply the recent approach by Kaur et al. (2018) to study brand communities on Instagram, which have not yet been studied in marketing research. *Why People Use Online Social Media Brand Communities: A Consumption Value Theory Perspective* by Kaur et al. was published earlier this year (2018) and it studies the antecedents for brand community participation on Facebook. Applying the existing explanation enables the comparison of two different social network applications, Facebook and Instagram. Kaur et al. (2018) also propose that future research should aim to validate their findings, since the data consists of responses by Indian college students. Thus this thesis contributes to the external validity of their up-to-date research paper.

1.1 Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to understand why consumers follow brands on Instagram. Therefore my intention is to study Instagram users, who already are brand followers. The study focuses on these Instagram users' motives to continue following brands. The research questions is:

What are the consumers' motives to continue following brands on Instagram?

Motives related to identity and social aspects, influence, entertainment and functional value are the main focus points.

As per Kaur et al. (2018) brand community participation in the context of social media may be explained with the concepts of social identity and social enhancement. I will study the impact of self-presentation, social enhancement, and social interaction on consumers' intention to continue following brands. Self-presentation deals with an individual's identification with the brand and the community. It concerns the individual's perception of the meaning of the brand and the brand community and of how it reflects their attitude and values. Social enhancement deals with the reputation, impression and social status that can be gained through the brand community. Kaur et al. (2018) test the variables of social enhancement, but not self-presentation. Prior

research (e.g. McAlexander et al. 2002, Schau et al. 2009) considers also that social interaction is a major driver of brand community participation. Therefore, I will include the concept in my study.

The importance of functional benefits that a consumer gains through brand community engagement, such as problem solving and information gathering, are emphasized in previous research on brand communities (e.g. Sicilia and Palazón 2008, Zaglia 2013). Furthermore, entertainment has been considered as an antecedent for brand community participation (e.g. Sicilia and Palazón 2008). Because of the emphasis that these concepts have been given in previous literature, I will include them in my study. As previously stated, Instagram based brand communities have not yet received attention within academia, and it will be interesting to see whether the theories and explanations of previous studies fit in the context of this new social network.

Finally, I study whether influencing the brand is a motive for brand community participation. This is another concept that is not included in the study by Kaur et al. (2018). The majority of the previous research on brand communities neglects the relationship between the consumer and company behind the brand. However, some researchers (e.g. McAlexander et al. 2002, Zaglia 2013) propose that interaction with the company behind the brand is important for the consumers and an essential part of brand communities. Brand communities enable consumers to raise their opinions and concerns regarding the brand as well as to gain acknowledgement from the company (Zaglia 2013). It is possible that social media empowers brand community members to be even more vocal about their experiences and opinions in relation to the brand.

This thesis differs from the major brand community studies, since it is based on quantitative research method. Previous research on the topic is to large extent based on qualitative methods. Especially the groundbreaking theories (e.g. Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) are based on ethnographic research methods such as interviews and observations. In addition, much of the research focusing on online communities (e.g. Sicilia and Palazón 2008; Gummerus et al. 2012) represents a qualitative approach, such as netnography. Due to the qualitative methods, most studies are limited to just one or a few brand communities. The data they are based on is smaller, since the

researchers are unable to intensively observe or interview large number of consumers. On the other hand, in some previous studies (e.g. Schau et al. 2009) the analysis is based on several brand communities in different product categories in order to map the similarities in different groups.

It is important to note that this thesis focuses on brand community participants and not on brand communities per se. This is why the study is not limited to a specific brand community or product category, but includes all kinds of Instagram users, who have chosen to follow at least one brand. Many prior studies have looked into how a brand community functions, what the characteristics of a brand community are (e.g. Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), what the practices taking place in such a community are (Schau et al. 2009), or how to maximize customer engagement in these communities (Gummerus et al. 2012). Fewer researchers have looked into the antecedents that consumers have to become brand community members. This study will shed light on consumers' motives in the context of the social network that is the top priority channel for marketers at the moment.

1.2 Instagram as a platform for brand communities

Instagram is a social network application for photograph and video sharing. The platform was launched in 2010. In 2012 Instagram was acquired by Facebook. Today there are more than 800 million active users (Instagram 2018a). Instagram is a very attractive channel for companies that wish to use visual media as a means of communication, brand enhancement, and product visualization (Doyle 2016). Companies can advertise on Instagram, meaning that their ads appear on the feed or Instagram Stories of the user. Instagram Stories is a feature where the posts are accessible only for 24 hours giving a feeling of live broadcast or sharing. Advertising can be targeted based on the data that is collected of Instagram users. According to Instagram (Instagram 2018b) over 2 million advertisers use the platform actively.

However many marketers choose also to have a business account, a profile dedicated to the brand on the platform. Instagram users need to click the 'Follow' button in order to subscribe the posts of that account. As per Instagram, there are over 25 million business profiles on their platform (Instagram 2018b). More than 200 million users visit at least one business profile daily and one in three of the most viewed

Instagram Stories are from businesses. In total 80 percent of all the users follow at least one business account (Instagram 2017).

Unlike ads that work as pushed communication, consumers, who choose to follow a brand, subscribe the content shared on the account. From a company's perspective, a successful account with thousands or even millions of followers is very attractive. Brand followers on Instagram form a community that wish to see more of the brand and receive the visual marketing material. Despite the enormous financial potential and impact on consumer behavior, branded Instagram accounts – brand communities – have not yet been researched. This thesis is a pioneer attempt to understand consumer behavior in relation to brands on Instagram.

1.3 Following as a form of brand community participation

Social media brand community participation can be defined in various ways. Malinen (2015), who has studied user participation in online communities in general, suggests that participation is often seen either from the perspective of content creation or from a social point of view. According to Malinen (2015), previous research often divides the community participants into active and passive users, also called “lurkers”. Active participation includes posting while passive participation consists of viewing these post instead of contributing to the activities or creating content. However, Malinen argues that passive community members are also needed, as they generate website traffic and increase hits. Active participants and hosts need an audience.

Active participation does not always mean that the user is more tied to the community (Malinen 2015). Also Laroche et al. (2012) argue that even weak ties connect people and encourage participants to engage in the community. As per Malinen (2015), the sense of community and belonging is a motive for lurking as well. Spending time in the online community and viewing the content may lead to closer attachment to the group. Malinen (2015) claims that appreciation of active participation over lurking is embedded in the perception that content creation has a higher financial value than content viewing. Yet, content creating, such as posting, might be motivated by self-interest and personal goals instead of the community good (Malinen 2015).

Thus, participation should not only be understood through content creation, commenting or liking. Connection building with other community members also counts as participation. Besides active and passive participation, Malinen (2015) brings up interaction as its own way to consume content. While active participation requires creating or commenting on the content and passive participation merely requires viewing of the content, interactive consumption refers to users who use the online community as an interactive tool. Interactive users are also more likely to perceive the online platform as a community than non-interactive or passive users.

As there is no unambiguous definition for online community participation, it needs to be specified in each study. Mahrous and Abdelmaaboud (2017), who study brand communities on Facebook, define participation as browsing, contributing and communicating with others through a brand's Facebook page. Kaur et al. (2018) consider that commenting, liking, and posting represent different modes of user participation in Facebook brand communities. In the context of Instagram, equivalent activities are scrolling, posting and commenting or messaging.

Although brand community participation has various modes, Kaur et al. (2018) are clear on who is a participant. They claim that a consumer becomes a brand community member by clicking the 'Like' button on the brand's page on Facebook. Following this argument and applying it to Instagram, consumers become brand community members by hitting the blue 'Follow' button on top of the account, next to the account's profile picture. Although clicking the 'Like' button on Facebook or 'Follow' button on Instagram is not a precondition for other forms of participation, it is presumably the most common way to participate and also the default feature on both platforms. In this study I will apply the definition of brand community member by Kaur et al. (2018) and use *following* as the key activity in brand community participation.

Following bears a specific meaning on Instagram. It is possible to look up and see accounts on Instagram without clicking the 'Follow' button, as most business accounts are accessible to everyone. Even consumers who have not downloaded the app or created an Instagram account can search and see a brand's picture feed in a browser. Liking and commenting requires an Instagram account, but viewing content

is possible for anyone. Since it is possible to lurk on Instagram, hitting the ‘Follow’ button and subscribing the content is done with an intention. An Instagram user can also see which accounts the other users are following. As the amount of personal information is often more limited than on Facebook, the list of followed accounts forms a part of a user’s profile. Thus following can be a tool for users to communicate their interests and values.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

After this introduction, I will take a look at the previous research on brand communities. Chapter two starts with a discussion on the terms *brand*, *community*, and *social media*. The chapter continues with a literature review presenting the major theories on brand communities and discussing more specific research on social media based brand communities. Chapter two concludes with the conceptual model and the hypotheses of this thesis.

In chapter three I will discuss the methodology of the thesis. I will start with presenting the survey instrument and continue with data collection and data analysis technique. The data as well as the results are presented and analyzed in chapter four. I will first look into the data characteristics and continue with testing the measurement model and the hypotheses. In chapter five I will discuss the findings of the study and present the managerial implications. I then conclude with a discussion on the limitations of the study and considerations regarding further research.

2. Literature review and hypothesis

In this chapter I look into the prior research on brand communities and present the conceptual framework of the study. First I discuss the key terms regarding the subject. Second, I present the most important literature and theories regarding brand communities. Third, I take a closer look at the previous research on social media based brand communities. I conclude with the theoretical framework of my study and present the hypotheses.

2.1 Terminology

Before the literature review I will describe the core terminology in relation to the subject of this thesis and explain how it is used in this study. The concept of ‘social media based brand community’ contains three terms, ‘social media’, ‘brand’, and ‘community’, which all need defining.

2.1.1 Brand

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a ‘name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers’ (American Marketing Association 2018). This definition is rather simple and reflects the seller’s perspective. It also emphasizes the core motivation for branding, which is to distinguish one’s products from competitors and thus provide added value for the customer. The definition also focuses on the features that can be legally protected, e.g. the brand name. However, as per Keller et al. (2012) a brand is more than the features that are supposed to differentiate the product. Especially for many business managers, a brand is something that has created a certain amount of awareness, reputation, prominence etc. in a marketplace (Keller et al. 2012). This definition captures better consumer’s point of view. Brands can be products or services, but also ideas or even persons can become brands (American Marketing Association 2018). For instance, Schau et al. (2009) consider a music group as a brand.

In the field of branding, consumers’ perspective and perception is crucial. It defines what a brand is and what it is worth. As per the American Marketing Association (2018) consumers’ reactions, e.g. brand recognition, are created through experiences

that the consumer has in relation to the specific product or service. These experiences can emerge from the usage of the product or service, but also through the influence of advertising, design, and media. According to Ogilvy, a brand can also be understood as a consumer's idea of the product (Meister 2012). Besides logos, font types, colors, symbols, and jingles, which can be legally protected, brands are constructed of values, ideas, and personality that consumers associate with them. Thus it can be argued that companies don't own their brands, as brands and consumers cannot be separated from each other (Meister 2012).

Companies work on creating brands in order to distinguish themselves and improve sales. Eventually, a well-established brand can become a company's greatest asset. Related to this, Keller (1993) discusses the concept of brand equity. According to him, understanding the value of the brand is important for two reasons. First, the company needs to know the financial value of their brands for accounting purposes, mergers and acquisitions. Second, as companies want to handle their marketing efforts with maximum efficiency, they need to understand consumers' behavior in relation to their products and brands. As per Keller (1993) financial evaluation of a brand is dependent on the underlying value of the brand and the strategic exploitation of it. This means that brand, at its core, is a strategic tool for the company.

Keller (1993) emphasizes the importance of customer-based brand equity, which refers to consumers' reactions towards the marketing efforts of the specific brand in comparison to a non-branded product of the same category. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and has strong and unique positive brand associations in mind (Keller 1993). As per Keller (1993) consumer's brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize and recall the brand. Brand image includes brand association and attributes that consumers relate with the brand. Benefits that represent the personal value that the brand brings to an individual consumer are also part of the image. Benefits can be functional, symbolic or experiential. Finally, the brand image includes brand attitudes, which are consumers' overall evaluation of the brand. Attitudes are important as they reflect consumer behavior in relation to the brand (Keller 1993).

Brands are not only beneficial for the company, but they bring value for consumers as well. Brands can help consumer to distinguish between different products and help consumer to make a purchase decision. As per Meister (2012), brands diminish the risks that a consumer takes when choosing a product or service. When making a purchase decision, a consumer can perceive functional, physical, financial, social, psychological and time related risks (Meister 2012). Thus a brand can be a guarantee of quality and safety. It contributes to consumer's mental well-being and social acceptance. A brand also can ensure value for money and reduces the time cost of the purchasing process (Meister 2012).

According to Laroche et al. (2012), brands satisfy an essential psychological and social need since they allow a person to express who they are and whom they identify with. People have a social need to be seen as having a certain self-identity. Joining a brand community helps meeting this need. In order to create this self-identity consumers look for symbols or signs that communicate to others who they want to be and how they want to be identified. (Laroche et al. 2012).

2.1.2 Community

Community has been defined in different way throughout the time, but it has often been juxtaposed with the concept of society (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Brand community researchers (e.g. Muniz and O'Guinn 2001, Meister 2012) refer to Ferdinand Tönnies's work, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, from 1887 as one of the earliest definitions of the concept of community. Tönnies argued that the natural, customary, familial, rural and real community has been replaced by the mass-produced, depersonalized and unnatural modern society (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). He distinguished three types of communities: family, which is based on blood, neighborhood, which is based on location, and friendship, which is based on spirit (Meister 2012).

Although definitions of community vary, later researchers have found four characteristics that communities tend to share: self-sufficiency, common life, consciousness of kind, and possession of common ends, norms and means (Meister 2012). As per Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) the three core community commonalities are consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility towards the

community. While in the earlier times communities were conceived of as a physical, typically rural place, through innovations in transportation and communication, communities have evolved into something like a shared identity (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

However, as Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) point out, most communities, except perhaps rural villages, are imagined. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) refer to Anderson's classic from 1983, *Imagined communities*, according to which communities can be established and maintained via mass media. Thus communities have been reproduced and spread, even though their members were not tied to a specific place. However, in order to exist, these modern communities require imaged others. The others enable the community members to distinguish themselves and to form a shared identity. As per Anderson, a community is defined through what it is not (Anderson 2007).

Cova (1997) develops the discussion further and studies the development of communities. He describes that since the beginning of the modern era, people have tried to liberate themselves from the traditional communities such as family, village, and religion. They have tried to become free from social links, which are tying and hindering to individuals. As per Cova (1997) people have never been as free as they are today to make choices regarding their private and public life. At the same time, people are more alone and free from limiting social constructions. Since the consciousness of kind, a shared communal identity, is no longer given, an individual needs to become somebody by differentiating him- or herself from others. Thus, according to Cova (1997) postmodernity can be understood as an era of extreme individualism and severe social dissolution.

Despite the unprecedented individual freedom, social structures are reappearing. Cova (1997) argues that the new social communities, or tribes as he calls them, are formed out of an emotional free choice. People form tribes based on shared emotions, styles of life, new moral beliefs, senses of injustice, and – perhaps most interestingly for this thesis – based on consumption practices (Cova 1997). These new communities are not restricted in spatial terms and their existence is enabled by technology. Individuals can belong to several tribes at the same time, having a different role in each of them. As per Cova (1997), the fragmentation of the society and the fact that individuals can

switch roles from one community to another makes it more difficult to categorize people. This all has a revolutionizing impact on marketing, too (Cova 1997).

Like Cova's (1997) tribes, brand communities embedded in social media have come into existence through technology. Brand community members may share the same lifestyle, consumption practices and consciousness of kind. However, it is debatable how well for instance the aspect of moral responsibility towards the community works as a community marker in the context of Instagram. Yet, many currently active researchers (e.g. Laroche et al. 2012, Habibi et al. 2014) consider that also brand communities based on social networks meet the definition of a community.

2.1.3 Social media

Social media has drastically changed the environment in which companies operate. In the past companies had much more power to control the information that was publically available about them. Now social media enables their customers to publically express their opinion about them (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social media has forced companies to become more transparent and engaged. It is a buzzword that is on the agenda of most businesses. However, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) people use the term social media differently and often without understanding what it really means. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications, which are build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.

As per Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) Web 2.0 refers to the change in the way that the Internet is used by software-developers as well as end-users. On the Web 2.0, content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, as was the case with Web 1.0, but go through constant alterations and modifications that are conducted by all Internet users. Web 2.0 is characterized by collaborative projects such as wikis and blogs. Although the further development of social media is rooted in both the ideology and technology of Web 2.0, it is not the result of a groundbreaking technical innovation. The term itself came to exist in 2004 (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Another term that is closely related to social media is user generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refer to the definition by OECD, according to which three aspects characterize user generated content. First, it is published on a publically accessible website or on a social networking platform that a selected group of people can access. Second, creating it has involved creative effort. Third, it is not a result of professional routines and practices.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) use social presence theory, media richness theory and theory on self-presentation in order to categorize different types of social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that social presence and media richness together form the first dimension of social media. As per the social presence theory, the degree of social presence, which refers to level of contact between users, varies in different media. Connection between two communication partners is impacted by intimacy, which means that the connection can be mediated or interpersonal, and immediacy, which refers to the time that it takes the message to be delivered. According to the media richness theory, media differs in the amount of information they enable to pass on. Some media are better in reducing ambiguity and uncertainty and in transmitting higher amount of information than others (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

The second dimension of social media is the concept of self-presentation. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explain that in any social interaction occasion people have the tendency to try to impact other peoples' impressions of them. People do so in order to benefit from it, but also in order to create an image that matches with their identity. Self-presentation is the underlying reason for people to create a personal website or a profile on social media. Thus Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) consider self-presentation and self-disclosure crucial for understanding social media platforms.

Based on these two dimensions, social presence together with media richness and self-presentation, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) present six different social media categories. The first category is social projects that are type of social media, where users are allowed to add, remove and change content. Well-known examples of social projects are Wikipedia and rating sites. The second category is blogs, which are one of the first forms of social media. Blogs include date-stamped posts and chronological order. They can be personal or centered around a topic. Content communities form the

third category of social media. In content communities users for instance share books, photos, videos or other material. Youtube is the best-known content community. Virtual game worlds enable users to create personal avatars and to connect with other players in a virtual world, such as in World of Warcraft. Virtual social worlds are similar to virtual game worlds, but they don't have the restricting rules of the game. An example of a virtual social world is Second Life.

The sixth type of social media that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) specify, is the topic of this study: social networking sites. These include e.g. Facebook and Instagram. Social networks are applications where users can create a profile with personal information and connect with other users. Social networks may be the most popular form of social media, and for many people these words are synonyms.

2.2 Previous research on brand communities

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define the concept of a 'brand community' as a specialized, non-geographically bound community that is based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand. They argue that brand communities are part of the brand's larger social construction and are essential for the brand's legacy. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) approach brand communities from a social constructionist perspective and lean on the community theories of sociology.

According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) communities in general have three core elements. The first and the most important one is the shared consciousness of kind, which refers to the connection that the community members feel towards each other and the collective perception of difference in relation to those who are not part of the community. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) use the term "we-ness". The community enables its members to distinguish themselves from other consumers, who do not really know the brand or use it for the wrong reasons (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Consciousness of kind also consists of oppositional brand loyalty, which refers to the avoidance of other brands. As per Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), oppositional brand loyalty may define a brand community even more than the admiration of a respective brand.

The second feature that Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) point to as a brand community marker is the rituals and traditions of the community. The brand community members celebrate the history of the brand, as it keeps the community robust and strengthens its culture. Also storytelling is essential to communities. Stories about the common experiences contribute to the sense of belonging. Similarly, in brand communities members share their stories regarding the brand with each other.

The third element of brand communities that Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) list is the sense of moral responsibility towards the group and its individual members. It includes the integration and retaining of members, both of which are crucial for the further existence of the community. The moral responsibility is also marked by the assistance that community members provide to each other in using the brand.

As per Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), brand communities differ from other social groups since the three community characteristics, consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions and the sense of moral responsibility, are situated within a commercial and mass-mediated ethos. Brand communities are also liberated from geographical boundaries. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) argue that consumers are aware of the explicitly commercial setting of the brand communities, since they are very self-reflexive and have a high self-awareness regarding authenticity and identity. Despite their distinguishing characteristics, brand communities are legitimate forms of community, reflecting their own era.

The relationship structure of a brand community according to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) is a customer–customer–brand triad. It lacks the relationships that customers may have with the branded product as well as with the brand marketer. McAlexander et al. (2002) further develop the brand community theory of Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), arguing that customers also value the relationships with their branded possessions and with agents, who own and manage the brand. Therefore, as per McAlexander et al. (2002), brand communities can be defined as dynamic “fabrics of relationships” or “shifting mosaics”. In their theoretical model the customer is at the centre and there are multiple dimensions of relationships, including those with the brand, the product, the firm and with other customers.

McAlexander et al. (2002) emphasize the dynamic nature of brand communities. They argue that brand communities differ on three dimensions, which are geographic concentration, social context, and temporality. Brand communities can be geographically concentrated or non-geographically bound. For instance online brand communities do not have geographic limitations. Geographic concentration may have an impact on the social context in case the communication within the community is merely face-to-face. Yet, if the communication is mediated by devices and takes place online, the social context can be rich despite the geographic aspect. Finally, McAlexander et al. (2002) point out the temporality of brand communities. Stable and enduring communities can provide a long lasting market and thus have the highest potential for marketers. However, temporary and periodic communities can also give a platform to share consumption experiences.

Although the temporality of brand communities varies, McAlexander et al. (2002) argue that the impact of the brand community can stretch over a longer period of time. They further argue that the community-building efforts from the firm impact the repurchase rates positively. For instance, consumers, who buy branded goods, do so with support from other users. Brand communities also enable the establishment of long-term relationships, which again reinforce the brand loyalty. McAlexander et al. (2002) point out that the relationships within the brand community create an exit barrier and prevent consumers from switching to another brand. Similarly, consumers' relationship with the branded product or with the company behind the brand provides a reason to remain as a customer.

Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) continue the discussion on the benefits that brand communities provide to companies. According to them, brand communities do not have to deal with problems that are associated with traditional marketing efforts, such as fragmentation of media and consumers' negative attitude towards direct marketing campaigns. Another benefit for companies is that brand communities enable customer empowerment, which is expected to lead to higher customer loyalty and repurchasing behavior (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006).

The aim of Bagozzi and Dholakia's (2006) study is to understand social and psychological antecedents for customer participation in brand communities. Bagozzi

and Dholakia (2006) approach the topic from the perspective of social psychology, using the theory of planned behavior as a basis for their research. They argue that social intentions and social identity are the main variables that explain brand community activities. Social intentions are based on attitudes, anticipated emotions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Social identity is, as Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) phrase it, ‘a refinement of, and elaboration on’ the concept of consciousness of kind by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001). Brand community members collectively perceive themselves different from the non-members. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) list three elements of social identity. The first element of social identity is cognitive identification. It refers to consumer’s self-awareness of being a member in a specific community. The second element is affective commitment, which means that the consumer feels attachment to and belongingness with the community. The third element of social identity is collective, group-based self-esteem. It reflects the evaluative significance of the brand community membership (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006).

Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) argue that social intentions have a significant role in brand communities. Social intentions shape the group behavior and thus impact also the brand related behavior. Similarly social identity shapes the group and brand behavior, especially through group identification processes. Identification with the brand community contributes to the identification with the brand (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006). Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) argue further – although somewhat contradictory – that brand identification can as well be an antecedent to consumer’s participation in brand community. All in all, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) emphasize the role of group identification and social identity in the process of brand commitment.

The social aspect of brand communities is the focus of Algesheimer et al. (2005) as well. They consider that brand communities have a major impact on their participants. For instance, a brand community strengthens its members’ behavioral intentions, such as their intention to continue participation as well as to recommend and to stay loyal to the brand. Algesheimer et al. (2005) argue that individuals’ relationship with the brand is a motive for their identification with the brand community. They think that

brand communities have the biggest influence on existing customers, who already have a relationship with the brand. Therefore brand communities are more appropriate tools for customer retention than customer acquisition (Algesheimer et al. 2005). As per Algesheimer et al. (2005) brand communities are good platforms for customer relationship management, because they enable the transfer of customer's existing relationship with the brand to the company behind it.

While Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), McAlexander et al. (2002), Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), and Algesheimer et al. (2005) consider the social aspect of brand communities being the key benefit to the consumer, Cova and Pace (2006) challenge this view and argue that brand communities are merely platforms of self-exhibition. As per Cova and Pace (2006), consumers do not participate in brand communities in order to interact with their peers, but to present themselves in front of them using the marks and rituals that are connected to the brand. By doing so, consumers create new sub-cultural elements in relation to the brand and its usage, and form an imaginary community.

According to Cova and Pace (2006), people have an existential need for recognition and they wish to be seen. This need is crucial even in the commercial setting of consumption. Brand communities provide a platform where consumers can expose themselves to their peer consumers, who act similarly. As per Cova and Pace (2006), this is typical behavior for post-modern consumers, who seek the company of other people without necessarily socializing with them. In brand communities, consumers can display intimate details about themselves in order to be heard and to feel that they exist. The social interaction is totally secondary for them. Thus brand communities are much more about action than interaction (Cova and Pace 2006).

Cova and Pace (2006) consider that a brand community is also a tool for consumer empowerment. Customer empowerment means that a company lets its customers take over aspects of the brand that have traditionally been pre-determined by marketers. Once a company behind the brand steps back in their marketing efforts and gives space for the fans of the brand, the fans will take over that space and develop it. Cova and Pace (2006) argue that consumer empowerment strengthens the connection that the fans have with the brand and contribute to the brand's legitimacy. Empowering

consumers to shape the meaning of the brand they love makes their relationships with the brand more meaningful (Cova and Pace 2006).

Like Cova and Pace (2006), Sicilia and Palazón (2008) study brand communities in an online setting. Sicilia and Palazón (2008) present a virtual brand community as a specialized community without geographical boundaries. It consists of individuals with a shared focus, and they communicate with each other electronically. The interaction takes place on a platform that is hosted by the company behind a brand (Sicilia and Palazón 2008). As per Sicilia and Palazón (2008), communication and interaction are the core of brand communities. They approach the topic with the uses and gratitude paradigm. According to this theory, media helps consumers to satisfy their social and psychological needs. The value of brand community participation determines how well the individual's needs are met (Sicilia and Palazón 2008).

According to Sicilia and Palazón (2008), a virtual brand community provides the participant with three types of value. First, a community member derives functional value, such as advice, information or expertise. In online communities participants can share information that is relevant to them. Second, virtual communities provide social value to the participants. The social value refers to friendship, self-esteem, social status, social enhancement, and emotional support. Brand communities bring together people with similar experiences and problems. They enable participants to identify themselves with the brand and the community and to interact with others. Social status within the community also brings social enhancement. Third, brand communities provide entertainment value. Social interaction leads to relaxation and fun, and can even result in a flow state (Sicilia and Palazón 2008).

While Cova and Pace (2006) argue that the company behind the brand should merely facilitate the platform and avoid intrusiveness, Sicilia and Palazón (2008) argue that the company should stimulate the interaction between the participants, because interactivity is the major reason for consumers to revisit the online platform. They list appealing features that the platform should provide, such as live chat and downloadable material, which today seem perhaps outdated. Appealing and interactive surroundings are important, according to Sicilia and Palazón (2008), the

key benefits that consumers gain from virtual community participation are entertainment and social value.

Similarly to Sicilia and Palazón (2008), Schau et al. (2009) encourage companies to take action to build and nurture brand communities and to enhance collaborative creation of value together with the consumers. Schau et al. (2009) propose that companies could sponsor social networking and facilitate activities related to the brand usage. In their study they map practices that occur in different brand communities in order to understand how brand communities create value.

Schau et al. (2009) present four categories of value creating practices. The first category is social networking, which aims at creating, enhancing, and sustaining connections between brand community participants. As per Schau et al. (2009) the brand community members wish to emphasize the homogeneity of the community and the normative behavior among the members. The second category is impression management practices. These actions are externally focused and aim at creating a positive impression of the brand, the brand enthusiasts, and the brand community. The third category consists of community engagement practices, which include staking, milestoneing, badging, and documenting. These activities aim to differentiate members within the group, yet they also strengthen the homogeneity of the community in relation to the outsiders. The fourth category is related to brand use and consists of practices such as customizing, grooming, and commoditizing (Schau et al. 2009).

Schau et al. (2009) argue that a high number of different practices lead to stronger and more vital brand community. According to them the value creating practices contribute to the cultural capital of the brand community members. Participants compete on devotion, knowledge and history related to the brand. Practices also provide brand related experiences and jargon that can be shared with the insiders (Schau et al. 2009). Schau et al. (2009) argue further that value creation practices generate consumption opportunities for the brand community members.

2.3 Brand communities on social media

Research on online brand communities is still rather limited and the majority of the studies are focused on websites that are hosted by companies behind the brands (e.g.

Cova and Pace 2006, Sicilia and Palazón 2008). Social media based online brand communities have so far received little attention within academia. The existing research focuses almost exclusively on Facebook, while brand communities on Instagram have not yet been studied. However, during the past decade the popularity of social media has had a major impact on customer behavior and online marketing. Most brand communities have thus moved to various social networks. The limited amount of research raises the question whether the social media based brand communities differ from the more traditional ones that have already been scrutinized.

Habibi, Laroche and Richard (2014) argue that brand communities embedded in social media do exist and despite some of the shared markers with traditional brand communities, they have unique characteristics. Habibi et al. (2014) propose that a social media brand community could be considered as a specific type of online brand community. As per Habibi et al. (2014), similarities include shared consciousness, rituals and traditions as well as obligations towards the group – the brand community markers presented by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001). However, there are two major differences between traditional and social media brand based communities. In comparison to website based brand community, members of social media based brand communities tend to provide their own names and real identity instead of using pseudonyms (Habibi et al. 2014). Another significant difference is the scale of the community. While website based brand communities have hosted one million members at most, social media brand communities can have tens of millions of participants (Habibi et al. 2014).

The fact that participants use their actual identities changes the social context of the brand community. As per Habibi et al. (2014), participants’ accessible profiles become part of the brand evaluation process. Brand community users can see each other’s real names and pictures, gaining information on age, sex, attractiveness, and location. According to Habibi et al. (2014) the availability of user data changes the participants’ behavior. They may, for instance, choose to interact only with those who resemble themselves. Other participants can also have a major role in the interpretation of the brand image. Since user profiles impact the behavior in the community as well as the evaluation of the brand, companies have an interest in who participates the brand community (Habibi et al. 2014).

Similar to traditional brand communities, shared histories and storytelling has an important role in social media embedded communities. However, in the social media context, brand related experiences are shared as pictures and videos instead of textual content (Habibi et al. 2014). In brand communities on Instagram, the emphasis is presumably even more on visual content, since it is intended for picture and video sharing. As per Habibi et al. (2014), another aspect that is characteristic to social media is the amount of affiliated communities or sub-communities. As social media enables anyone to start a brand community, there are multiple groups dedicated to the same brand. Habibi et al. (2014) point out those consumers, who are dedicated supporters of a brand, can be participants in several affiliated communities or sub-groups simultaneously.

Habibi et al. (2014) argue that brand communities and social media actually overlap in many ways. According to them the terms ‘community’ and ‘social’ refer to same aspect of human life. In addition, creation and sharing of meaning are crucial both for brand communities and social media. Due to these similarities, social media based brand communities can be ideal platforms for brand enthusiasts to create and share contents, values, and meanings related to a brand (Habibi et al. 2014).

Like Habibi et al. (2014), also Laroche et al. (2012) study the differences between social media based and the more traditional brand communities. Laroche et al. (2012) analyze how social media as a brand community platform impacts the brand community markers defined by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), as well as the value creation practices and brand loyalty. They consider that the popularity of social media has had a major impact on marketing and that it has also shaped consumer behavior. Consumers seek information in social media prior to shopping (Laroche et al. 2012), which means that marketers need to be present in social media. Consumers also share their post-purchase experiences, including complaints and other negative feedback on social media (Laroche et al. 2012).

According to Laroche et al. (2012) brand communities based on social media enhance the feeling of community among the participants. Hence the consciousness of kind, one of the brand community markers described by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), is

crucial also for brand communities embedded in social media (Laroche et al. 2012). Laroche et al. (2012) claim that even weak ties that are typical for social media communities make people feel socially connected and encourage community engagement. Yet Laroche et al. (2012) explain that shared consciousness does not mean that the members would be actively promoting the community and its ethos outside the group. Only as the feeling of obligation towards the community grows, it becomes more important for an individual member to manage the impression about the brand, the brand community, and its members (Laroche et al. 2012).

Laroche et al. (2012) also research whether brand communities strengthen brand trust and brand loyalty, both of which are very interesting from the company point of view. They suggest that brand communities create value both for the participants and the company behind the brand. Value creation practices such as social networking, community engagement, impression management, and brand use contribute to brand loyalty. However, only brand use and impression management enrich brand trust (Laroche et al. 2012). According to Laroche et al. (2012), the value creation practices develop over time. Since social media brand communities are relatively new, their impact on brand trust and brand loyalty can increase in the future (Laroche et al. 2012).

Zaglia (2013) studies the motives for brand community participation in the social media setting. She points out that brand community participation on social networks includes two phases. First the participant needs to join the social network, e.g. Instagram, and only then can he or she join the brand community. Zaglia (2013) supports the previous arguments by Dholakia et al. (2004) and suggests that people join social media based brand communities to seek assistance and information that is not available in other sources as well as to improve their skills. She also considers the passion for the brand to be an essential antecedent for brand community participation. Zaglia (2013) supports views presented in prior literature also when it comes to the importance of social relations and enhancement. Furthermore, she argues that consumers join brand communities in order to raise their concerns. Brand communities give voice to their members and enable them to be vocal about their affection to, but also claim on the brand (Zaglia 2013).

Previous researchers have also look into the different forms of participation. De Vries et al. (2012) study the popularity of brand posts on Facebook. The popularity is measured through the amount of likes and comments that a post receives. De Vries et al. (2012) suggest that in order to maximize the popularity a post should be highly vivid and slightly interactive, such as a video or a contest. They point out that the brand community participants are influenced by each other, which means that when a company is sharing a positive comment from a brand community member, the others tend to like it. Also sharing positive or negative comments tend to lead to more comments as participants reflect their own opinions in relation to the others' opinions (De Vries et al. 2012).

Gummerus et al. (2012) study customer engagement in social media brand communities, specifically on Facebook. They define customer engagement as behavioral manifestation towards a company or a brand. It consists of interaction and communication between consumers as well as between a consumer and a company. It includes transactions such as purchase, which bears a deeper meaning to the consumer (Gummerus et al. 2012). Gummerus et al. (2012) argue that customer engagement as a behavioral manifestation is related to the emergence social media, since social networks enable consumers to interact with companies and brands in a new way. Due to the popularity of social media, companies have moved their brand communities from websites to social networks (Gummerus et al. 2012).

According to Gummerus et al. (2012), customer engagement in brand communities is driven by perceived benefits, such as practical, social, and economic benefits, social enhancement, and entertainment. Most of the benefits presented by Gummer et al. (2012) are discussed in prior studies (e.g. Sicilia and Palazón 2008), but the economic benefits have received less attention in previous literature. As per Gummerus et al. (2012) economic benefits motivate consumers, who wish to save time, gain a discount, or want to participate in competitions. Gummerus et al. (2012) claim that customer engagement has a positive impact on perceived benefits. Benefits, on the other hand, contribute to customer loyalty and satisfaction, which are profitable for companies and motivate them to host brand communities. Perhaps surprisingly only economic benefits did not enhance consumer loyalty or satisfaction (Gummerus et al. 2012).

Some of the findings by Gummerus et al. (2012) do not support the arguments of previous literature. For instance, Gummerus et al. (2012) emphasize meaning of entertainment value in the context of social media and suggest that it has a bigger impact on customer loyalty and satisfaction than social benefits have. Yet, in many the prior studies (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006, Sicilia and Palazón 2008) social value is considered to be the greatest benefit that brand communities provide to consumers.

Furthermore, Gummerus et al. (2012) argue that self-presentation and social enhancement are essential aspects of brand communities embedded in social media. With self-presentation they mean the individual's need to control the impression that other people form of him or her. Social enhancement refers to the human need to be recognized, needed, and useful in the eyes of other brand community participants (Gummerus et al. 2012).

One of the most recent studies on social media based brand communities is by Kaur et al. (2018). Using the consumption value theory as a theoretical framework Kaur et al. (2018) test the impact of epistemic, emotional, and social values on users' intention to continue using an online social media brand community. Epistemic value refers to the benefit that the user obtains by receiving information from the brand community. Emotional value concerns the feelings such as enjoyment that the brand community use awakens. Social values refer to social interaction, networking and connection that a user gets from association with a brand community (Kaur et al. 2018).

The findings of Kaur et al. (2018) on the antecedents for brand community participation are contradicting with many of the previous studies. While many previous brand community theories emphasize the functional and social values as drivers for brand community participation (e.g. Muniz and O'Guinn 2001, Dholakia et al. 2004, Zaglia 2013), Kaur et al. (2018) argue that social influence, problem solving, and social interaction have no impact on users' intention to continue participating in brand communities. As per Kaur et al. (2018) this finding is consistent among users with various levels of activity. On the other hand, Kaur et al. (2018)

argue that social enhancement and entertainment both drive brand community participation. They consider that especially younger brand community participants use social media brand communities merely for impression management.

2.4 Conceptual framework and hypotheses

2.4.1 Self-presentation

Social identity is an essential aspect of brand communities. As per Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), consciousness of kind, a collective sense of "we-ness" and at the same time a shared perception of difference from non-members, is the first marker of a brand community. Also Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) discuss the concepts of cognitive identification, affective commitment, and group-based self-esteem in the brand community context.

Meister (2012) supports these views and suggests further that brand communities enable individuals to build their social identity by being a member in a group. An individual can define him- or herself through participation in a brand community. This requires that the brand has a personal meaning and value to the individual and that he or she can identify with it (Meister 2012). As importantly, brand communities empower the participants to live out their dreams and fantasies (Meister 2012).

Meister (2012) argues that a brand community can have an important role in how an individual perceives him- or herself. The cognitive value and emotional importance of being a member in a social group are crucial for the self-definition, which is part of the individual's self-concept (Meister 2012). Brand community membership can thus strengthen an individual's self-concept by lifting their self-worth and self-esteem. Meister (2012) uses the term self-presentation to describe the importance that brand community membership can have for an individual's self-concept.

Since the brands and brand communities can have such an impact on consumer's self-concept, consumers constantly evaluate the fit between themselves, the brand, and the community (Meister 2012). Thus brand communities need to inspire and be relevant to consumers. Meister (2012) claims that if the community no longer matches the consumer's self-concept, consumer leaves the community. In the context of

Instagram, the consumer can effortlessly join and leave the brand communities by hitting the 'Follow' button. As the branded accounts are most often accessible even without following, choosing to follow and therefore becoming a brand community member must be meaningful to the consumer.

Kaur et al. (2018) consider that online self-identity is one of the major drivers of social media usage in general, especially for young people. However, they do not include a concept measuring the impact of self-definition or identity in their model on brand community participation. Therefore, in this thesis the conceptual approach by Kaur et al. (2018) is complemented with Meister's (2012) concept of self-presentation. Thus the first hypothesis is:

H1: Self-presentation has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

2.4.2 Social enhancement

According to Sicilia and Palazón (2008) one of the three values that brand communities provide to the participants is social value, which includes the concepts of social status and social enhancement. Also Gummerus et al. (2012) and Zaglia (2013) argue that enhancement of one's social position is a significant motivational antecedent for brand community participation.

According to Kaur et al. (2018) social media in general is used as a tool for impression management. Social media users wish to gain enhancement from their peers. Kaur et al. (2018) consider that brand communities embedded in social media may have a similar function. They claim that although other aspects of social value, such as social interaction, don't have an impact on users' intention to participate in brand communities, social enhancement strongly predicts the participation intention. Kaur et al. (2018) explain that social enhancement drives the brand community participation in spite of how active community members are. They even suggest that the least active users have joined brand communities mainly because of the possibility to enhance their image. This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: Social enhancement has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

2.4.3 Social interaction

Previous literature emphasizes social interaction between brand community participants as the main driver of brand community participation (e.g. McAlexander et al. 2002). Sicilia and Palazón (2008) consider social value, including friendship and emotional support, as the highest gain that consumers can obtain from brand community participation. They argue that the possibility to form genuine relationships with like-minded people is a reason for consumers to become brand community members.

However, in contradiction to the previous research, the recent study by Kaur et al. (2018) indicates that in the social media context, social interaction does not have an impact on brand community participation. Kaur et al. (2018) consider their finding to be surprising and discuss the possible reasons. According to them, it is possible that the concept of social interaction has a different meaning in different studies. Kaur et al. (2018) focus on formation of new relationships. They also propose that especially younger users of social media brand communities are not interested in interacting with new people.

Despite the recent findings by Kaur et al. (2018) social interaction is included in the conceptual model of this thesis, since the majority of the prior literature emphasizes the importance of interaction between brand community participants. Therefore, the third hypothesis is:

H3: Social interaction has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

2.4.4 Influence on the brand

According to Zaglia (2013) one motive for brand community participation is the possibility to influence the brand. This concept has been not been discussed in most of the previous studies. Zaglia (2013) argues that social network based brand

communities provide the participants a channel to express their opinions or concerns about the brand or the branded products. Communities also enable consumers to reach out to the company behind the brand. Zaglia (2013) also suggests that consumers expect to receive recognition and acknowledgment from the company.

The argument that consumers use brand communities as platform for influencing the brand and interacting with the company supports the view by McAlexander et al. (2002), who describe the brand community as a network of relationships. According to McAlexander et al. (2002) customer–marketer, customer–brand, and customer–product relationships are as crucial part of brand community as the relationship between brand community members. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) argue that once consumers identify themselves with the company behind a brand, they consider that they have a more legitimate and thus stronger claim on the company. Consumers also express this claim more consistently and actively. Consumers can gain a remarkable power over the company, while the company loses some of its autonomy (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003).

While Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) consider that from the company’s perspective consumers can gain too strong of a position, Cova and Pace (2006) argue that companies should give their customers greater control over the relationship that they have with the brand. They consider that consumers should be empowered to alter the meaning of the brand and make their relationship with it more relevant and valuable. Kaur et al. (2018) do not study whether influencing the brand is a motive for brand community participation. Yet, considering how easy it is for consumers to share e.g. their negative post-purchase experience on social media, the concept of influence is included in this study. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is:

H4: Influence on the brand has a positive impact on users’ intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

2.4.5 Fun

Experiential aspects of consumption have been recognized in academic research already in the 1980s. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) stress the importance of esthetics, symbolic meanings, hedonism and emotions in the consumption experience.

According to Sicilia and Palazón (2008), brand communities provide their participants entertainment value. Entertainment refers to fun and relaxation, which participants can experience through interaction or playing with each other. As per Sicilia and Palazón (2008), the emotional and sensorial benefits enable the participant to form memorable experiences, which in turn impact the attitudes and reinforce the relationship of the participant towards the community platform as well as towards the brand.

Emotions and entertainment are emphasized in the context of social media. Social media applications are hedonic technologies that resonate with users' feelings and needs (Kaur et al. 2018). According to Kaur et al. (2018) Facebook users perceive entertainment and enjoyment as the main benefits of the application. Therefore it can be assumed that entertainment and fun are essential for Instagram usage as well.

As per Kaur et al. (2018) hedonic needs, enjoyment and entertainment have a positive impact on users' intention to participate in social media brand communities. They use the concept of playfulness to describe the feelings and emotions that arouse from the brand community usage. Playfulness consists of hopefulness, happiness and excitement. Considering the arguments above, the fifth hypothesis is:

H5: Fun has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

2.4.6 Functional value

According to Sicilia and Palazón (2008) brand communities provide their members with functional value. Brand communities deliver information on new trends and products. They also enable their members to exchange information on different topics of their interests as well as to share their opinions and expertise (Sicilia and Palazón 2008). The information and expertise that brand communities offer, might for instance help participants solve problems or make purchase decisions. Although Sicilia and Palazón (2008) admit that the functional value is not sufficient to maintain a brand community, they consider it to be crucial.

Sicilia and Palazón (2008) are not the only ones emphasizing the role of functional value for brand communities. The vast majority of the previous research considers information seeking and problem solving to be important benefits of brand community participation. However, the recent findings by Kaur et al. (2018) contradict with the prior explanations. Kaur et al. (2018) show that epistemic value has no influence on social media based brand community participation. Due to this contradiction and because of the emphasis in prior literature, the concept of functional value is included in this study. Thus the sixth and the final hypothesis is:

H6: Functional value has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram.

The hypotheses and the conceptual model are summarized below.

Hypothesis	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Data Measure
H1	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Social identity	Survey questions 3–7 (SELF1, SELF2, SELF3, SELF4, SELF5)
H2	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Social enhancement	Survey questions 21–23 (ENHA1, ENHA2, ENHA3)
H3	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Social interaction	Survey questions 15–16 (INTE1, INTE2)
H4	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Influence	Survey questions 8–10 (INFL1, INFL2, INFL3)
H5	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Fun	Survey questions 11–14 (FUN1, FUN2, FUN3, FUN4)
H6	Intention to continue following brands on Instagram	Functional value	Survey questions 17–20 (FUNC1, FUNC2, FUNC3, FUNC4)

Table 1. The hypotheses and variables.

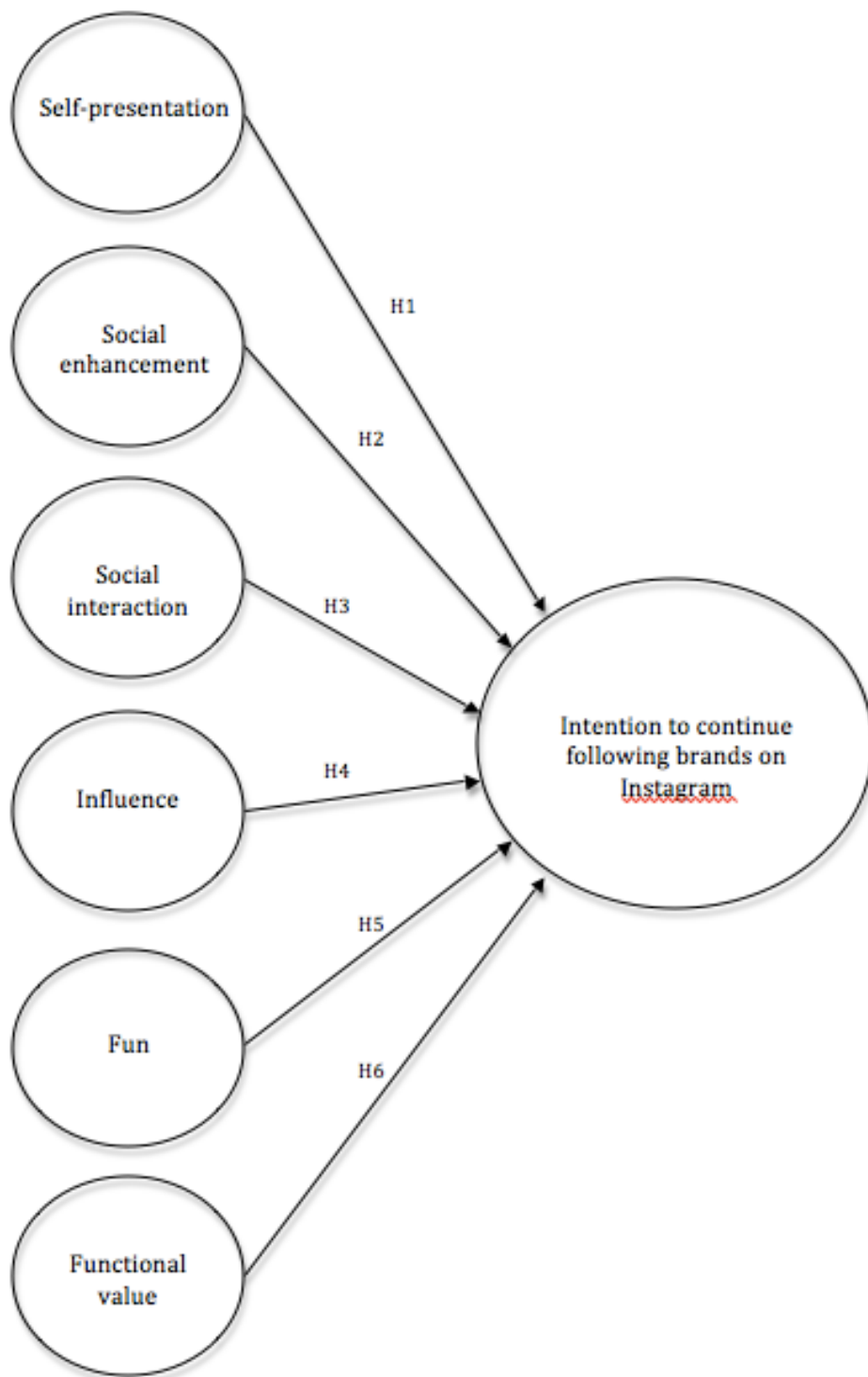


Figure 1. The conceptual model.

3. Data and Methodology

This chapter describes the methods used in this thesis for data collection and analysis. The first part focuses on the creation of the survey and the data collection. In the second part, the measurement of the independent and dependent variables are explained. Finally, the statistical techniques for analyzing the data are discussed.

3.1 Survey instrument and data collection

The research method used in this thesis is a survey among Instagram users. Many previous studies on brand communities (e.g. Cova and Pace, 2006; Sicilia and Palazón, 2007) are based on qualitative methods. Many of them derive from methods used in social sciences, such as observation, in-depth interview, and netnography. Although qualitative methods contribute to the understanding of consumer behavior, the results are limited to small samples and to certain brand communities.

The consumer survey used in this thesis is based on the previous studies in order to ensure the validity of the scales. The core of the questionnaire comes from Kaur et al. (2018), who test consumers' intention to continue participating in brand communities on Facebook. Questions regarding the independent variables fun, functional value, social enhancement, and social interaction, as well as the dependent variable of intention to continue brand community participation are based on their survey (Appendix 7.1 and 7.2). A few questions were left out and some changes in wording were made in order to adjust the survey to the context of this thesis.

The questions regarding self-presentation (Appendix 7.1) derive from the PhD dissertation of Meister (2012) and were adjusted to match the context of this study. Since there are similarities in the concepts of self-presentation and social enhancement, the survey was structured so that these questions would not appear directly after each other.

The questions on influence are based on Zaglia (2013), but they have been formulated specifically for this study. Zaglia (2013) herself has studied brand communities embedded in social media with qualitative methods and thus no validated survey

questions were available. This means that the scales regarding influence on the brand have not been previously validated.

The dependent variable indicates the intention of the brand community participants to continue their participation or more precisely, their following. The survey questions related to the dependent variable (Appendix 7.2) derive from Kaur et al. (2018). Having continuation intention that is measured on a 7-point likert scale as a dependent variable enables the use of regression analysis. Finally, survey participants were asked demographic questions about their gender, age, citizenship, and education (Appendix 7.3).

The survey was created with the online survey application Qualtrics. The survey consists of a short introduction and 29 questions in total. Questions regarding the studied concepts are multiple-choice. Respondents could choose an alternative on a likert scale with 7 options (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questions were divided on different pages based on the concepts. Respondents were not allowed to skip a question, but all questions needed to be answered in order to continue to the next section and to complete the survey.

As the study focuses on understanding the motives to continue brand community participation, only responses from those participants who follow brands on Instagram, qualify for the analysis. Therefore the first question is to confirm that the participant follows at least one brand on Instagram. In case the participant chooses the “no” alternative the survey comes to an end and no further questions are shown.

Before distributing the survey, a pre-test was conducted within a small group of respondents. This was done in order to collect feedback on the formulation and to figure out any unnecessary complexities or difficulties on the survey. The questions were updated according to the feedback. The link to the survey was distributed through different social media channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and email.

During the data collection I received some inquiries regarding the first survey question on whether the participant follows at least one brand on Instagram. A few participants contacted me to ask what does the term 'brand' refers to. I thought of this in advance, but choose not to include any definition or example of a brand. This was done in order to keep the introduction and instructions short and accessible for the participants and to avoid leading them to a certain direction and thus impacting their responses. With hindsight it might have been useful to explain the term, since some participants responded that they do not follow any brands, although they actually do. An example of a brand would have helped more participants to perceive themselves as brand followers and thus it would have made it easier to collect the data.

3.2 Data analysis method

Data analysis was conducted with SPSS. First the normal distribution of the data for the dependent variable 'continuation intention' was estimated with a histogram. All data was also recoded so that the high values on the likert scale from 1–7 indicated stronger agreement and the lower values stronger disagreement. On the survey, 'strongly agree' was given as the top most option and 'strongly disagree' as the bottom most option to give a positive tone and to make survey participation a comfortable and nice experience. Thus Qualtrics coded the option 'strongly agree' with value 1 and 'strongly disagree' with value 7. When analyzing the positive impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables, it is more logical to have the high value expressing stronger agreement, hence the recoding.

The data regarding individual questions were transformed into index variables measuring self-presentation, influence, fun, social interaction, functional value, social enhancement, and continuation intention. The analysis of the data was conducted with the multiple regression method on SPSS. Multiple regression makes it possible to scrutinize the individual contribution of each explanatory variable (Mazzocchi 2008). As per Mazzocchi (2008), although the multiple regression model is useful in the study where there are multiple determinants of the independent variable, it should be ensured that the independent variables are truly independent from each other. Thus the explanatory variables were tested for collinearity.

4. Results

In this chapter I first analyze the study participants and the characteristics of the data. Before moving on to the testing of the hypotheses, the validity and reliability measurement model is tested. The hypotheses are tested with a linear regression model using SPSS. Finally, I look into multicollinearity and the goodness-of-fit.

4.1 Study participants

A total of 178 people participated in the survey. Unexpectedly many of these responses are not valid for the survey, as they are not completed or the participants have answered that they do not follow any brands on Instagram. Therefore the sample size is 99. Of the sample 81% are female and 19% are male. 60% of the respondents included in the sample have obtained a master's or doctorate's degree. The majority, 78% in total, of respondents is born between 1984 and 1994. The youngest participant in the sample is born in 2002 and the oldest in 1955. Two countries, the Netherlands and Finland, represent 73% of the respondents. Other respondents come from Europe and some individual respondents represent North and South America as well as Asia.

Based on the demographic data, a typical participant in this study is a well-educated female millennial from Northern Europe. Data based on responses from the millennials can be seen as a positive factor. Especially from marketers' perspective the generation, which soon will be at their topmost spending age, is very interesting. The geographical and cultural representation of the participants differ significantly from the study of Kaur et al. (2018), which is good for the validity of their results.

Both women and well-educated consumers are heavily overrepresented in this study. This naturally bounds the generalization of the results and can be considered as a limitation for the study. However, the characteristic of this study, a master's thesis, does not enable continuation or repetition of the data collection, although in another setting, this would perhaps be recommendable.

4.2 Measurement model

The measurement model was tested to examine its reliability and validity. The chosen scales had been previously been validated by Kaur et al. (2018) and Meister (2012),

except for the study construct regarding the influence on the brand. The scales were based on Zaglia (2013), yet no validated questions were accessible. In addition, the face validity of the survey was tested through a pre-study and the survey instrument was adjusted according to the findings.

The reliability of the scales was tested by using Cronbach’s Alpha on SPSS. It can be used to test the consistency of the measurement across multiple survey items measuring the same construct over time (Mazzocchi 2008). As per Mazzocchi (2008), the Cronbach’s Alpha value should be higher than 0.7 in order to demonstrate good reliability of the item. All items have a Cronbach’s Alpha value > 0.7 (table 2), which indicates a good or even excellent reliability of the measurement model.

Item	Cronbach’s Alpha
Self-presentation	0.762
Social enhancement	0.910
Influence on the brand	0.721
Fun	0.848
Functional value	0.703
Continuation intention	0.812

Table 2. Cronbach’s Alpha values.

Since social interaction is a two-item scale, instead of using Cronbach’s Alpha, a Spearman Rank (rho) was run to test the reliability (table 3). The test indicated a strong correlation.

			INTE1	INTE2
Spearman’s rho	INTE1	Correlation	1.000	0.709**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	99	99
	INTE2	Correlation	0.709**	1.000
		Coefficient		
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	.	
	N	99	99	

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

Table 3. Spearman’s rho.

4.3 Hypotheses testing

To test the hypotheses regarding the impact of self-presentation, social enhancement, social interaction, influence, fun, and functional value on the users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed with SPSS. The results of the linear regression analysis provided confirmation for half of the research hypotheses (see table 4).

The first hypothesis, H1: self-presentation has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is supported, as $p < 0.05$. Self-presentation has a beta value of 0.117. This means that for every one unit of change in the self-presentation, there is 0.117 unit change in the users' intention to continue following brands.

The second hypothesis, H2: social enhancement has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is not supported, since $p > 0.05$.

The third hypothesis H3: social interaction has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is not supported. $P < 0.05$, but the beta value -0.282 is negative. This means that the less socially interactive the brand followers are on Instagram, the higher is their intention to continue following brands.

The fourth hypothesis, H4: Influence on the brand has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is not supported, as $p > 0.1$.

The fifth hypothesis, H5: Fun has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is supported, since $p < 0.01$. Fun has a beta value of 0.297. This means that for every one unit of change in fun, there is a 0.297 unit change in the users' intention to continue following brands.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis H6: Functional value has a positive impact on users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram, is supported, since $p < 0.01$. Functional value has a beta value of 0.408, meaning that for every one unit of change in functional value, there is a 0.408 units change in the user's intention to continue

following brands on Instagram. Functional value has the highest significant positive association with the intention to continue following brands of the tested variables in this study.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.229	1.635		1.975	0.051		
selfpresentation_index	0.117	0.058	0.183	2.027	0.046	0.775	1.291
influence_index	0.023	0.085	0.024	0.270	0.787	0.804	1.244
fun_index	0.223	0.068	0.297	3.257	0.002	0.757	1.321
interaction_index	-0.282	0.118	-0.229	-2.401	0.018	0.695	1.438
functional_index	0.314	0.075	0.408	4.174	0.000	0.659	1.518
enhancement_index	0.060	0.075	0.077	0.798	0.427	0.685	1.460

a. Dependent Variable: continuation_index

Table 4. Hypothesis testing: linear regression.

4.4 Multicollinearity

Low tolerance values (T) and high values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) are indicators for multicollinearity, which means that explanatory variables are correlated (Mazzocchi 2008). If none of the independent variables are correlated, the VIFs are 1. Tests for multicollinearity indicates that a very low level of multicollinearity is present. The VIF for all factors are around 1.3–1.5 (table 4), which does indicate some correlation, but not enough to make independent variables statistically insignificant. Therefore multicollinearity present in this study is not a problem and no action to diminish it needs to be taken.

4.5 Goodness-of-fit

According to Mazzocchi (2008) in regression analysis, R^2 is the measure of the goodness-of-fit. The model summary (table 5) shows how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. The R^2 indicates how well the model fits the data (Mazzocchi 2008). The coefficient of determination, R^2 value is 0.42, which indicates a moderate fit.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.648	0.420	0.382	2.620

- a. Predictors: (Constant), enhancement_index, influence_index, fun_index, selfpresentation_index, interaction_index, functional_index
b. Dependent Variable: continuation_index

Table. 5 Model summary.

5. Discussion and conclusions

First the findings of the thesis are summarized and discussed. Then I present the managerial implications of the results and conclude with limitations of the study as well as discuss the directions of future research.

5.1 Discussion

This thesis aims at understanding consumers' motives for following brands on Instagram. Previous research on brand communities is focused on offline or website based on online communities, while brand communities embedded in social media have not yet received much of attention within academia. As per Kaur et al. (2018), the major theories on brand communities may not be applicable to hedonic technologies, such as social media. The study by Kaur et al. (2018) provides the base for the conceptual framework in this study, complemented with concepts of self-presentation as used by Meister (2012) and influence on the brand (Zaglia 2013).

The results do not fully support the explanation for brand community participation provided by Kaur et al. (2018). They argue that social enhancement, as part of the online social identity, is perhaps the most important driver of social media brand community participation especially among younger users. Yet, the results of this study indicate that social enhancement does not have a significant positive impact on brand community participation. Social identity, however, does seem to be a motive to participate in brand community, since self-presentation has a significant positive association with users' intention to follow brands on Instagram.

The results support Meister's (2012) argument that a brand community is a tool that helps consumers create their self-concept. As per Meister (2012) brand community membership contributes to consumer's self-perception. A brand community enables consumers to live their dreams and fantasies (Meister 2012). Since the results indicate that self-presentation is a motive to follow brands on Instagram, while social enhancement is not, it seems that consumers follow brands in order to strengthen their own idea about themselves rather than to gain status or admiration from their peers. It is more important what the brand and the community around it mean to the individual than how it is seen by the individual's peers.

Similarly, the results regarding the social interaction indicate that brand community participation is something that the consumers do for their own sake rather than for the social sphere. The results show a negative correlation between social interaction and intention to continue following brands on Instagram. This means that the less the brand follower interacts with other followers the higher is his or her intention to continue following brands. Kaur et al. (2018) present similar results. Yet, these results are in contradiction with most of the previous studies. McAlexander et al. (2002), Sicilia and Palazón (2008), and Schau et al. (2009), for an example, emphasize the importance of social interactions and relationships for brand communities and their members.

It is possible that the lack of social interaction is one the unique characteristics of brand communities embedded in social media. Habibi et al. (2014) consider that this is because people tend to select more carefully with whom they interact, as the user profiles are accessible on social networks. Cova and Pace (2006) argue that even on the more traditional website based brand communities participants self-present rather than interact. According to them, people wish to be seen and heard and thus feel that they exist, but they do not want to socialize with other users. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that this thesis and the results measure only following as a form of participation. If the brand community participation had been measured as liking and commenting, social interaction might have turned out to be a significant driver of the intention to continue participation.

The study results do not show a significant positive association between consumers' influence on the brand and intention to continue following brands. This result contradicts with the previous research. Zaglia (2013) considers influence on the brand as an antecedent for brand community participation. McAlexander et al. (2002) suggest that interaction between the consumer and the brand or the company behind it is one of the key relations in a brand community. The discrepancy in the results is interesting, considering that social media can be an empowering tool for the consumers. It is noteworthy that few studies have focused on customer's influence on the brand in the brand community context. Also it should be noted that the survey questions regarding influence had not been validated by previous researchers.

Therefore more research is needed in order to draw strong conclusions on the importance of consumer's influence on the brand.

Entertainment value is considered to be one of the key benefits that consumers gain by participating in brand communities (Kaur et al. 2018, Sicilia and Palazón 2008). The findings of this study are consistent with the previous research. Having fun and being entertained has a significant positive correlation with following brands on Instagram. As per Kaur et al. (2018), social media based brand communities can satisfy the hedonic needs of the consumer and thus the consumer keeps on participating. Fun was measured through questions about happiness, excitement, satisfaction, and hopefulness, which represent positive emotions more generally. People surely want to continue having these emotions and therefore it is logical that having fun drives the intention to continue following brands on Instagram. The challenge for brands and marketers is how to get the consumers feel entertained and having fun on Instagram.

The finding regarding functional value is perhaps the most surprising in this thesis. The results indicate that of the variables measured in this study, functional value has the highest positive association with users' intention to continue following brands on Instagram. Kaur et al. (2018), whose very recent study this thesis is based on, argue the opposite. According to their study, functional value has no impact on consumers' intention to continue participating in brand communities. Kaur et al. (2018) consider that young adults use social media based brand communities for impression management rather than for finding information. Kaur et al. (2018) perceive their finding as significant, since it contradicts with prior brand community research (e.g. Sicilia and Palazón 2008, Zaglia 2013, and Laroche et al. 2012).

A possible explanation for the contradicting results between this thesis and Kaur et al. (2018) is that the social network applications differ. It could be that on Facebook, where the accessible profiles have provide more information on the user than on Instagram, the users are more into impression management and social enhancement. The argument by Habibi et al. (2014), according to which users participate in brand communities with their real name has a major impact on their behavior, supports this

interpretation. It seems that Instagram is more a tool for learning about new trends and daydreaming.

Based on the results of this study, consumers follow brands on Instagram in order to be entertained, learn about new products and trends, and to strengthen their self-concept. Instagram brand communities are not about social relations, mingling and making friends. Neither do people join them to gain status or admiration. Consumers don't seem to be keen on influencing the brand or impacting its meaning, at least not through Instagram. In a way Instagram brand communities may be more passive than those on Facebook or on websites. However, it goes without saying that it requires more research on Instagram based brand communities as well as on other forms of participation to make definitive statements.

Further research is also needed to study the causality between the explanatory variables used in this study and the brand community participation. Despite the significant positive associations, strong arguments on causality cannot be made. The positive association between the independent and dependent variables could possibly be explained by a shared factor that the model is missing. However, the findings of this thesis have shed light on the motives to follow brands on Instagram and challenged some of the views presented in previous studies.

5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study have implications for social media marketing strategies. The results can help marketers to understand why consumers, especially millennials, follow brands on Instagram and how to get their attention. The findings indicate that consumers follow brands on Instagram first of all in order to gain information. Thus the content that is shared on Instagram needs to be timely, relevant, and accurate. Another motive for following brands is entertainment. Consumers, who are having fun and experiencing positive emotions, are more likely to continue following the brand. This means that companies should focus on producing entertaining and enchanting content.

However, the content is not enough to keep consumers following the brand. As the results show, self-presentation is an antecedent to follow brands on Instagram, which

means that the brand needs to be identifiable and bear meaning to the consumer. The brand needs to have a clear identity and values, since consumers use it for self-definition. Marketers cannot rely on informative content or aesthetic pictures, in case the brand in itself is not well thought through and appealing.

Following a brand is something that consumers seem to do for their own sake: for fun, to learn, and to strengthen their idea about themselves. The social aspect, relationship with other consumers or the company behind the brand, is not significant. Consumers don't wish to use Instagram to influence the brand or to gain acknowledgement from the company. Although many companies try to encourage active participation and chase likes and shares, the study findings do not support this kind of strategy.

5.3 Limitations and further research

This thesis is one the first studies to focus on Instagram based brand communities. Although brand communities on other social networks, especially Facebook, have been studied, the results indicate that the prior explanations cannot necessarily be applied to Instagram. Furthermore, even though the findings about consumers' motives to follow brands on Instagram contribute to the academic research on brand communities and can help marketers to better understand the consumer behavior, the study has considerable limitations.

Firstly, the small size of the sample and the sample selection bias limits the validity of the results. The nature of the study set limitations for the data collection, limiting the sample size. This can damage the internal validity of the results. It should be also considered that high-educated young women are heavily overrepresented in the sample. This limits the external validity of the results, meaning that the findings cannot be widely generalized. A proper randomization was not achieved, which is a typical weakness of a master's thesis.

Secondly, this study was focused only on following as a form of participation. The concepts that were not significant for the consumers' intention to continue following brands might have a significant impact on other forms of participation. It is possible that social interaction and influencing the brand are drivers of commenting on brand

posts. Further research is needed in order to understand the antecedent for other forms of brand community participation on Instagram.

There is a need to study Instagram as a platform for brand communities and brand marketing in general. Academic research understandably cannot up with the pace of consumer trends, but it is surprising that practically all prior studies on brand communities have focused on Facebook. Considering the declining popularity of Facebook, especially among younger consumer groups, understanding the behavior of Instagram users seems more relevant.

Future research should also study the impact of social enhancement on brand community participation. The findings by Kaur et al. (2018) on this point did not get support in this study, but remain an interesting aspect of social media based brand communities as well as social network use in general. Also the consumers' influence over the brand should be analyzed more closely, since social networks have given consumers a channel to be vocal about their grievances regarding the brand or the company behind it.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Measurements of the independent variables

	Self-presentation (Meister 2012)
SELF1	The image of the brand was crucial for my decision to start following the brand.
SELF2	To be a follower of the brand on Instagram means a lot to me.
SELF3	Being a follower of the brand on Instagram says something about me and my attitude.
SELF4	I expect a lot from the brand, the company behind it, and the other followers.
SELF5	It is important for me that I can identify with the brand, the company behind it, and the other followers.

	Influence (based on Zaglia 2013)
INFL1	Following the brand on Instagram enables me to express my opinions about the brand.
INFL2	Following the brand on Instagram enables me to express my concerns about the brand.
INFL3	Following the brand on Instagram enables me to gain acknowledgement from the company that manages the brand.

	Fun (Kaur et al. 2018)
FUN1	Following brands on Instagram brings me happiness.
FUN2	Following brands on Instagram brings me excitement.
FUN3	Following brands on Instagram brings me satisfaction.
FUN4	Following brands on Instagram brings me hopefulness.

	Social interaction (Kaur et al. 2018)
SOCI1	Following brands on Instagram enables me to develop relationships with others.
SOCI2	Following brands on Instagram enables me to make new friends.

	Functional value (Kaur et al. 2018)
FUNC1	I follow brands on Instagram to keep up with new trends.
FUNC2	I follow brands on Instagram to see what new products are available.
FUNC3	I follow brands on Instagram to solve problems.
FUNC4	I follow brands on Instagram to make decisions.

	Social enhancement (Kaur et al. 2018)
ENHA1	Following brands on Instagram enhances my reputation among friends.

ENHA2	Following brands on Instagram can help me impress others.
ENHA3	Following brands on Instagram can make me feel important.

Appendix B: Measurement of the dependent variable

	Continuation intention (Kaur et al. 2018)
CONT1	I plan to continue following brands on Instagram.
CONT2	I want to continue following brands on Instagram rather than stop following them.
CONT3	Following brands on Instagram is part of my daily like and I will always do that.

Appendix C: Demographic data

	Demographic data
DEMO1	What is your gender?
DEMO2	What is your year of birth?
DEMO3	Of what country are you a citizen?
DEMO4	What is the highest level of education you have completed?