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“Brand Buyer Stereotypes: Is Need for Uniqueness More Important than Stereotypes in Brand Evaluation and Choice?”

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Abstract

Originally, brands were only seen as quality signals, but from consumer behavior it is known that consumers and brands are relationship partners. Hence, the tendency of people to stereotype others can also be applied to the consumer-brand relationship aspect. Existing literature is more oriented toward two types of stereotypes in this relationship – brand origin stereotypes and brand stereotypes, but there is also a third type of stereotypes in the consumer-brand relationship which deserves attention, namely the *brand buyer stereotypes*. And while brand buyer stereotypes represent a consumer's stereotypical perceptions of the buyer of a particular brand, existing research has demonstrated that consumers also tend to express their *need for uniqueness*. Since it can be expected that brand buyer stereotypes and consumers' need for uniqueness can coexist within an individual, this research investigates their individual and joint effects on brand evaluation and choice. The research was conducted in February 2018 among Bosnian and Herzegovinian consumers, investigating the perceptions they have about their favorite brand and produced the following results: a) both consumers' need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes are important for consumer-brand identification, b) the need for uniqueness is more diagnostic than brand buyer stereotypes in consumer-brand identification, c) there is a weak relationship between consumers' need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes, and d) the stereotypical dimension of competence is more diagnostic for consumer-brand identification than warmth within brand buyer stereotypes. Overall, the empirical insights provided by this master thesis contribute to the research on the concepts of brand buyer stereotypes and consumer-brand identification and are reflected in several theoretical and managerial implications.

Keywords: *stereotype content model, brand buyer stereotypes, consumers' need for uniqueness, perceived brand globalness/localness, consumer-brand identification, repurchase intention, brand loyalty, switching intention, positive word of mouth*

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Abbreviations Index

AOS – Avoidance of Similarity

BBS – Brand Buyer Stereotypes

CBI – Consumer-brand Identification

CCC - Creative Choice Counterconformity

CNFU – Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness

COO – Country of Origin

PWOM – Positive Word-of-Mouth

SCM – Stereotype Content Model

UCC – Unpopular Choice Counterconformity

1. Introduction

This chapter familiarizes the reader with the general topic of the present master thesis and its main research question, which is drawn from some limitations of existing literature. In its final part, the chapter also provides a brief overview of the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Background

Over the course of the last few decades, a considerable amount of research has focused on the relationships that consumers create with brands. As stated in Tuskej et al. (2013), brands have been essential for building relationships with consumers, ensuring lasting business success. Simply defined 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, 1995), consumers primarily saw brands as quality signals (Erdem & Swait, 1998; Rao et al., 1999; Tsai, 2005). Yet, as brands have become omnipresent in all parts of the global culture (Cayla & Arnould, 2008), research done in social psychology has concluded that consumers have relationships with brands that resemble relations between people, such as arranged marriages or best friendships (Fournier, 1998).

According to Fournier (2009), successful consumer-brand relationships are those that recognize and satisfy the individual and collective needs, both of emotional and practical value, of real people. As stated in Davvetas et al. (forthcoming), the dimensions of consumer-brand relationships can be described with different concepts, such as brand love and brand passion (see also Batra et al., 2012), whereas consumer-brand identification [CBI] represents one of the most important constructs to capture the relationships between consumers and brands. Among other factors influencing the relationships between brands and consumers, the current thesis investigates whether consumers’ need for uniqueness as an individual characteristic of consumers and their stereotypical tendency toward buyers of different brands have an influence on consumers’ identification with a brand.

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According to Greenwald & Banaji (1995), a stereotype represents an oversimplified and generalized set of beliefs about the characteristics of a social group (e.g. cheerleaders are physically attractive – positive stereotype, and unintelligent – negative stereotype). The central idea of stereotyping is attributing the characteristics of a group to its individual members (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). Stereotypes are not formed for societal groups exclusively but can be developed for countries and nationalities (e.g. Maheswaran, 1994), as well as brands (e.g. Kervyn et al., 2012) and their buyers (e.g. Antonetti & Maklan, 2016). Fiske et al. (2002) developed an important theoretical framework for understanding stereotypes, namely the Stereotype Content Model [SCM], which argues that there are two dimensions of stereotypes, warmth, and competence. Whereas warmth reflects the nature of others' intent, captured by such notions as friendliness, kindness, and good-nature, competence reflects the others' ability to pursue that intent, captured by such notions as efficiency, capability, and intelligence (Fiske et al., 2002).

As stated in Fiske et al. (2002, p. 878), social psychologists have generally viewed solely unflattering stereotypes as indication of prejudice, where prejudice represents “a uniform antipathy or contempt toward an out-group across a variety of dimensions” (see also Allport, 1954), whereas flattering stereotypes were attributed to one's in-groups. According to Durante et al. (2010), the originality of the SCM lies in not describing prejudice as just a uniform antipathy or contempt toward an outgroup, since it is now known that not all stereotypes are the same. Namely, one individual may perceive a certain group as warm but not competent, whereas another individual may perceive that same group as competent but not warm (Fiske et al., 2002), meaning that the stereotypes are rather mixed.

In general, we can distinguish between three types of stereotypes in the consumer-brand relationship. Though the existing literature was more oriented toward two types of stereotypes - brand origin stereotypes (e.g. Chattalas et al., 2008; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Halkias et al., 2016; Maheswaran, 1994) and brand stereotypes (e.g. Aaker et al., 2010; Ivens et al., 2015; Kervyn et al., 2012), it is also known that a third type of stereotypes can be identified in the consumer-brand relationship: *the brand buyer stereotypes* [BBS]. These stereotypes can be defined as a socially shared and oversimplified set of beliefs about the characteristics of different brands/countries and their people/typical buyers/users of a certain brand (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Halkias

et al., 2016; Kervyn et al., 2012; Maheswaran, 1994). When thinking about these definitions, it is important to understand how consumers perceive brands with respect to the stereotypical dimensions of warmth and competence, since no brand wants to be seen as incompetent, inefficient, etc., but rather as efficient, capable, competent, trustworthy, etc.

From Tian et al. (2001) it is also known that consumers tend to acquire and display material possessions for the purpose of feeling differentiated from other people and that the pursuit of differentiation (or counterconformity motivation) varies across people to impact consumer reactions. According to these authors (i.e. Tian et al., 2001), individuals with a high need to be differentiated from other people feel threatened when they get the impression that they are highly similar to others. In this situation, the counterconforming individuals will search for ways to move away from the group standards and re-establish their uniqueness, regardless of the additional costs involved (see also Bloch, 1995). Marketers have recognized the importance of an individual's desire for differentiation with respect to others and, hence, communicate scarce (e.g. a low stock notice on eBay) and unique offerings (e.g. for every pair of shoes sold, Toms shoes donate a new pair of shoes to a child in need), including the ones that deviate from the group norm (Tian et al., 2001; see also Frank, 1997; Lynn & Harris, 1997; Snyder, 1992; Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

1.2. Research gap and purpose of the study

The present thesis is focused on BBS and consumers' need for uniqueness [CNFU], as two different predictors of consumer-brand identification. Whereas one captures a consumers' stereotypical perceptions, the other captures an individual consumer characteristic. To the best of our knowledge, BBS are by now covered in only one paper, namely in the study of Antonetti & Maklan (2016). According to the authors (i.e. Antonetti & Maklan, 2016), a brand is perceived with respect to the stereotypical dimensions of warmth and competence, and these same perceptions can be transferred to the buyers of that brand. In the existing literature, it is also known that the SCM "may result from shared public views of groups", whereas the way in which people understand "culturally shared stereotypes takes the perspective of society's dominant

reference groups” (Fiske et al., 2002, p. 881). As stated in Davvetas et al. (forthcoming), consumers behave in a way that supports the entity or group they identify with. We expect that consumers do not want to identify with brands whose buyers they perceive as incompetent, or inefficient, but rather as intelligent, capable, etc. Regarding the need for uniqueness, as stated in Stokburger-Sauer (2012), the perceptions of brands’ distinctiveness are associated with stronger identification. According to Davvetas et al. (forthcoming, p. 13), “a company’s identity distinctiveness and prestige shape the company’s identity attractiveness and thus consumers’ willingness to identify with it” (see also Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Therefore, the author of this thesis believes that BBS and CNFU do in fact influence CBI and, hence, deserve more attention and should be further investigated.

A question that arises here is: when making a choice between different brands, is the personal characteristic of CNFU more important for an individual consumer than the stereotypical perceptions which that same consumer has regarding the buyers of a particular brand? In other words, the fact whether consumer behavior is more influenced by socially shared perceptions toward buyers of a certain brand (i.e. BBS), or by the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as being different from others, or even by the extent to which other individuals evaluate them as unique is still unclear. Hence, the main research question of this study is: *How do need for uniqueness and tendency of stereotyping the buyers of different brands impact consumer-brand identification?*

To the best of our knowledge, although there is evidence for the importance of BBS (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016) and CNFU (Tian et al., 2001), there is still no literature investigating which one of these two constructs is more influential in CBI. Hence, to investigate whether CNFU or BBS is more important in brand evaluation and choice, for the purpose of this thesis, a conceptual model will be developed to be able to test different propositions for real brands indicated as “favorite” by the participants in the present study. In addition, the model will test perceived brand globalness [PBG] and perceived brand localness [PBL] as already determined predictors of CBI. Namely, Davvetas et al. (forthcoming) have demonstrated that PBG and PBL have a positive relationship with consumer-brand identification. The current study aims to investigate whether this relationship is weaker or stronger, than the relationships which BBS and CNFU have with CBI.

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By investigating the effects that PBG, PBL, BBS and CNFU have on CBI, we want to determine which one of the aforementioned constructs is more diagnostic in brand evaluation and choice. Namely, consumers which identify strongly with a particular brand stay loyal to that brand, repurchase it in the future and generate positive word of mouth [PWOM] about that brand (Tuskej et al., 2013). Hence, it is important to understand which one of the aforementioned constructs is the best predictor of CBI. Furthermore, together with repurchase/switching intention and brand loyalty, PWOM will also be tested as an outcome variable in the research model.

This study is focused on covering the previously mentioned existing research gap by investigating the individual and joint effects that CNFU and BBS have on CBI. First of all, the goal of this study is to contribute to the limited literature on brand buyer stereotypes and, hence, to a better understanding of the importance of need for uniqueness and stereotypes in consumers' behavior. A further aim of the study is to explore whether CNFU or BBS is more influential in brand evaluation and choice. To address the aforementioned limitations of previous research, this study investigates BBS through the assessment of brand buyer perceptions in a way that the respondents give their personal judgements about how warm and competent they perceive the buyers of their favorite brand to be.

Also, though there is a considerable amount of literature covering PBG and PBL, this thesis aims at investigating the effects these two constructs have on CBI. That is to say that the purpose of this study is to investigate which one of the proposed predictors of CBI (i.e. BBS, CNFU, PBG and PBL) leads to a higher identification of consumers with their favorite brand and, thus, to a desirable outcome manifested with brand loyalty, repurchase intention and positive word of mouth.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

After a brief introduction to the topic and the main research goals of the present master thesis, the structure of this thesis continues with the review of existing literature.

Chapter 2 defines the two focal concepts of this master thesis – BBS and CNFU, providing an overview of the scarce literature related to these two concepts.

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Additionally, the literature covering the rest of the constructs relevant for the understanding of the conceptual model of the study, precisely PBG, PBL, CBI, brand loyalty, repurchase/switching intention and PWOM, is also reviewed in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 introduces the conceptual framework of the study explaining the relationships within the model based on previous theoretical and empirical findings. Additionally, the research hypotheses are developed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 portrays the research methodology used in this thesis in order to test the hypotheses. The focus of this chapter is on research design, data collection and measures necessary to test the hypotheses.

Chapter 5 familiarizes the reader with the most important findings of the empirical investigation obtained from the analyses of a quantitative data set. After some preliminary analyses of the data set characteristics, the proposed hypotheses are tested in this chapter. Additionally, the results of some secondary tests including demographics are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6 concludes this master thesis with some theoretical and managerial implications. Drawing from the contributions and limitations of the study, this chapter also provides guidance for future research.

2. Literature review

The present chapter familiarizes the reader with the focal concepts of this thesis – the brand buyer stereotypes and consumers' need for uniqueness. While the stereotype content model was explained by Fiske et al. (2002), Tian et al. (2001) focused their research on consumers' need for uniqueness. Hence, the central ideas of the authors, relevant for this thesis, are presented in the following sections. Furthermore, for a better understanding of the conceptual model demonstrated in chapter 3., the literature covering constructs of PBG, PBL, CBI, brand loyalty, repurchase/switching intention and PWOM is also reviewed in the present chapter of the thesis.

2.1. Stereotypes and the stereotype content model

According to Taylor (1981), the way in which people evaluate others as “in-groups” or “out-groups” is based on the process of categorization, meaning that we do not stereotype a person as an individual, but rather as a member of a group (e.g. a person can be seen as a student, Austrian, cheerleader, etc). Only after a person is placed into one or more of these categories, that person becomes an object of stereotyping (Taylor, 1981). As stated in Taylor (1981, p. 84), “the main function of categorization is to reduce the complex object world to a more simple and manageable structure” (see also Bruner et al., 1956). According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), the aforementioned process of categorization generates in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination.

As stated in Fiske and Taylor (1991), stereotypes represent cognitive associations and expectations that an individual has about any social group. The core idea of stereotyping is that a persons' reactions toward individual members of an important social group in their surroundings are influenced by the beliefs which they develop, over time, about the characteristics of that particular group (Macrae et al., 1996). For instance, people tend to stereotype housewives as “sweet and harmless” (Fiske et al., 2002, p. 878), so every time an individual with such perceptions about housewives meets one, he/she will

immediately believe that this housewife possesses these same characteristics as well. While some stereotyped groups are liked, others are disliked (Fiske et al., 2002), but regardless of their positive or negative connotation, stereotypes often represent exaggerated beliefs about a certain group (Allport, 1954). According to Levy et al. (1998), if stereotypes are well-established, they often serve as essential basis for judgments created about social groups and their individual members, hence generating evaluative responses.

Existing literature has investigated different types of stereotypes that people develop and the ways in which these stereotypes influence a persons' everyday life. For example, Deaux and Lewis (1984) have investigated gender stereotypes, whereas Dovidio et al. (1986) focused their research on racial stereotypes. Stereotypes are not only applicable to people, but "to every stimulus object that is ascribed to the stereotypical category" as well (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3624). Research done in international marketing has also concluded that stereotypes are not solely formed about social groups, but countries (Maheswaran, 1994) and brands (Aaker et al., 2010) as well. As stated in Diamantopoulos et al. (2017), the perceptions of typical characteristics of a certain country result from an individuals' exposure to information about that particular country and socialization, based on which different country-level categories or stereotypes are developed (see also Maheswaran, 1994). These perceptions are not solely applicable to people, but "to every attitude object for which category membership is established" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017, p. 1024) and, hence, whenever a brand is identified as originating from a certain country, the stereotypical perceptions about that country transfer to the individuals' impressions about that brand (see also Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Liu & Johnson, 2005).

In their study, Fiske et al. (2002) developed an important theoretical framework for the comprehension of the content of stereotypes, the *Stereotype Content Model*. According to Ivens et al. (2015), the SCM represents a useful framework for understanding consumer's emotions and responses toward brands. Originally, the model was developed to examine stereotypes and discrimination of social groups. The SCM proposes that all stereotypes can be described along two fundamental dimensions: *warmth* and *competence*. These stereotypical dimensions result from interactions with

other individuals and groups (Fiske et al., 2002), and usually predict an individuals' reaction and behavior toward them (Cuddy et al., 2008). Whereas warmth reflects cognitive appraisals of an individual about the favorability of the intentions that outgroup members have toward members of the in-group, the capability of out-groups to pursue those intentions represents competence (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Halkias et al., 2016; Ivens et al., 2015). Namely, according to Fiske et al. (2002, p. 881), "groups are perceived as competent to the extent that they are powerful and high status and as warm to the extent that they do not compete with others". Warmth includes such traits as *friendly, well-intentioned, sincere, good-natured, warm and trustworthy*, while competence is captured by traits like *competent, intelligent, confident, efficient, competitive and independent* (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske et al., 2007).

Stereotypical perceptions are comprised of various combinations of stereotypical dimensions. According to Cuddy et al. (2008), outgroups are stereotyped through a mix of warmth and competence, reflecting the compensatory nature of stereotypes. In contrast, resulting from in-group favoritism, reference groups are stereotyped as high on both, warmth and competence (Tajfel, 1981). As stated in Cuddy et al. (2008), other groups of people (e.g. homeless, poor people) receive low ratings on both stereotypical dimensions. Furthermore, according to Fiske et al. (2002), the SCM is not solely based on simple assessments of sympathy and antipathy; it also reflects different dimensions of (dis)respect and (dis)like. For instance, while elderly people are disrespected as "incapable and useless", Asians are respected for their high competence (Fiske et al., 2002, p. 878).

2.2. Stereotyping in a branding context

In general, the SCM distinguishes between three different types of consumer stereotypes, namely the brand stereotypes, brand origin stereotypes and brand buyer/user stereotypes. As mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, existing literature has mainly focused on the first two types of stereotypes in this consumer-brand relationship. Yet, the influence of brand buyer stereotypes still remains quite unclear and, thus, requires deeper investigation.

Brand stereotypes represent “a socially shared and oversimplified set of beliefs about the characteristics of different brands” (Kervyn et al., 2012). As stated in Ivens et al. (2015), research done in the last two decades has demonstrated that along with brand attributes and benefits, relational and emotional aspects of a brand create basic components stimulating the way consumers perceive a brand, how they feel about it and, consequently, what their consumer behavior concerning that brand is like (see also Aaker et al., 2004; Batra et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2012). For instance, Fournier (1998) features brands as relationship partners and demonstrates that consumers encounter different kinds of connections with brands like, for example, marriages or friendships (Ivens et al., 2015). Furthermore, consumers’ love for a brand leads to loyalty, positive word of mouth, and resistance to negative information about that brand (Batra et al., 2012).

According to Aaker et al. (2010), the same mechanisms which govern the stereotypes of people can also be applied to brands. That is to say that the SCM “could also apply to brand perception” (Kervyn et al., 2012, p. 170). In order to make an adaptation of the SCM to brand perception, Kervyn et al. (2012) introduced the Brands as International Agents Framework (BIAF). As the authors stated in their study, the transition from social to brand perception is established in the way that the dimensions of warmth and competence translate in BIAF into intentions and ability. In other words, in BIAF brands “differ in how well (or ill) intentioned they seem to be, as well as on how able they are perceived to be” (Kervyn et al., 2012, p. 171).

Ivens et al. (2015) demonstrated that as people stereotype others, they also stereotype brands along the two dimensions of warmth and competence. When it comes to brand stereotypes, both stereotypical dimensions are highly relevant. In their study, Aaker et al. (2010) demonstrated that consumers perceive non-profit organizations as less competent than for-profits, whereas profit organizations are perceived as less warm compared to non-profits. The perceptions of quality, durability and reliability predict a brand’s competence, while brand love and brand passion predict the stereotypes of a brand’s warmth (Kervyn et al., 2012, p. 8; see also Ahuvia, 2005; Albert et al., 2010). According to Ivens et al. (2015), in order to stimulate a favorable response toward brands, managers ought to create brand campaigns which activate high levels of warmth

and competence simultaneously. Namely, brand campaigns that solely emphasize one of these dimensions may have a limited effect on beneficial attitudes and reactions of consumers toward brands (Ivens et al., 2015).

As another type of stereotypes in the SCM, *brand origin stereotypes* are “based on the idea that individuals associate different countries and their people with different attributes, which intuitively transfer to how they perceive products coming from these countries” (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3623; see also Maheswaran, 1994). Researchers (e.g. Han, 1989; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Maheswaran & Chen, 2009) have shown that consumers evaluate products differently depending on its country of origin [COO]. For example, regardless of the additional costs involved, “consumers are likely to prefer French to Austrian champagne; Italian to Finnish fashion; German to Chinese cars; and Japanese to Mexican electronics” (Chattalas et al., 2008, p. 55). According to Maheswaran (1994), people tend to stereotype a country based on their perceptions about the inhabitants of that country. For instance, if the characteristics of high capability and efficiency are attributed to Germans, same attributes will be assigned to Germany as a country.

Moreover, the individual’s perception of a country and its inhabitants is transferred to the brands originating from that country (Maheswaran, 1994). Even though the emergence of global brands might blur the COO effect in the minds of consumers, the perception of a country still represents an important component of an attitude toward the brand (Halkias et al., 2016). Interestingly, in their study, Dawar & Frost (1999) concluded that a country perceived as high on competence should promote its products by concentrating on projecting an image of warmth or vice versa. In their study, Diamantopoulos et al. (2017, p. 1032) investigated the impact of explicit (i.e. conscious) and implicit (i.e. unconscious) country stereotypes on consumer preferences and demonstrated that “implicit judgements of COO’s warmth are more predictive of brands preference than judgements of competence”, when spontaneous (as opposed to more purposeful) decisions are made. The COO effects also affect perceptions on products’ hedonic versus utilitarian properties (Leclerc et al., 1994). Countries perceived as high in competence and low in warmth are more appropriate for “exporting utilitarian products and low-contact services”, whereas the ones perceived as low in competence

and high in warmth are more suited for “exporting hedonic products and high-contact services” (Chattalas et al., 2008, p. 69).

While the SCM was originally used to represent groups, the arguments that brand buyers can also be perceived as a social group have been present in the past few decades and are now widely accepted. According to Kervyn et al. (2012), the SCM is also applicable to an individual’s perceptions about other people (Russel & Fiske, 2008), wherein the perceptions about the social status of those people predict competence, while the perceptions about their competitiveness predict warmth. Talking about brand buyer stereotypes, a typical BBS would be that the buyers of household goods are housewives, which are usually stereotyped along the stereotypical dimensions of warmth as “sweet and harmless” (Fiske et al., 2002, p. 878).

Antonetti & Maklan (2016), defined *brand buyer stereotypes* as “a socially shared and oversimplified set of beliefs about the characteristics of typical buyers/users of a certain brand”. Thus, the social perception of a brand transfers to its users. According to Antonetti & Maklan (2016), as the perceptions of a brand are made with respect to its stereotypical dimensions, the same kind of social perception will affect the buyers of that same brand. The perception of the buyer is closely connected to the perception of the brand, e.g. if the brand is perceived as competent, but not warm, the buyer will also be perceived in the same manner (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007). For instance, if Mercedes is perceived as a brand high in competence but relatively low in warmth, users of this brand will also be socially stereotyped as competent but not warm (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; see also Fennis & Pruyn, 2007; Kervyn et al., 2012). This statement is supported by findings of Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), who claim that buyers use brands as expression for personal values and meanings. In their study, Antonetti and Maklan (2016) demonstrated that people are reluctant to buy responsible brands because of the association of a social stereotype with responsible consumers. Namely, the users of responsible brands are stereotyped along the stereotypical dimensions of warmth, but warmth, however, does not represent “an appealing feature in a consumption context” (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 796).

2.3. Consumers' need for uniqueness as an individual consumer characteristic

The concept of CNFU originates from Snyder and Fromkin's (1977) theory of uniqueness, according to which the need to feel different from other people (labeled as "counterconformity motivation") arises when individuals feel a threat to their identity, resulting from situations in which people perceive themselves very similar to the others (Tian et al., 2001; see also Nail, 1986; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). In their study, Tian et al. (2001, p. 50) defined CNFU as "an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's personal and social identity".

The central notion of CNFU is that individuals with the need to feel different from others in their social environment acquire possessions which communicate their uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001). Yet, as the once perceived as unique possessions become omnipresent, the counterconforming individuals become reluctant of the use of these goods and seek out new forms of enhancing their uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001; see also Snyder, 1992; Tepper, 1997). According to Tian et al. (2001), consumers withstand conformity with respect to their consumer-product displays by acquiring novelty, handmade or customized products. Existing research demonstrates that, regardless of the amount of costs involved, counterconforming individuals are ready to pay for unique designs (Tian et al., 2001; see also Bloch, 1995). The individual in need to feel different from other people is influenced by the behavioral norms of the group and acts so as not to be in compliance with those norms (Tian et al., 2001; see also Nail, 1986). Hence, products, their utilization and displays characterized by deviation from the group norm tend to become symbols of uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001).

According to Tian et al. (2001), the motivation behind the pursuit of counterconformity varies across people and has an impact on their consumer behaviour. In their study, these authors reported that CNFU should reflect individual differences in counterconformity motivation of consumers – "a motivation for differentiating the self via consumer goods and the visual display of these goods that involves the volitional or wilful pursuit of differentness relative to others as an end goal" (Tian et al., 2001, p. 52).

Hence, these authors highlight that CNFU is more precise than “willingness to be individuated” - the desire to apart from others and “independence” – a motivation that may accidentally reflect in social distinction as a consequence of conforming to one’s subjective taste (see also Maslach et al., 1985; Nail, 1986).

Individuals differ to some extent in the way they try to satisfy their desire for uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001). For example, some individuals communicate their uniqueness through possession displays (Maslach et al., 1985), whereas the others tend to express their uniqueness with a specific style of interaction with other people (Holt, 1995). In addition, according to Tian et al. (2001, p. 52), CNFU is reflected in the processes of “self-image” and “social image” enhancement. That is to say that some consumers acquire goods to see themselves as being distinct in comparison to others, while others seek out a product which represents a public symbol of uniqueness to be evaluated as unique by the others (Tian et al., 2001).

In their study, Tian et al. (2001) developed and validated a measure of consumer characteristic labeled as *consumers’ need for uniqueness*. The study resulted in the identification of 31 items, covering three different dimensions of consumers’ need for uniqueness (i.e. creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity and avoidance of similarity) which will be discussed later in this section. Furthermore, these authors demonstrated that the validity of CNFU’s measure was not threatened by social desirability response bias, as it did not correspond with the socially desirable response scale or impression management (see also Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1993). According to Tian et al. (2001, p. 64), the CNFU is “a product-oriented scale” created to “correspond with conceptual marketing models of consumers’ responses to exterior product designs, product fashion cycles and variety-seeking behavior”.

According to Tian et al. (2001), consumers’ need for uniqueness is conceptualized as subsuming three behavioral manifestations or dimensions:

- *Creative Choice Counterconformity* – consumers seek distinctiveness from others in their social group, yet make selections that have a high potential to be evaluated as good decisions by these others;

- *Unpopular Choice Counterconformity* – in order to differentiate themselves, consumers risk social disapproval by selecting and utilizing products and brands that differ from established norms of the group;
- *Avoidance of Similarity* – in order to depart from the group standards and recreate their differentness, consumers lose interest in the belongings that have become popular and, hence, stop using them.

Over time, individuals form their unique identity and express it through the creation of a specific personal style via material displays such as “original, novel or unique consumer goods”, or through “decorative collection, arrangement, and displays of goods” (Tian et al., 2001, p. 52; see also Belk et al., 1989; Kron, 1983). Hence, the expression of social distinctiveness through unusual possessions results in the search for and adoption of new products and behavior (Tian et al., 2001; see also McAlister & Pessemier, 1982).

According to Tian et al., (2001), counterconforming individuals also show a tendency to enhance their differentness by making unpopular choices and by avoiding the similar ones. Namely, in order to distinguish themselves from others, consumers in high need for uniqueness are even willing to take the risk of social disapproval by making choices that negatively differentiate them from others (Tian et al., 2001; see also Ziller, 1964). Although the expression of uniqueness through unpopular choice counterconformity may elicit evaluations of poor taste, breaking the norms of one’s social group enhances self-image (Tian et al., 2001; see also Gross, 1977). Overall, choices once perceived as deviating from the group norm, may become socially accepted over time (Tian et al., 2001; see also Heckert, 1989).

2.4. Perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness

Modern consumption consists of an interplay between locally available brands and the ones present in more than just one market (Özsomer, 2012). Hence, in today’s multinational marketplace, it is essential to understand why some consumers prefer global as opposed to local brands (Steenkamp et al., 2003). In their study, Steenkamp et

al. (2003, p. 53) define global brands as “brands that consumers can find under the same name in multiple countries with generally similar and centrally coordinated marketing strategies” (see also Yip, 1995; Branch, 2001). On the other hand, as reported by Davvetas & Diamantopoulos (2016, p. 63), we can define local brands as ones “available in a specific geographical region or a concentrated marketplace, or as local players and symbols or icons of the local culture (see also Dimofte et al., 2008, p. 120; Swoboda et al., 2012, p. 72). As stated in Swoboda et al. (2012), although consumers have vague notions about the strategy a company uses, they are able to judge whether the company’s brand is global or local from the company’s offers and communication. Existing studies indicate that companies tend to exploit the effects that global brands have on consumers and communicate the globalness of their brand through messages containing elements such as logo, brand name etc. (Steenkamp et al., 2003; see also Alden et al., 1999).

While existing research (e.g. Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp et al., 2003; Swoboda et al., 2012) posits that consumers show a preference for global brands due to their worldwide availability and perceived quality (Mohan et al., 2018), the literature also suggests that the interplay between local and global brands could depend on the product category and consumer segment (Özsomer, 2012). As stated in Özsomer (2012), while local brands might be more appealing for household goods, due to their relation to sophistication, status, modernity and innovation, global brands are more attractive for goods visible to the public. As stated in Davvetas et al. (forthcoming, p. 6), “the demand-side benefits emerging from a brand’s global or local nature cannot be materialized unless the consumer actually perceives the brand as global or local”.

PBG and PBL represent brand-specific factors, and the same brand may be perceived as both global and local at the same time either due to combinations of “local availability with domestic origin” or due to adaptations to “the local market despite being global” (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3623). According to Steenkamp et al. (2003), perceived brand globalness represents the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as being recognized, available and consumed in multiple countries, whereas Swoboda et al. (2012, p. 72) defined perceived brand localness as the extent to which a brand is “being recognized as a local player and a symbol of local culture”.

According to Steenkamp et al. (2003), the belief that PBG creates consumer perceptions of brand superiority is widely asserted. However, many challenges arise from here. For instance, as stated in Steenkamp et al. (2003), there is the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism (CET) which refers to “the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products” (see also Shimp & Sharma, 1987, p. 280). Furthermore, evidence exists that many consumers favor brands with tight local relations, leading some authors to claim that companies are overenthusiastic and that consumers do not have inborn preference for global brands (Steenkamp et al., 2003; see also De Mooij, 1998; Zambuni, 1993). Hence, Steenkamp et al. (2003) concluded that the emergence of global brands does not suggest that PBG is the only route to success, emphasizing the alternative route to become an icon of local culture. Besides, some researchers question the dominance of a standardized global consumer culture over localized cultural adaptations (Steenkamp et al., 2003; see also Ger et al., 1993).

PBL does not indicate that the brand is only active in one country (Swoboda et al., 2012). Namely, as stated in Swoboda et al. (2012), the concept of PBL does not concentrate on reach but rather on the cultural component of a brand, captured by local consumer culture positioning (see also Alden et al., 2006). Swoboda et al. (2012, p. 74) emphasized in their study that “PBG and PBL do not represent opposing points on a continuum” but provide brands with alternatives to position themselves as global, local, or even “glocal” (see also Dimofte et al., 2008; Steenkamp & De Jong, 2010; Steenkamp et al., 2003). That is to say that PBG and PBL do not exclude each other and, in order to get a better understanding of the perceptions of brand globalness and localness, these two brand-specific factors should be considered jointly (Mohan et al., 2018).

In today’s global workplace, managers of local brands can gain competitive advantage through the use of local cultural capital and by focusing their targeting and positioning strategies on a deeper understanding of the local culture, the requirements of local markets and specific tastes of its consumers (Steenkamp et al., 2003). As stated in Steenkamp et al. (2003, p. 56), the aforementioned elements of competitive advantage for the local brand create “a sustainable unique value and offer the symbolism of

authenticity and prestige” (see also Ger, 1999, p. 70). According to Steenkamp et al. (2003), due to the fact that “high quality” may be interpreted in various ways across different markets, consumers may perceive a local brand to be more in accordance with local quality needs. Namely, local brands are developed for and tailored to the unique needs and desires of local markets and, hence, have their own strengths, such as “perceptions of uniqueness, originality, and pride of representing the local market” (Özsomer, 2012, p. 73).

2.5. Consumer-brand identification

Striving for a sense of self is a fundamental aspect of the human condition (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). In their study, Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012, p. 406) emphasize that “what we buy, own, and consume define us to others as well as to ourselves”. Namely, existing research suggests that brands, as carriers of symbolic meanings (Levy, 1959), can help consumers achieve their fundamental identity goals and projects (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). As stated in Tuskej et al. (2013), along with theorists of consumer culture and society (e.g. Douglas & Isherwood, 2005; Ekstrom & Brembeck, 2004), researchers in the marketing field (e.g. Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008; Rodhain, 2006) have also established that brands are important in creating and communicating consumer identity.

Recent studies of CBI draw on the social identity perspective, which suggests that social identities of consumers can be represented through both brands and organizations (Wolter et al., 2015). In line with this theory, Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012, p. 407) defined CBI as “a consumers' perceived state of oneness with a brand” and indicated that CBI represents a valid and potent expression of our quest for identity-fulfilling meaning in the marketplace of brands. Existing studies have demonstrated the capacity of brands to impersonate and communicate preferable consumer identities (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; see also Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2009; Escalas, 2004; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Lam et al., 2010; Levy, 1959; Strizhakova et al., 2008).

As stated in Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), in social settings, individuals aspire to differentiate themselves from others (see also Tajfel & Turner, 1985). These authors refer to Snyder and Fromkin's (1977) theory of uniqueness which highlights this need as a crucial component of the desire of individuals to feel good about themselves (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Further, Brewer's (1991) theory of optimal distinctiveness proposes that, through the identification with groups that satisfy both needs, individuals attempt to resolve the core tension between their need to be similar to others and their need to be unique (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). In line with this, Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) refer to Tian et al. (2001) and their construct of CNFU. Namely, the main antecedent to a consumer's desire to identify with a brand is the distinctiveness of that brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; see also Berger & Heath, 2007). To support this argument, the authors refer to the research of Thompson et al. (2006), which has recorded that consumers usually seek for affirmation of their identities through the consumption of brands that are perceived as being the polar opposites of mass-production: mass-consumption brands (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

According to Tuskej et al. (2013), brands have been essential for creating relationships with consumers securing lasting business success. In their research, Tuskej et al. (2013) demonstrated that consumers do indeed identify with their favorite brands and, therefore, perceive the brand as a part of their self-concept. Hence, the concept of CBI is central to our understanding of how, when, and why brands help consumers articulate their identities (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Finally, CBI generates “valuable pro-brand outcomes” such as brand loyalty and PWOM (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012, p. 410; see also Tuskej et al., 2013).

2.6. Consumer behavior

The role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships is clarified by different authors (e.g. Ahearne et al., 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Tuskej et al., 2013; Wolter et al., 2015). Namely, according to Wolter et al. (2015), consumers who identify with a certain brand show the willingness to invest further effort in preserving

and supporting that brand. Hence, brand loyalty, repurchase, and PWOM are identified as the most common outcomes of CBI (Ahearne et al., 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; He, Li, & Harris, 2012; Naumann & Bowden, 2015; Tuskej et al., 2013).

According to Tuskej et al. (2013, p. 54), brand loyalty refers to the “behavioral perspective and reflects mainly in the repeated purchase of a particular brand as well as consumers’ need to reduce effort and simplify decision-making processes” (see also Assael, 1998; Warrington & Shim, 2000). The difference between the actual repeat purchasing behavior and repurchase intention lies in the fact that the latter represents “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior” (Gommans et al., 2001, p. 44; see also Oliver, 1999).

As stated in Naumann & Bowden (2015), consumers manifest their loyalty in both behavioral and attitudinal ways thereby determining the success of a brand through repurchase, reluctance to alternatives, and resistance to negative WOM and counter persuasion (see also Dick & Basu, 1994). There are two dimensions in which consumers tend to commit to a brand, namely, affective brand commitment resulting from an emotional connection to a brand and social compliance commitment resulting from a need for social approval (Tuskej et al., 2013; see also Ellis, 2000, p. 39-40). As reported by Tuskej et al. (2013, p. 55), the aforementioned dimensions of loyalty refer to “true loyalty to a brand”.

As a negative pro-brand outcome, switching intention represents the opposite of repurchase intention and can be defined as “one’s attitude toward replacing the current brand with another” (Keaveney, 1995). Consumers switch to different alternatives due to a variety of reasons, such as better quality, lower costs, PWOM etc. (e.g. Tuskej et al., 2013; Wen-Hua et al., 2010). According to Lin & Wang (2017), prior to switching, consumers engage in evaluation of the perceived values and risks of their alternatives. Therefore, it is important for brand managers to understand the switching intentions of their consumers, in order to retain those consumers and avoid the possible negative consequences of their switching behavior (Wan-Ling & Hwang, 2006).

Furthermore, with respect to consumer behavior, existing studies propose that WOM represents one of the most significant reactions of consumers to the efforts that brands put in the strengthening of their consumer-brand relationship (Tuskej et al., 2013; see also Brown et al., 2005, p. 123). Namely, the idea behind WOM is that product information can spread from one consumer to another (Brown et al., 2005). In their study, Tuskej et al. (2013) indicated that consumers who identify with a particular brand tend to spread PWOM about that brand and recommend it frequently (see also Ahearne et al., 2005, p. 580; Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 83). Overall, WOM is becoming an essential element of integrated marketing communication, affecting consumer attitudes and behaviors (Tuskej et al., 2013; see also Harrison-Walker, 2001; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955).

3. Conceptual model and hypotheses

This chapter introduces the reader to the research model of this study. By discussing the main relationships within the model, hypotheses between perceived brand globalness/localness, brand buyer stereotypes, consumers' need for uniqueness, consumer-brand identification, and consumer behavior (i.e. brand loyalty/repurchase intention, switching intention and PWOM) are formulated.

3.1. Conceptual model

In order to investigate the effects of BBS and CNFU on consumer behavior manifested through CBI with brand loyalty/repurchase intention, PWOM, and switching intention, a conceptual model is developed in this study. The model is represented below with **Figure 1**.

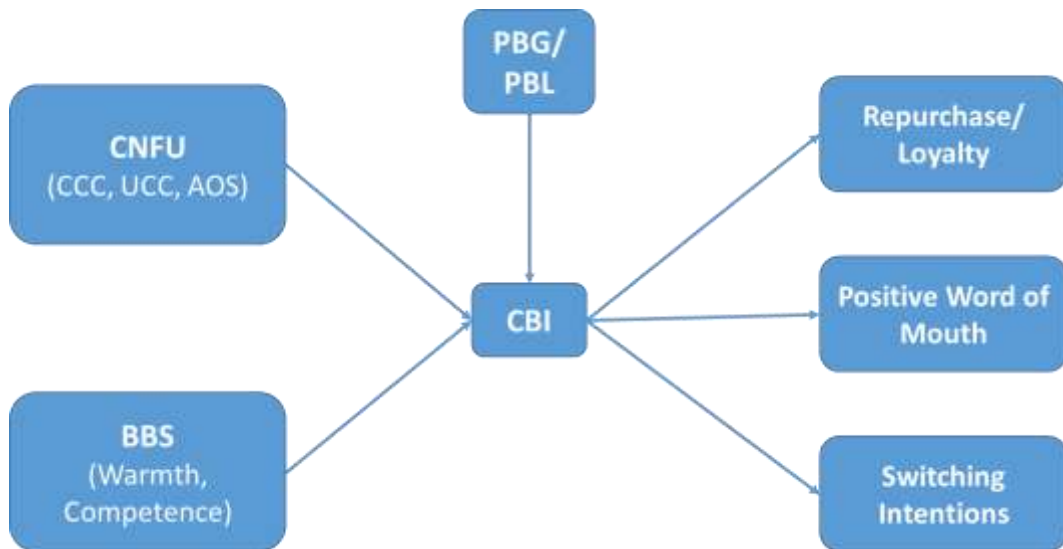


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Note: BBS – brand buyer stereotypes, CNFU – consumers' need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CBI – consumer-brand identification.

In the proposed model, brand buyer stereotypes are measured through the stereotypical dimensions of warmth and competence, while consumers' need for uniqueness is reflected by avoidance of similarity, unpopular choice counterconformity and creative choice counterconformity. Furthermore, along with BBS and CNFU, the conceptual model of this thesis includes PBG and PBL as the predictors of CBI. Although many scholars have investigated the effects of PBG and PBL on consumers and their brand-related attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp & De Jong, 2010; Steenkamp et al., 2003; Swoboda et al., 2012), this study aims to verify the positive effects they have on CBI (see Davvetas et al., forthcoming). Hence, the hypotheses proposed from the conceptual model of this thesis are presented in the following parts of this chapter.

3.2. Hypotheses development

Drawing on from the main research question of this thesis, the conceptual model aims to investigate the effects that CNFU and BBS have on brand loyalty, repurchase/switching intention and PWOM through CBI. Hence, a number of hypotheses that capture the expected interactions between the constructs within the model are formulated in the following.

3.2.1. Consumers' need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes as drivers of consumer-brand identification

Brands and possessions help consumers emphasize their uniqueness, express their identity, and provide a sense of past (Tuskej et al., 2013). According to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), studies of CBI mainly concentrate on the cognitive construction of the self and, hence, provide poor reasoning of the bonds between consumers and brands. Consumers have the urge to establish strong relationships with brands and are convinced that they “express and enhance one's identity”, which has a significant role in the life of a consumer (Tuskej et al., 2013, p. 54; see also McEwen, 2005). As stated in

the study by Fournier (1998, p. 346), consumers tend to “animate, humanize or somehow personalize the brand”. Hence, despite the fact that the relationship between a brand and its consumer is not of a social character, brands can represent something a consumer identifies with (Tuskej et al., 2013).

Most fundamentally, as reported by Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), brands are things that we consume, often frequently, thereby including various aspects of the consumption experience itself as the key components influencing the reasons we tend to identify with some but not other brands (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Fournier, 1998; Holt, 2005; McAlexander et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2005). As reported in Tuskej et al. (2013), consumers seem to find brand's identity more appealing when the brand identity corresponds to their own sense of self in light of the fact that such identities provide them with the possibility to genuinely and completely express their own sense of who they are.

Individuals often develop relationships with brands with the purpose of establishing new social connections or to equalize their existing connections in some significant way (Fournier, 2009). According to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012, p. 409), consumers tend to “coalesce” into different social groups “on the basis of a shared commitment to a brand” (see also Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Thompson et al., 2006). We expect that the dimensions of BBS also play a significant role in the consumer-brand relationship, and that no buyers of a brand want to evoke negative stereotypes via their consumer choice. Relying on the evidence that social perceptions of brands transfer to its users (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016) and that warmth is more diagnostic in brand stereotypes than competence (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012), we propose that the warmth stereotypes of brand buyers affect CBI positively:

H_{1a}: There is a positive influence of BBS - warmth on consumer-brand identification.

Furthermore, considering that competence refers to the ability of individuals to realize their intentions (Halkias et al., 2016), we expect that the perceptions of brand buyer competence are very important in CBI, and that no brand buyers want to be perceived as incompetent or incapable by others, but rather as efficient, competent, intelligent, etc.

According to Fiske et al. (2002), the stronger the perceived capability of a group to pursue its intentions, the stronger are the stereotypes of its competence. Hence, regarding the effects of the competence stereotypes of brand buyers on CBI, we hypothesize the following:

H_{1b}: There is a positive influence of BBS - competence on consumer-brand identification.

Existing research argues that various “higher-order self-definitional needs” trigger the need for identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012, p. 408; see also Brewer, 1991; Kunda, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). More precisely, as stated in Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012, p. 408), in the consumption domain, identification is driven by the need for “self-continuity or self-verification, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement” (see also Berger & Heath, 2007; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Chernev et al., 2011). Relying on these drivers, in their study, Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) posit that CBI is related to the degree to which an individual perceives a brand to have similar a personality to his or her own, to be unique or distinctive, and to be prestigious.

Therefore, in order to avoid similarity with others, counterconforming individuals constantly monitor their ownership of substitutive goods and, hence, devalue and discontinue using the goods that have become popular (Tian et al., 2001). According to Tian et al. (2001, p. 53), avoidance of similarity arises due to the fact that “consumers’ success in creating distinctive self-images and social images is often short lived”. Namely, consumer’s uniqueness depends on their choices and these choices, especially creative ones, tend to attract other counterconforming individuals (Tian et al., 2001; see also Fisher & Price, 1992).

According to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), brand with images or identities which set them apart from their competitors are more likely to identify with, provided, of course, that the basis for this distinctiveness is not perceived as entirely undesirable or negative. In their study, Davvetas et al. (forthcoming, p. 13) stated that “a company’s identity distinctiveness and prestige shape the company’s identity attractiveness and thus consumers’ willingness to identify with it” (see also Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Since the respondents in this study were stereotyping the buyers of their favorite brand and

knowing that consumers tend to identify more with brands whose identity corresponds to their own sense of who they are (Tuskej et al., 2013), we propose the following hypotheses for all three dimensions of CNFU:

H_{2a}: There is a positive influence of CNFU – creative choice counterconformity on consumer-brand identification.

H_{2b}: There is a positive influence of CNFU – unpopular choice counterconformity on consumer-brand identification.

H_{2c}: There is a positive influence of CNFU – avoidance of similarity on consumer-brand identification.

3.2.2. The role of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness on consumer-brand identification

Although the interplay between global and local brands may be influenced by many factors, such as perceived quality, consumer ethnocentrism, and cosmopolitanism, the author of this thesis is interested in the effects that PBG and PBL have on CBI in contrast to the effects that CNFU and BBS have on the same concept. Davvetas et al. (forthcoming) demonstrated that both PBG and PBL of a certain brand stimulate the motivations behind a consumers' identification with that particular brand.

Namely, as the perceived multi-market reach of a brand increases, the PBG increases as well (Steenkamp et al., 2003). According to Steenkamp et al. (2003), PBG is positively related to both perceived brand quality and prestige and, through them, to purchase likelihood. Hence, the global brand effect influences the brand purchase intention through higher quality and status ratings, even when other factors are controlled for (Steenkamp et al., 2003). According to Davvetas et al. (2015), global brands benefit from positive consumer attitudes, consumers' willingness to pay price premiums and other related positive responses from consumers.

In general, consumers perceive global brands as superior to local ones, due to their availability all over the world (Steenkamp et al., 2003). As stated in Halkias et al.

(2016), the preference for global brands is induced by the positive feelings brands evoke in consumers, by the emotional values consumers associate with global brands, as well as by the perceptions consumers create about global brands as communicators of modernity, global citizenship, and cosmopolitanism (see also Dimofte et al., 2008; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2014; Swoboda et al., 2012; Xie et al., 2015). The global brand perceptions “result from long-term and strategic brand-building efforts undertaken worldwide” (Mohan et al., 2018, p. 3; see also Özsomer & Altras, 2008; Voss & Mohan, 2016). Global brands are usually “more scarce and more expensive than local brands”, creating “greater aspirational, prestige appeal” (Steenkamp et al., 2003, p. 55).

As stated in Davvetas et al. (forthcoming), the creation of consumers’ identities is influenced by both global and local effects and constitutes of local and/or global components. Whereas global identity can be defined as a “consumer’s identification with people around the world”, the local identity refers to a “consumer’s identification with his/her local community” (Davvetas et al., forthcoming, p. 10; see also Zhang & Khare, 2009). According to Swoboda et al. (2012), as opposed to the consumers with strong local identities, globally oriented consumers show more preference for brands perceived as global. Global brands provide consumers with the opportunity to participate in an “aspired-to global consumer culture” (Steenkamp et al., 2003, p. 55). Namely, some consumers purchase global brands with the intention to create an image of being an “cosmopolitan”, “sophisticated”, and “modern” consumer (Steenkamp et al., 2003, p. 55; see also Friedman, 1990). As stated in Davvetas et al. (forthcoming, p. 10), “consumers appreciate the benefits of identifying both with brands that signal success, status and global citizenship”, as well as with the brands that “retain consumers’ self-categorization in their local community” (see also Steenkamp & De Jong, 2010; Strizhakova et al., 2008). Therefore, irrespective of the consumer identity (i.e. global, local, hybrid) of the respondents participating in this study, we expect that consumers do indeed identify with their favorite brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) and, thus, propose the following hypotheses:

H_{3a}: Perceived brand globalness impacts consumer-brand identification positively.

Local brands have the competitive advantage of unique perceived value, local positioning, and cultural resources (Swoboda et al., 2012). From Tuskej et al. (2013) we

know that brands and possessions help consumers emphasize their uniqueness, express their identity, and provide a sense of past. According to Swoboda et al. (2012, p. 74), when targeting niche markets, local companies can create competitive advantage through the utilization of local identity and culture, and profit from “a higher level of awareness, image, and monetary value; a better response to local needs; and more flexible pricing than global brands” (see also Ger, 1999; Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004).

As Halkias et al. (2016) indicated in their study, local brands benefit from their ability to make adaptations to local tastes and satisfy the needs of local consumers (see also Dimofte et al., 2008; Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004). According to Mohan et al. (2018), perceived brand localness increases brand recognition and consumer trust (see also Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004). Brands perceived as icons of the local culture “benefit from perceptions of higher prestige and positive affect” (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3623; see also Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp et al., 2003). Local brands have a better understanding of the local culture and the preferences of its consumers and, hence, benefit from a better connectedness to local markets than global brands (Halkias et al., 2016).

The participants in the present research were asked to make evaluations based on their favorite brand. Considering that, in consistence with the domestic-bias effect, consumers show preference for brands related to their country over foreign brands (Mohan et al., 2018; see also Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Verlegh, 2007), we expect that consumers will identify with the brand they perceive as local and propose the following hypothesis:

H_{3b}: Perceived brand localness impacts consumer-brand identification positively.

3.2.3. The role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships

As reported by Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), conceptual and practical significance of examining the antecedents of CBI is predicated on the extent to which CBI produces valuable pro-brand outcomes. The authors draw on prior research and emphasize brand

loyalty and brand advocacy as two important consequences of CBI. Namely, these valuable outcomes of CBI lead to long-term business success resulting with beneficial financial performance (see also Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006).

According to Algesheimer et al. (2004), strong identification with a brand is reflected in consumers loyalty. In their study, Naumann and Bowden (2015) reported that loyalty results from CBI through a consumers' satisfaction with a brand. More precisely, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos (2017) concluded that CBI enhances the positive influence of consumer intention and recommendation through the reduction of regret on behavioral intentions and satisfaction. Further literature supports the idea that CBI triggers a favorable response from consumers toward a brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Namely, as reported by Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), CBI has a strong impact on consumer loyalty (Homburg et al., 2009) and prevents consumers from switching brands (Lam et al., 2010), whereas brand attachment as a construct linked to CBI positively relates to the actual purchase behavior (Park et al., 2010).

In addition, Kuenzel & Halliday (2008) confirmed in their study that CBI results in positive brand advocacy and repurchase intentions. According to Tuskej et al. (2013), along with a positive impact on consumers' commitment to a brand, CBI can also influence positive WOM. Furthermore, Dick & Basu (1994) demonstrated that a prospective consequence of loyalty includes WOM (Tuskej et al., 2013). In their study, Halkias et al. (2016) refer to Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) and emphasize that the consumers' overall positive evaluations of a certain brand should have a positive impact on its behavioral intention regarding that specific brand. Hence, based on the aforementioned previous findings, for the purpose of this study the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{4a}: Consumer-brand identification has a positive effect on brand loyalty and repurchase intention.

H_{4b}: Consumer-brand identification has a positive effect on positive word of mouth.

H_{4c}: Consumer-brand identification has a positive effect on switching intention.

For illustrative purposes, all the hypotheses formulated in this study are represented in **Figure 2**.

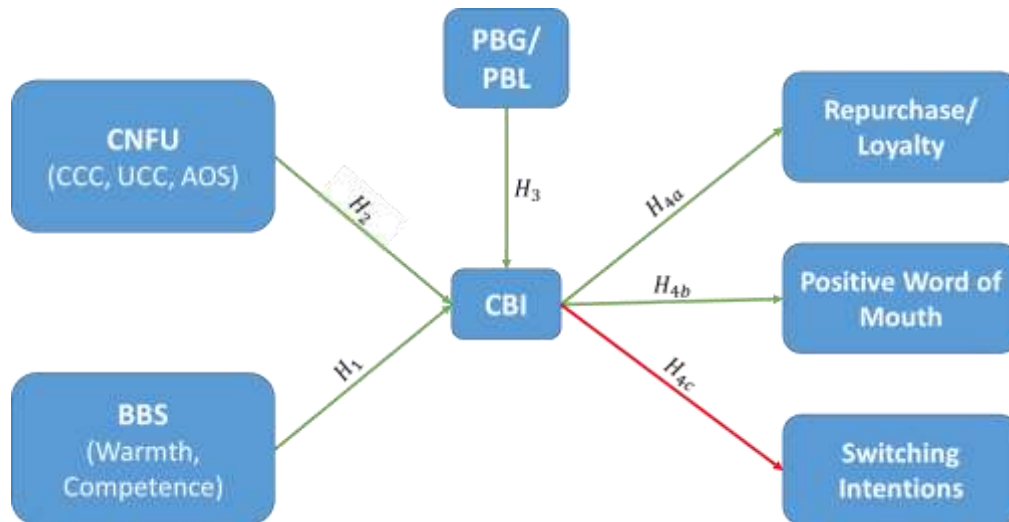


Figure 2: Model Hypotheses

Note: BBS – brand buyer stereotypes, CNFU – consumers’ need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CBI – consumer-brand identification.

4. Research methodology

In this chapter, a thorough description of the empirical research conducted to test the formulated hypotheses is provided. More specifically, this chapter is focused on the description of the research design, country of research, measurements used to test the hypotheses and the data collection process.

4.1. Research design & country of the research

The research was conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the authors' better access to respondents from this country. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina was chosen as the country of research due to its exposure to global brands, several neighboring countries, multicultural environment, etc. Located in the west of the Balkan peninsula, Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects the influence of, on the one side, traditional and conservative eastern culture and, on the other side, liberal and individualistic western culture (Malcolm, 1996). Online statistics (Internet World Stats, 2018) indicated that 69.3% of the overall Bosnian and Herzegovinian population were Internet users in June 2017, which led to the decision to conduct an online survey in this country. The decision to utilize an online survey as a research method in this study resulted from its advantages indicated by Babin & Zikmund (2016). According to these authors (Babin & Zikmund, 2016), the distance aspect, access to potential respondents, comparatively low costs, and respondents' anonymity favor the use of online survey as a research method.

Data was gathered via a web-based questionnaire created on a software program called SoSci Survey (<https://www.soscisurvey.de/>). The link to the questionnaire was distributed through the author's personal contacts and through Facebook using a snowball sampling technique. According to Babin & Zikmund (2016, p. 350), snowball sampling "involves using some process for selecting a few initial respondents and then uses those respondents to seek out additional respondents". Drawing on the research of Brickman-Bhutta (2009), Tuskej et al. (2013) indicated that despite the fact that studies have not yet widely exploited social networks such as Facebook as a research

instrument to approach respondents, this sort of sampling has comparative advantages and disadvantages related to other forms of web-based research (see also Brickman-Bhutta, 2009). As stated in Babin & Zikmund (2016), the key advantages of snowball sampling are the ease of use, as referrals simplify the data collection process; lower costs and a faster process of data collection, as the respondents come from reliable resources.

In order to collect the necessary primary data, a questionnaire was designed based on common metrics and well-established scales (see section 4.3.). Starting with the instruction to the respondents to indicate their favorite brand, the questionnaire was supposed to investigate the respondent's personal judgements about their favorite brand and their individual need for uniqueness. Instead of using specific product categories and brands, the focus of this study was on respondents' favorite brands to be sure that the participants in this study are familiar with the brand whose buyers they were evaluating and to be able to measure CBI.

For the purpose of maintaining a logical train of thought, avoidance of order bias, and the possible negative effects of the long CNFU scale (31 items, see Appendix A) — such as the reluctance to continue to the end of the questionnaire — special attention was paid to the sequence of questions. Hence, the three measures of CNFU (see section 2.3.) were split and the items measuring PBG/PBL, CBI, repurchase intention/brand loyalty, switching intention, and PWOM were put in between. Finally, the BBS question followed after the three measures of CNFU (see section 2.3). The questionnaire finished with some standard demographic information.

Since the questionnaire was designed in English, linguistic adaptations were necessary for the respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The translation from English to Bosnian language was screened and translated backwards by one advanced and one native Bosnian speaker, who were both advanced in English. According to Nurjannah et al. (2014), backward translation is a common technique used in marketing research to assure linguistic validity. In order to avoid any possible misinterpretations, both versions of the questionnaire were compared to map the concepts to the target culture.

4.2. Data collection

The online survey was carried out in February 2018. Initial respondents were selected from the author's personal contact list and approached via e-mail with short instructions providing a link to the questionnaire on SoSciSurvey.de. Each of them was asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to other individuals. Potential respondents were able to proceed to the online questionnaire by following a link created especially for this study (https://www.soscisurvey.de/master_thesis_survey/). The criteria for a potential respondent was to be a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with an age over 18 years old.

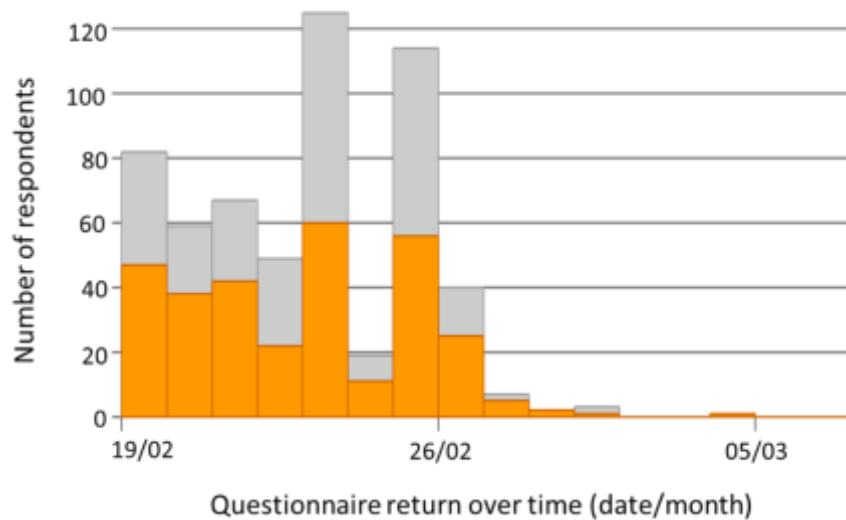


Figure 3: Questionnaire return over time

As the response rate started to stagnate, the link to the survey was shared on Facebook. Even though there is no theoretical support that snowball sampling via Facebook can by any means substitute for probability-based techniques (Tuskej et al., 2013), the fact that Facebook is the most popular social network in Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the decision to use Facebook as a sampling tool. Namely, 57% of the overall Bosnian and Herzegovinian population were using Facebook in June 2017 (Internet World Stats, 2018). The potential respondents who accessed the link to the questionnaire on SoSciSurvey.de through Facebook also received short instructions and were asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to other individuals. Data collection lasted two weeks and the last respondent filled out the questionnaire on the 5th of March (see Figure 3).

4.3. Construct measures and psychometric properties

Well-established measurement scales from the marketing literature were used to measure the constructs involved in the study. As the questionnaire was designed in English, all scales were translated into the native language of respondents, Bosnian, to avoid any potential misunderstandings. All constructs in the research model were measured using multi-item scales. Scale items in the questionnaire were mostly measured with a 7-point Likert scale (anchored by 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). The only exception is the brand buyer stereotypes question, which was measured with a 5-point Likert scale (anchored by 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *extremely*). The first question was open-ended, and it concerned the favorite brand of the respondent.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their favorite brand and proceed by answering the following questions based on that particular brand. The idea behind this was to inspect the variety of brands (both global and local, the “most preferred” brand, and the “most dominant” product category as these results could be used to specify the most attractive brands/product categories for further research. Further questions were devoted to identifying the respondents’ need for uniqueness, the stereotypes they have toward the buyers of their favorite brand, their identification with that brand, the perceived brand globalness/localness, repurchase intention/brand loyalty, switching intention and positive word of mouth. To measure the aforementioned perceptions of consumers toward their favorite brand, established scales were used (see Appendix A).

As mentioned in section 4.1., in order to avoid the possible negative effects of the long CNFU scale, such as the reluctance of respondents to proceed to the end of the questionnaire, the scale was split into three sections. The ordering of all constructs used in this study is presented with **Table 1**. The questionnaire was concluded with some standard questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondent, such as gender, nationality, place of residence, level of education, income, and age.

Construct	Source of the construct's scales
PBG	Steenkamp, J. B. E. M., Batra, R., & Alden, D. L. (2003)
PBL	Swoboda, B., Pennemann, K., & Taube, M. (2012)
CNFU_CCC	Tian, K. T., Bearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001).
CBI	Stokburger-Sauer, N., Ratneshwar, S. & Sen, S. (2012)
REP_LOYAL	Putrevu, S., & Lord, K. R. (1994)
SWITCH_INT	Putrevu, S., & Lord, K. R. (1994)
CNFU_UCC	Tian, K. T., aBearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001).
PWOM	Tuskej, U., Golob, U. & Podnar, K. (2013)
CNFU_AOS	Tian, K. T., Bearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001).
BBS - Competence	Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., & Glick, P. (2002).
BBS - Warmth	Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., & Glick, P. (2002).

Table 1: Research constructs in their order of appearance in the questionnaire

Note: PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CBI – consumer-brand identification, REP_LOYAL – brand loyalty/repurchase intention, SWITCH_INT – switching intention, PWOM – positive word of mouth, CNFU – consumers' need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, BBS – brand buyer stereotypes.

In order to assess whether the aforementioned items do in fact measure the concepts they are supposed to measure, a principal axis factor (PAF) and reliability analysis were conducted to indicate a good fit. The PAF was conducted on 60 items with oblique rotation. The suitability of PAF was assessed prior to the analysis. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.881 with individual KMO measures all greater than 0.6. Hence, based on Kaiser's criterion, all scales can be classified as “*middling*” to “*meritorious*” (Field, 2013). Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .001$) and the determinants were all higher than 0.00001. An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data and eleven factors with eigenvalues greater than one were identified. The eigenvalues associated with each factor in PAF indicate the variance explained by that particular factor (Field, 2013). The percentage of explained variance (R Square) for all identified construct in the research is presented in **Table 2**.

For example, the total cumulative percentage of explained variance for the perceived brand globalness construct was 62.67%. As stated by Field (2013), only the items with factor loadings over 0.4 should be considered. Since all items loaded high enough on one factor, no items needed to be deleted. All the items were identified as unidimensional. Furthermore, the reliability of one-dimensional scales was measured with Cronbach's alpha. This measurement for reliability can take values from zero to one, with values over 0.7 indicating a good reliability of the results (Field, 2013). As the values in **Table 2** show, all the scales had good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7.

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	R Square
PBG	3	0.829	62.67%
PBL	3	0.899	75.72%
CBI	5	0.941	76.26%
REP_LOYAL	4	0.794	54.35%
SWITCH_INT	3	0.765	53.07%
PWOM	3	0.887	72.98%
CNFU_CCC	11	0.945	61.73%
CNFU_UCC	11	0.894	43.78%
CNFU_AOS	9	0.940	63.90%
BBS - Competence	4	0.873	63.38%
BBS - Warmth	4	0.920	74.77%

Table 2: *Reliability and validity of constructs*

Note: PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CBI – consumer-brand identification, REP_LOYAL – brand loyalty/repurchase intention, SWITCH_INT – switching intention, PWOM – positive word of mouth, CNFU – consumers' need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, BBS – brand buyer stereotypes.

5. Findings

The results of the conducted analyses are presented in this chapter. Starting with the sample description, this chapter continues with the actual hypothesis testing. Furthermore, some additional analyses were conducted to test the impact of demographics on the overall results of this thesis.

5.1. Sample description

Although around 570 respondents were in the sampling pool, a total of 310 respondents completed the questionnaire, indicating a response rate of around 54%. However, some of the cases needed to be deleted from the data set, since the respondents provided improper answers. Namely, although it was indicated that the survey is about consumers with a Bosnian and Herzegovinian nationality, twenty-three respondents indicated being of another nationality than was required. Furthermore, despite the age requirements for potential survey participants, two of them were minors. Additionally, 18 cases were identified where the respondents gave a list of several brands instead of indicating their favorite one or showed unfamiliarity with the term “brand” by providing an answer to the first question of the survey which could by no means be considered as valid. Hence, the final sample size comprised of 267 respondents.

The data was checked for outliers and missing values. Although there were two cases with missing level of education and eight cases with missing income value, this did not cause any problematic consequences for statistical analyses. Additionally, while examining the data within the confines of the researched constructs, few outliers were recorded but none have been removed from the data set as these outliers represented valuable data. According to Field (2013), one ought to lean on their own expertise when determining whether to exclude a value or the whole set or not.

Although an equal number of both male and female potential respondents was initially invited by the author to participate in this survey, and each respondent was asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to the same number of men and women, the gender

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allocation among the remaining respondents was 74.2% women and 25.8% male. The reasoning for such gender discrepancy may be the fact that the sample selection in online snowball sampling is biased toward the online population's characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, etc. (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Also, the gender disbalance in our sample might imply that women are more willing to cooperate in the survey (Tuskej et al., 2013; see also Fricker, 2008).

The majority of respondents fall into the 26 to 35 age group. The youngest participant was 18 years old, whereas the oldest participant was 67 years old. The mean age of respondents was close to 32 years old with the standard deviation of 11.4. Hence, this is a young sample consistent with the overall Bosnian and Herzegovinian population (Agency for statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2017). The histogram of the age distribution is shown in **Figure 4**.

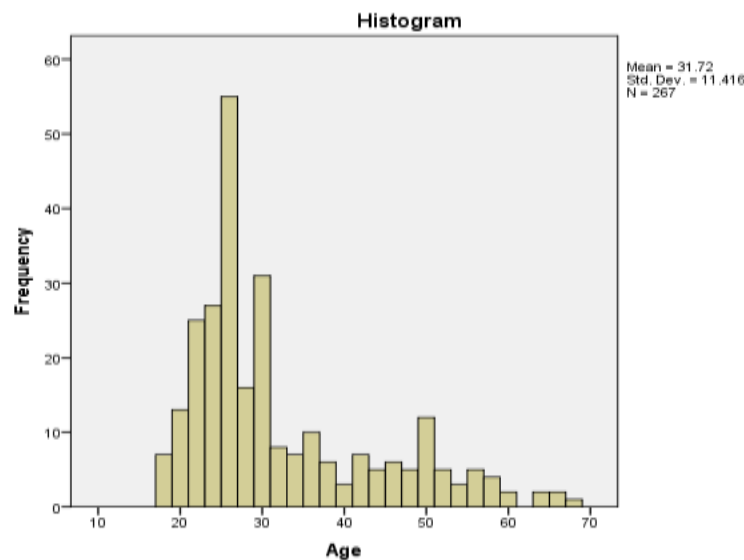


Figure 4: Age distribution

The education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina has some slight variations compared to the education systems in most European countries. This difference is mainly regarding the ages of duration of different levels of education. The full-time compulsory education lasts 9 years, typically ending at the age of 14. Bosnian and Herzegovinians receive their high school diploma after the completion of 12 to 13 years of schooling, mainly at the age of 19. Therefore, the respondents were asked to select the highest level of their education from four options:

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- High school
- Bachelors' degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate.

Overall, the respondents can be characterized as well educated, since about 65% of them hold a university degree. Namely, 45.3% of respondents have a bachelors' degree, 18.9% have a master's degree, and the remaining 0.8% have a doctorate. The respondents resided mainly in urban areas (91.4%).

Most respondents' monthly income falls between 400BAM – 1200BAM ($\approx$ 205€ - 614€)¹, which comprises for the two different income interval options provided to the respondents. Namely, 28.5% of the respondents fall in the 400BAM – 800BAM ($\approx$ 205€ - 409€)² category, and 28.5% fall in the 800BAM – 1200BAM ($\approx$ 409€ - 614€) category. According to the Agency for statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017) the average net wages in the first part of 2018 were estimated as 870BAM ($\approx$ 445€)³. The unemployment rate in the country, as indicated by the same source, was 20.5 in 2017. In general, this sample structure overrepresents younger and better-educated respondents in comparison to the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Overall 106 different brands (see Appendix B) were identified in the study. The respondents showed a preference for global brands. Namely, 234 respondents listed 76 global brands as their favorite. The results show that the “most” preferred brand is Nike (mentioned by 35 respondents), followed by Zara (mentioned by 27 respondents) and Adidas (mentioned by 18 respondents). While all of these brands refer to global ones, the “most” preferred local brands are Alma Ras, Lipa and Tops, mentioned by 2 respondents each. However, global brands can be perceived as local, and the other way around. Hence, the effects of the perceptions consumers have about the globalness/localness of their favorite brands on consumer-brand identification will be presented later in the findings. **Table 3** presents the categories of products consumers chose as their favorite brand.

¹ (1 BAM = 0.511292 EUR);
<https://xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=800&From=BAM&To=EUR> (30.04.2018)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Product Categories	No. of Brands	Top Brands per Product Category	%
Clothes and shoes	49	Nike, Zara, Adidas	46.2
Cosmetics	11	Nivea, Balea, Max factor	10.4
Food and drinks	25	Coca Cola, Meggle, Nutella	23.6
Automobiles	4	Audi, BMW, Mercedes	3.8
Electronics	8	Apple, Samsung, Nokia	7.5
Other	9	Drina, Violeta, Likvi	8.5

Table 3: *Respondent's favorite brand product categories*

5.2. Relationships between need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes

To investigate the relationships between the dimensions of brand buyer stereotypes and consumers' need for uniqueness (warmth, competence, creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, and avoidance of similarity), Pearson's correlation was used with a two-tailed test of significance. The aim was to find out in which directions the variables tend to move in relation to each other, to determine whether the constructs of brand buyer stereotypes and consumers' need for uniqueness are interrelated. Although 8 out of 10 possible connections are significant ($p < 0.05$), the results suggest small correlations between these constructs ($r \approx 1$, Field, 2013, p. 267) with an average correlation coefficient of $r = .268$ (see **Figure 5**).

Overall, the findings indicate that creative choice counterconformity and unpopular choice counterconformity, as two dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness, correlate with the warmth and competence dimensions of buyer stereotypes. However, the correlation coefficient r is close to 1, meaning that the fundamental effects of these two dimensions of need for uniqueness could have a very low potential effect on buyer stereotypes. The correlation between avoidance of similarity and buyer stereotypes is weak (competence: $r = .049$, $p > 0.05$; warmth: $r = .059$, $p > 0.05$), meaning that these two consumer characteristics should not have an impact on each other. In general, the correlation between CNFU and BBS is very small, and the effect of one construct on the other is very low.

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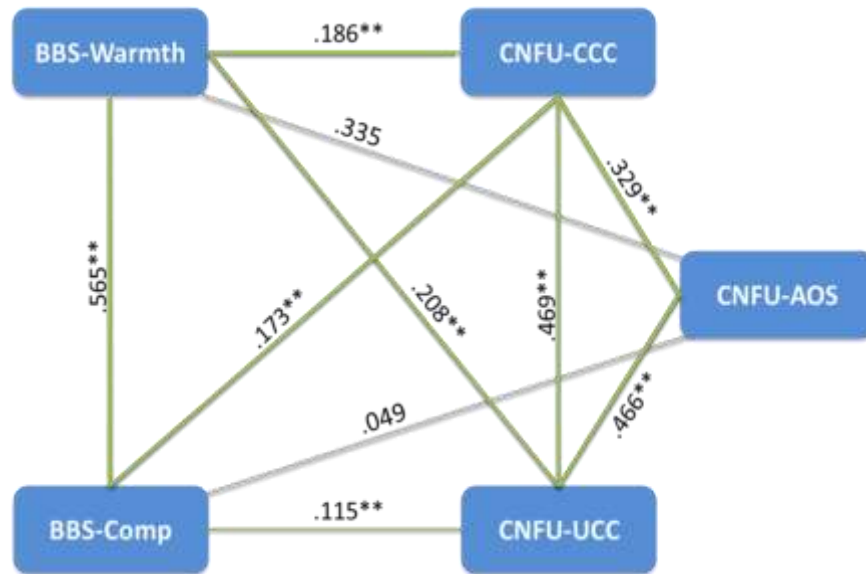


Figure 5: Pearson's correlation coefficients (two-tailed)

Note: BBS – brand buyer stereotypes, Comp – competence, CNFU - consumers' need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity.

5.3. Need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes as drivers of consumer-brand identification

In order to investigate the effects of PBG/PBL, BBS, and CNFU on CBI, a hierarchical regression model was used. All assumptions (no extreme multicollinearity – max value of .565; no autocorrelation – Durbin Watson test = 1.722 and homoscedasticity) were met and allowed us to continue with the analysis. The statistically significant R^2 values indicate that the predictor variables can explain 40.2% ($p < .001$) of the variability in CBI. The rest of the variability remains unexplained (for a detailed overview see Appendix C). While in the first step the impact of PBG and PBL on CBI has been tested, in the next step the dimensions of BBS have been added to the model. Then, the dimensions of CNFU have been added to the model in the final step of the regression. All three models are statistically significant ($p < .001$). While PBG and PBL explain 14% of the variability in consumer-brand identification, adding the dimensions of BBS accounts for additional 6.2%. However, adding the dimensions of CNFU to the model accounts for 20% more of the variability in consumer-brand identification (see **Table**

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4). Although these findings support the hypotheses H_1 , H_2 , and H_3 presented with **Figure 2**, it is clear that the need for uniqueness is more important than the brand buyer stereotypes in brand evaluation and choice.

Model	R Square	Sig. F Change	Standardized β	p-value (one-tailed)
1	.140	.000		
PBG			.261	.000
PBL			.331	.000
2	.202	.000		
PBG			.208	.000
PBL			.293	.000
BBS - Warmth			.103	.066
BBS - Competence			.183	.004
3	.402	.000		
PBG			.155	.002
PBL			.162	.001
BBS - Warmth			.045	.225
BBS - Competence			.140	.011
CNFU - CCC			.353	.000
CNFU - UCC			.182	.001
CNFU - AOS			.026	.320

Table 4: Hierarchical regression coefficients

Note: PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CNFU – consumers’ need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, BBS – brand buyer stereotypes.

Overall, the findings suggest that the effects of PBG and PBL on CBI go in line with the existing theory, as both constructs show to have a positive significant impact on CBI (PBG: standardized $\beta = .155$, $p < .05$; PBL: standardized $\beta = .162$, $p < .05$). These findings confirm what was hypothesised under H_3 . The best predictor of CBI in the model is creative choice counterconformity (standardized $\beta = .353$, $p < .001$). Hence, based on its definition (see section 2.3.) it can be concluded that, while need for uniqueness is more diagnostic than buyer stereotypes in brand evaluation, consumers

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seek social approval when making their selections. Looking at the impact of other dimensions of CNFU on CBI, we can see that unpopular choice counterconformity (standardized $\beta = .182$, $p < .05$) shows to be a significant predictor of CBI as well, indicating that consumers are even willing to take the risk of social disapproval in order to differentiate themselves from others in their social group. Although the effects of avoidance of similarity on CBI do not show to be significant (standardized $\beta = .026$, $p > .05$), the results presented with Table 4 prove what was hypothesised under H_2 .

Regarding brand buyer stereotypes, the results indicate that competence is more diagnostic than warmth (competence: standardized $\beta = .140$, $p < .05$; warmth: standardized $\beta = .045$, $p > .05$). The effects of both warmth and competence brand buyer stereotypes are positive on CBI and prove what was hypothesised under H_1 . In other words, the stereotypes of competence, intelligence, confidence, efficiency, competitiveness, and independence are more important in brand buyer stereotypes, than the socially shared and oversimplified views of brand buyers as friendly, well-intentioned, sincere, good-natured, warm, and trustworthy.

5.4. The effects of consumer-brand identification

To investigate the role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships a simple regression model was used, comparing CBI with repurchase intention/brand loyalty, positive word of mouth and switching intention. The results presented in **Table 5** show that consumer-brand identification has a significant effect on repurchase intention/brand loyalty (standardized $\beta = .467$; $p < .001$) and positive word of mouth (standardized $\beta = .451$; $p < .001$), whereas the effects on switching intention are also positive, but not significant (standardized $\beta = .036$; $p > .05$). Simply said, an increase in consumer brand identification results in an increase in brand loyalty, repurchase intention, and positive word of mouth, but it does not have an impact on switching intention (for a detailed overview see Appendix C). Overall, the results of this analysis confirm what was hypothesized under H_4 .

Dependent Variable	R Square	Sig. F Change	Standardized β
Repurchase Intentions/Brand Loyalty	.215	.000	.467
PWOM	.203	.000	.451
Switching Intention	.001	.561	.036

Table 5: Simple regression coefficients

5.5. Additional tests

In addition to the hypotheses tested in the course of the research, further tests were conducted regarding the effects of demographic differences. The fact that the majority of respondents are women (74.2%; see section 5.1.) gave rise to the question of whether this disproportion in gender allocation has a significant impact on the overall results. Hence, some secondary analyses were taken to clarify this matter.

5.5.1. Hierarchical regression: including demographics

In order to test the effects of demographic differences on the results obtained in section 5.3., a hierarchical regression analysis was used. The first model included gender, place of residence, level of education, income level, and age as predictors. The rest of the predictors were added to the model as follows: PBG and PBL in the second step, followed by the dimensions of BBS in the third step and the dimensions of CNFU in the final step of the regression. All assumptions (no extreme multicollinearity – max value of .545; no autocorrelation – Durbin Watson test = 1.749 and homoscedasticity) were met and allowed us to continue with the analysis. The statistically significant R^2 values indicate that the predictor variables can explain 39.4% ($p < .001$) of the variability in CBI. The rest of the variability remains unexplained (see Appendix D). As opposed to the first model ($p > .05$), the remaining three models are statistically significant ($p < .001$). Looking at **Table 6**, demographics explain 2.5% of the variability in consumer-brand identification, whereas PBG and PBL account for additional 12.1%. Furthermore, while adding the dimensions of BBS accounts for additional 4.9%, adding the

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dimensions of CNFU to the model accounts for 19.9% more of the variability in consumer-brand identification.

Model	R Square	Sig. F Change	Standardized β	p-value (one-tailed)
1	.025	.267		
Gender			-.045	.238
Residence			-.075	.119
Eduaction			-.057	.197
Income			.070	.160
Age			.074	.128
2	.146	.000		
Gender			-.042	.239
Residence			-.070	.120
Education			-.051	.210
Income			.049	.227
Age			.040	.263
PBG			.265	.000
PBL			.295	.000
3	.195	.001		
Gender			-.057	.164
Residence			-.049	.202
Education			-.066	.141
Level			.050	.219
Age			.034	.292
PBG			.215	.000
PBL			.263	.000
BBS - Warmth			.080	.129
BBS - Competence			.177	.007
4	.394	.000		
Gender			-.095	.033
Residence			-.011	.418

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Education			.004	.472
Level			.047	.201
Age			-.005	.464
PBG			.153	.002
PBL			.139	.006
BBS - Warmth			.034	.292
BBS - Competence			.141	.012
CNFU-CCC			.358	.000
CNFU-UCC			.182	.002
CNFU-AOS			.024	.342

Table 6: Hierarchical regression coefficients: extension with demographics

Note: PBG/PBL – perceived brand globalness/localness, CNFU – consumers’ need for uniqueness, CCC – creative choice counterconformity, UCC – unpopular choice counterconformity, AOS – avoidance of similarity, BBS – brand buyer stereotypes.

Of all demographics tested, gender turned out to be the only significant predictor of CBI. Precisely, the results from **Table 6** indicate that males have a positive influence on the dependent variable, CBI, over female in our model (standardized $\beta = -.095$, $p < .05$). This indicates that the overall results obtained in our hierarchical regression were affected by the gender disbalance in our sample.

As for the remaining results, the stereotypical dimensions of competence of brand buyers showed to be more preferable than warmth (BBS competence: standardized $\beta = .141$, $p < .05$; BBS warmth: standardized $\beta = .034$, $p > .05$), whereas creative choice counterconformity was, again, identified as the best predictor of CBI in this study (standardized $\beta = .368$, $p < .001$). In general, the findings mainly go in line with the results obtained in section 5.3., making it clear that need for uniqueness is more diagnostic than brand buyer stereotypes in brand evaluation and choice, regardless of demographics. When adding demographics to the model, PBG (standardized $\beta = .153$, $p < .05$) shows to be a better predictor of CBI than PBL (standardized $\beta = .139$, $p < .05$).

5.5.2. Independent samples t-test

Independent samples t-test was used to ascertain whether there were differences between men and women in their need for uniqueness and the way they stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand along the stereotypical dimensions of warmth and competence. Levene's test results for equality of variances indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in male and female respondents ($p > .05$) for both need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes, meaning that gender does not really have an effect on need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes. The overall results of the independent samples t-test can be found in Appendix D, whereas **Table 7** represents the calculated effect size between men and women in their need for uniqueness and the way in which they stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand.

On average, male respondents tend to stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand along the stereotypical dimensions of warmth ($M = 3.25$, $SE = .11$) more than female respondents ($M = 3.22$, $SE = .07$). This difference, 0.25, was not significant: $t(265) = .188$, $p > .05$. According to Field (2013), this difference represents a small effect (Cohen's $d = 0.03$). In contrast to brand buyer stereotypes warmth, the results from independent samples t-test indicate that women are more prone to stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand along the stereotypical dimensions of competence ($M = 3.27$, $SE = .06$), than male respondents ($M = 3.10$, $SE = .10$). However, this difference of -.159 was not significant $t(265) = -1.367$, $p > .05$ and represents a small effect (Cohen's $d = 0.19$).

Regarding consumers' need for uniqueness, men express their need for uniqueness by making choices that deviate from the group norm (CNFU – unpopular choice counterconformity: $M = 3.86$, $SE = .16$) more than women (CNFU – unpopular choice counterconformity: $M = 3.71$, $SE = .09$). This difference, .149, was not significant: $t(265) = .795$, $p > .05$ and represents small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.11$). In comparison to men (CNFU - creative choice counterconformity: $M = 4.07$, $SE = .19$; CNFU - avoidance of similarity: $M = 3.11$, $SE = .20$), women are more prone to express their need for uniqueness by making socially acceptable choices (CNFU - creative choice counterconformity: $M = 4.42$, $SE = .12$) and by avoiding similarity with others (CNFU – avoidance of similarity: $M = 3.14$, $SE = .13$). However, this differences (CNFU - creative choice counterconformity: -.343; CNFU - avoidance of similarity: -.029), were

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not significant (CNFU - creative choice counterconformity: $t(265) = -1.51, p > .05$; CNFU – avoidance of similarity: $t(265) = -.121, p > .05$) and represents a small effect (CNFU - creative choice counterconformity: Cohen's $d = 0.21$; CNFU – avoidance of similarity: Cohen's $d = 0.17$). Overall, as the secondary tests indicate that the overall findings were influenced by the gender disbalance in our sample, some directions for further studies in the area of CNFU and BBS are discussed in the following chapter of this thesis.

Test variables	Cohen's d
Brand buyer stereotypes warmth	0.03
Brand buyer stereotypes competence	0.19
Consumers' need for uniqueness – creative choice counterconformity	0.21
Consumers' need for uniqueness – unpopular choice counterconformity	0.11
Consumers' need for uniqueness – avoidance of similarity	0,17

Table 7: *Effect size for Independent Samples t-Test*

6. Discussion

After the results from conducted analyses have been obtained, the following sections conclude this master thesis with its theoretical and managerial contributions. Finally, limitations of this study are specified, resulting in possible directions for future research.

6.1. Conclusion and theoretical implications

In the past few decades, marketing literature has shown a vivid interest in the topic of brand related stereotypes (e.g. Aaker et al., 2010; Chattalas et al., 2008; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Halkias et al., 2016; Ivens et al., 2015; Kervyn et al., 2012; Maheswaran, 1994). While the research was mainly conducted in the directions of brand stereotypes and brand origin stereotypes, it is also known that the same stereotypical tendency can be applied to brand buyers as well. We believe that brand buyers, as a social group, are also exposed to stereotyping, and that the way in which individuals perceive the buyers of a certain brand impacts their attitudes toward that brand and their willingness to purchase that brand, generate positive word of mouth about it, etc. So far, the only paper focusing on the topic of brand buyer stereotypes is the one written by Antonetti & Maklan (2016). Hence, the aim of this thesis was to fill the existing gap in research and contribute to the limited literature on brand buyer stereotypes. While Fournier & Alvarez (2012) suggested that, regarding brand stereotypes, warmth is more diagnostic than competence, when it comes to BBS, this study has shown that the dimension of competence is more diagnostic than warmth, for the stereotypes of brand buyers.

The research done in consumer psychology and marketing has also investigated the effects of CNFU, as an individual consumer characteristic. This study has confirmed that both the need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes are important for an individual consumer and that particular dimensions of both constructs can be used as predictors of CBI.

Discussion

Furthermore, the findings from conducted analyses suggest that there is a positive correlation between the dimensions of brand buyer stereotypes and the need for uniqueness, meaning that both need for uniqueness and stereotypical tendency toward brand buyers can coexist in a person. However, this correlation is small (Pearson's correlation $\approx +1$, see section 5.2.), meaning that the increase of one consumer characteristic might simultaneously result with a low increase of the other characteristic as well.

The main analysis investigated the effects that PBG/PBL, BBS and CNFU have on CBI. Although the results imply that, out of the aforementioned constructs, consumers' need for uniqueness is the best predictor of consumer-brand identification, the findings are also consistent with previous research and show that perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness have a positive impact on the identification of consumers with their favorite brand. This implies that consumer brand identification depends on both brand-related and consumer-related characteristics, and that in building consumer brand identification PBG/PBL, BBS and CNFU reinforce each other's influence. The final analysis supported the existing findings that consumer-brand identification leads to brand loyalty, repurchase intention and positive word of mouth.

A theoretical contribution of this master thesis research is the discovery that both the need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes are important in brand evaluation and choice. Although consumers' need for uniqueness is a better predictor of consumer-brand identification than buyer stereotypes, an interesting contribution to the literature on brand buyer stereotypes is the discovery that individuals are more prone to stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand along the stereotypical dimension of competence, rather than the stereotypical dimension of warmth. The reason why respondents in this study were evaluating the buyers of their favorite brand as competent may be because they believe that the purchase of that brand would make them be perceived as competent by the others in their surroundings. These results support the findings of Antonetti & Maklan (2016), who concluded that, in a consumption context, warmth is a less appealing feature than competence. As already mentioned, warmth is more diagnostic than competence in brand stereotypes (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Combined with the findings about BBS from this study, it can be concluded that the preference for consumers goes in the direction of warm brands and competent buyers of those brands.

Regarding consumer's need for uniqueness, a theoretical contribution of this thesis is that creative choice counterconformity is more diagnostic in consumer-brand identification than the other two dimensions of CNFU (i.e. unpopular choice counterconformity and avoidance of similarity). This implies that, although consumers seek for ways to enhance their uniqueness, they prefer to do it in socially approved ways, rather than to take a risk of making choices that deviate from group norms. Finally, some additional analyses indicate that men demonstrate more consumer-brand identification with their favorite brand than women.

6.2. Managerial implications

While the results from analyses conducted for the purpose of this master thesis research imply that both BBS and CNFU can coexist in a person and have a positive effect on consumer-brand identification, creative choice counterconformity seems to be the best predictor of the identification of consumers with their favorite brand. Hence, in order to increase repurchase and PWOM among loyal customers, companies could consider adding customization options for consumers to express their uniqueness, since it is shown to increase CBI. More precisely, in line with the definition of creative choice counterconformity, the focal point of the decision-makers within a company should be to emphasize the socially approved uniqueness of their brand buyers.

In our everyday life we can find many examples of companies who put the effort in the enhancement of their buyers' distinctiveness. By putting people's names on the bottles of their drink, Coca-Cola developed a global campaign to emphasize the uniqueness of their buyers. The same strategy is adapted by Starbucks, whose baristas write their consumers' names on the coffee cups. One way to add "uniqueness" is to employ tailor-made products, personalized items, handcrafted goods, and novelty goods, since this would create an impression of differentness as opposed to the mass-produced goods. In other words, brands should give more options to consumers for customization of their products through colour, design etc. This practice is applicable to both brands following global positioning strategies, and the ones following local positioning strategies.

Two good examples of global brands that offer customization options are Nike and Adidas, who allow their buyers to design personalized sneakers in online stores and

receive their custom-made shoes in just a few weeks. Another successful example is Dbrand from Canada, a company that sells customizable skins for smartphones, computers, and game console worldwide. Dbrand allows consumers to differentiate themselves from others with a uniqueness signalled by the skin for the smartphone they use in their everyday life. The company constantly creates new skins, and the success of Dbrand probably lies in the satisfaction of CNFU only, implicating to managers of other brands the benefits of consumers' uniqueness signaling strategies.

Further possibility for managers would be to use catchy slogans to emphasize the uniqueness of their buyers. Some examples demonstrating that brands do tend to enhance their focus on individual consumers include Apple ("*Think different.*"), L'Oréal ("*Because You're worth it.*") and Burger King ("*Have it Your Way.*").

Regarding the brand buyer stereotypes, managers should focus on the promotion of competence of their buyers. The communication of a brand buyer's competence could be done by promoting the intelligent, confident, efficient, competitive or independent female consumers. A way of emphasizing the competence of buyers is to employ a celebrity person or a public figure in a commercial, like for example, the Vogue editor Anna Wintour or Richard Brandson. An example of collaboration with a sports female player can be seen in the ad for Samsung TV ("*Get ready to watch*") casting the famous tennis player Ana Ivanovic, while other examples mostly include male sport players like in the ads of Nike ("*Write the Future*"), Mercedes ("*The Roger Federer of automobiles meets the Mercedes-Benz of tennis*"), and Adidas ("*Calling all Creators*").

However, there are some brands who put the emphasis on communicating the warmth of their consumers by promoting warm, friendly, kind or good-natured male consumers. A way of emphasizing the warmth of brand buyers is to show them in their friendly family surrounding, or to suggest their environmental friendliness, or include pets in ads. As one of the world's most successful brands, Coca Cola focuses on the communication of their buyer's warmth, which can be seen in their commercials "*Life*", and "*Brotherly love*", as well as in their Christmas commercials ("*Holidays are coming*") over the years to name a few. Some other examples of the communication of warm brand buyers include the commercials of Ikea ("*Start something new*") and Chevrolet ("*A Boy and His Dog*").

6.3. Limitations and future research

Although this research is, to the best of our knowledge, only the second study of brand buyer stereotypes, it provides valuable insights and findings. Thus, it is important to recognize its limitations resulting with a large-scale potential for future research. As the research was conducted in one country only, it would be interesting to see comparisons with other nations. Cultural environment of a country, its ethnic diversity, historical background, level of development, etc., may have an influence on the need for uniqueness of its residents and the way in which they stereotype others in their surroundings. Therefore, future research should focus on expanding the scope of countries, since the results might vary across different countries and cultures.

Another limitation of this study refers to the data collection technique. Although it was a consciously made decision to use online surveys distributed through nonprobability sampling technique via e-mail and Facebook, the sample included a considerably higher percentage of female than male respondents. As stated in Tuskej et al. (2013), nonprobability sampling implies that the results cannot be generalized. Hence, it can be said, that our sample has not been representative of the true population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as this gender disbalance in the data set may have resulted in bias and noise in our sample. Furthermore, some secondary analyses suggest that there seem to be some differences in the relationship between consumer-brand identification and its antecedents due to gender disbalance. Future researchers should try to generate a balanced sample by gender to increase the generalizability of findings.

Furthermore, it may be of both conceptual and practical value to increase the sample size, as some of the additional analyses conducted in this study indicate the inclination of men and women to different dimensions of both need for uniqueness and brand buyer stereotypes. More precisely, the results imply that men stereotype the buyers of their favorite brand along the dimension of warmth, as opposed to female respondents who show the tendency for stereotyping the buyers of their favorite brand along the stereotypical dimension of competence. Regarding the dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness, female respondents show the tendency for expressing their uniqueness through creative choice counterconformity and avoidance of similarity, whereas men are more willing to take the risk of social disapproval to enhance their uniqueness.

Discussion

However, the effect size of these differences between male and female respondents is small and can be increased with a larger sample size.

Deciding not to specify any brands or product categories for the purpose of this research resulted in the variety of brands indicated by respondents as their favorite. Namely, this was a very interesting outcome of the present thesis, as 267 respondents listed a total of 105 different brands. In general, local brands were mostly from the “food and drinks” product category, whereas the dominant product category was “clothes and shoes” with round 47%. Overall, 72% of the brands listed by consumers were global. However, although the results from obtained analyses confirmed that consumers do indeed identify with their favorite brand, the results are not generalizable to situations in which consumers have not been involved with the brand (Tuskej et al., 2013). Therefore, if they decide on specifying the brands for research purposes, future researchers should also include some control variables such as, brand familiarity, past purchase behaviour, price sensitivity, product category involvement, visibility of the product, and willingness to pay to name a few, to be sure that the respondents are familiar with the brand and that they had some experience with that brand in the past. In the case that future researchers decide to focus on specific brands, they might also take into consideration that the “most preferred” brand was Nike.

Furthermore, future researchers may consider inspecting the effects of brand buyer stereotypes on some other dependent variable, like brand attitude for instance. It would also be interesting to see how do brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, brand prestige and other brand related factors influence the stereotypes individuals make about the buyers of a brand. Another direction for researchers may be to investigate the effects of explicit and implicit buyer stereotypes on brand attitude and purchase decision. Also, future researchers may consider exploring the factors affecting brand buyer stereotypes such as, word-of-mouth, past experience, marketing mix of a brand, etc., to determine what are the best drivers of brand buyer stereotypes.

Finally, an interesting study for future research might be to investigate brand origin stereotypes, brand stereotypes, and brand buyer stereotypes in the same study in order to determine which one of these brand related stereotypes is more diagnostic for consumer-brand identification.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Measurement Scales

Brand Ownership	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
Do you own [BRAND]?	Da li posjedujete [BREND]?

Perceived Brand Globalness - Steenkamp, J. B. E. M., Batra, R., & Alden, D. L. (2003). How perceived brand globalness creates brand value. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 34(1), 53-65.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
To me, [BRAND] is a global brand.	Za mene je [BREND] globalni brend.
I think consumers abroad buy [BRAND].	Mislim da potrošači u inozemstvu kupuju [BREND].
[BRAND] is sold all over the world.	[BREND] se prodaje širom svijeta.

Perceived Brand Localness - Swoboda, B., Pennemann, K., & Taube, M. (2012). The effects of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness in China: Empirical evidence on western, Asian, and domestic retailers. <i>Journal of International Marketing</i> , 20(4), 72-95.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
I associate [BRAND] with things that are Bosnian and Herzegovinian.	Povezujem [BREND] sa stvarima koje su bosanskohercegovačke.
To me, [BRAND] represents what Bosnia and Herzegovina is about.	Za mene [BREND] predstavlja ono što Bosna i Hercegovina predstavlja.
To me, [BRAND] is a very good symbol of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Za mene je [BREND] veoma dobar simbol Bosne i Hercegovine.

Consumers' Need for Uniqueness - Tian, K., Bearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001). Consumers' Need for Uniqueness: Scale Development and Validation. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 28 (1), 50-66.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.	Prikupljam neobične proizvode kao način govorenja ljudima da sam drugačiji/drugačija.
I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	Ponekad sam kupio/kupila neobične proizvode ili brendove s ciljem da stvorim osobeni imidž.
I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	Često tražim jedinstvene proizvode ili brendove, da stvorim vlastiti stil.
Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	Kada kupujem robu, često mi je važan cilj da pronađem nešto što izražava moju jedinstvenost.
I often combine possessions in such a way	Često kombinujem stvari koje posjedujem

Appendix

that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.	na način da stvorim lični imidž koji se ne može kopirati.
I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	Često pokušavam da pronađem zanimljiviju verziju uobičajenih proizvoda, jer uživam u tome da budem originalan/originalna.
I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	Aktivno nastojim da razvijem ličnu jedinstvenost kupovinom posebnih proizvoda ili brendova.
Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	To što imam oko za zanimljive i neobične proizvode, pomaže mi u uspostavljanju prepoznatljivog imidža.
The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	Proizvodi i brendovi koji mi se najviše sviđaju su oni koji izražavaju moju individualnost.
I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.	Često razmišljam o stvarima koje kupujem i radim na način kako ih mogu iskoristiti za oblikovanje što osobnijeg ličnog imidža.
I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	Često sam u potrazi za novim proizvodima i brendovima koji će nadograditi moju ličnu jedinstvenost.
When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.	Prilikom odijevanja, ponekad sam se usudio/usudila biti drugačiji/drugačija na način koji drugi vjerojatno neće odobriti.
As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.	Što se mene tiče, kada se radi o proizvodima koje kupujem i situacijama u kojima ih upotrebljavam, običaji i pravila su napravljeni da bi se prekršili.
I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.	Često se odijevam nekonvencionalno čak i kad je vjerojatno da ću time uvrijediti druge.
I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.	Prilikom kupovine rijetko se ponašam onako kako drugi očekuju od mene u toj situaciji.
Concern for being out of place doesn't prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.	Zabrinutost zbog neprikladnosti me ne sprječava da oblačim ono što želim.
When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.	Kada se radi o proizvodima koje kupujem i situacijama u kojima ih upotrebljavam, često sam prekršio/prekršila običaje i pravila.
I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	Često kršim razumljiva pravila moje društvene grupe o tome šta kupiti ili posjedovati.
I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	Često postupam protivno prihvaćenim pravilima moje društvene grupe o tome kada i kako se određeni proizvodi ispravno koriste.

Appendix

I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't seem to accept.	Uživam da dovodim u pitanje većinski ukus svojih poznanika kupujući nešto što oni vjerovatno ne bi odobrili.
If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.	Ukoliko je neko nagovijestio da sam se neprilično odijevao/odijevala za društvenu situaciju, nastavio/nastavila bih se oblačiti na isti način.
When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar, but I don't care.	Kad se odijevam drugačije, često sam svjestan/svjesna da me drugi smatraju čudnim/čudnom, ali me to ne zanima.
When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	Kada proizvodi ili brendovi koji mi se sviđaju postanu izuzetno popularni, gubim interesovanje za njih.
I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	Izbjegavam proizvode ili brendove koje su već prihvatili i kupili prosječni potrošači.
When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	Kada proizvod koji posjedujem postane popularan među opštom populacijom, počinjem da ga koristim manje.
I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	Često pokušavam izbjeći proizvode ili brendove za koje znam da ih kupuje opšta populacija.
As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	Po pravilu, ne volim proizvode ili brendove koje obično svi kupuju.
I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	Odustajem od nošenja modnih predmeta koje sam kupio/kupila nakon što postanu popularni među širom javnošću.
The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	Što je proizvod ili brend više uobičajen među opštom populacijom, manje sam zainteresovan/a da ga kupim.
Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	Čini mi se da proizvodi nemaju veliku vrijednost kada ih redovno svi kupuju.
When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	Kada stil odjeće koju posjedujem postane previše uobičajen, obično ga prestanem nositi.

Consumer – Brand Identification - Stokburger-Sauer, N., Ratneshwar, S., & Sen, S (2012). Drivers of consumer-brand identification. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 29 (4), 406-418.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
I feel a strong sense of belonging to [BRAND].	Osjećam snažnu pripadnost [BREND].
I identify strongly with [BRAND].	Snažno se poistovjećujem sa [BREND].
[BRAND] embodies what I believe in.	[BREND] utjelovljuje ono u šta vjerujem.
[BRAND] is like a part of me.	[BREND] je kao dio mene.
[BRAND] has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	[BREND] ima mnogo ličnog značaja za mene.

Repurchase Intention/Brand Loyalty/Switching Intention – Adapted from Putrevu, S., & Lord, K. R. (1994). Comparative and Noncomparative Advertising: Attitudinal Effects under Cognitive and Affective Involvement Conditions. <i>Journal of Advertising</i>, 23(2), 77-91.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
It is very likely that I will repurchase [BRAND] in the future.	Vrlo je vjerovatno da ću u budućnosti ponovo kupiti [BREND].
I will purchase [BRAND] next time I need such a product.	Kupiću [BREND] sljedeći put kada mi zatreba takav proizvod.
I will definitely try [BRAND].	Definitivno ću isprobati [BREND].
It is very likely that I will buy a different brand in the future.	Vrlo je vjerovatno da ću u budućnosti kupiti neki drugi brend.
I will purchase a different brand next time I need such a product.	Kupiću neki drugi brend sljedeći put kada mi zatreba takav proizvod.
I always purchase the [BRAND].	Uvijek kupujem [BREND].
I am willing to buy a new brand of [PRODUCT].	Voljan/Voljna sam kupiti novi brend [PROIZVODA].

Positive Word-of-Mouth - Tuskej, U., Golob, U., & Podnar, K. (2013). The role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships. <i>Journal of Business Research</i>, 66 (1), 53-59.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
I transmit my personal experiences with this [BRAND] also to other people I know.	Prenosim lična iskustva sa ovim [BREND] i drugim osobama koje poznajem.
I give advice about this [BRAND] to people I know.	Dajem savjete o ovom [BREND] osobama koje poznajem.
I talk about this [BRAND] because it offers really good products.	Pričam o ovom [BREND] jer nudi zaista dobre proizvode.

Brand Buyer Stereotypes - Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., & Glick, P. (2002). A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from Perceived Status and Competition. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, Vol. 82, No. 6, p. 878–902.	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as capable.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao sposobne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as competent.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao kompetentne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as efficient.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao efikasne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as intelligent.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao inteligentne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as friendly.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao prijateljske.

Appendix

Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as good-natured.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao dobrodušne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as warm.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao ljubazne.
Most people in Bosnia and Herzegovina view [typical buyers / consumers of [BRAND]] as kind.	Većina ljudi u Bosni i Hercegovini vidi tipične kupce / potrošače [BREND]] kao tople.

Demographic Information	
Original Items	Bosnian Translation
Gender: • Male • Female	Spol: • Muški • Ženski
Nationality: • Bosnian and Herzegovinian • Other: _____	Nacionalnost: • Bosanskohercegovačka • Drugo: _____
Place of Residence: • City • Rural area	Prebivalište: • Grad • Ruralno područje
Level of Education: • High School • Bachelors' degree • Masters' degree • Doctorate	Nivo obrazovanja: • Srednja škola • Bachelor diploma • Master diploma • Doktorat
Income (BAM/Month): • Less than 400 • 401 - 800 • 801 - 1200 • More than 1200	Prihodi (KM/Mjesec): • Manje od 400 • 401 – 800 • 801 – 1200 • Više od 1200
Age (Please state in years)	Starost (Molimo navedite u godinama)

Appendix B – List of respondents' favorite brands and their categories

BRAND CATEGORIES	
Clothes and shoes	
Adidas	Marc Chain
All stars converse	Marc Jacobs
Alma Ras	Massimo Dutti
Armani	Maui Jim
Belissima	McKinley
Beneton	Michael Kors
Borac Travnik	MONA
Bosnian Kingdom Clothing	Nike
Calvin Klein	Orsay
Chanel	Prada
Cocopat bags	Queen
Denim Co	Ralph Lauren
Desigual	Reebok
Esprit	s.Oliver
Forever 21	Springfield
Granof	Stefanel
GS	Tamaris
Gucci	Tom Tailor
H&M	Tommy Hilfiger
Harmony	Topshop
Levi's	Vero Moda
Lindex	Versace
Lisca	Victoria's Secret
Lonsdale	Zara
Mango	
Cosmetics	
Avene	L'Oréal
Avon	Max factor
Clinique	Nivea
Balea	Rituals
Dior	VICHY
Lancome	
Food & drinks	
Bajra	Milka
Bihacka pivovara	Nektar
Cakana	Nutella
Coca Cola	Preminger
Ferrero	Prozorski parmezan
Kestenov med	Sarajevski kiseljak
Kinder	Sarajevsko pivo
KRAS	Tesanjski dijamant
Ledo	Tops
Lindt	Vegeta
Lipa	Vispak

Appendix

McDonald's	Zuta osa (rakija)
Meggle	
Automobiles	
Audi	
BMW	
Mercedes	
Porsche	
Electronics	
Apple	Samsung
Fender	Sony
Intel	Tc Electronics
Nokia	Xiaomi
Others	
Bioguano	Pelikan
Drina	Queen
Google	Swarovski
Likvi	Violeta
Linkin Park	
TOTAL	106

Appendix C – SPSS Outputs: Main analyses

1. PBG/PBL, BBS and CNFU as predictors of CBI - Hierarchical Regression

Coefficients ^a													
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,873	,481		1,817	,070	-,073	1,820					
	PBG	,321	,072	,261	4,455	,000	,179	,463	,188	,264	,254	,951	1,051
	PBL	,287	,051	,331	5,660	,000	,187	,386	,274	,329	,323	,951	1,051
2	(Constant)	-,477	,555		-,860	,391	-1,569	,615					
	PBG	,256	,072	,208	3,551	,000	,114	,397	,188	,214	,196	,891	1,123
	PBL	,254	,050	,293	5,103	,000	,156	,352	,274	,301	,282	,922	1,084
	BBSWarm	,184	,122	,103	1,511	,132	-,056	,424	,261	,093	,083	,659	1,517
	BBSComp	,381	,143	,183	2,657	,008	,099	,663	,303	,162	,147	,639	1,564
3	(Constant)	-1,732	,506		-3,420	,001	-2,729	-,734					
	PBG	,190	,063	,155	3,015	,003	,066	,315	,188	,184	,145	,877	1,140
	PBL	,140	,045	,162	3,107	,002	,051	,229	,274	,190	,149	,850	1,176
	BBSWarm	,081	,107	,045	,759	,449	-,129	,292	,261	,047	,036	,648	1,542
	BBSComp	,291	,125	,140	2,327	,021	,045	,537	,303	,143	,112	,635	1,574
	CNFU-CCC	,376	,060	,353	6,223	,000	,257	,495	,536	,361	,299	,716	1,396
	CNFU-UCC	,234	,076	,182	3,064	,002	,083	,384	,429	,187	,147	,654	1,529
	CNFU-AOS	,026	,055	,026	,469	,640	-,082	,133	,260	,029	,023	,761	1,315
a. Dependent Variable: CBI													

a. Dependent Variable: CBI

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,374 ^a	,140	,133	1,60961	,140	21,420	2	264	,000	
2	,449 ^b	,202	,190	1,55632	,062	10,196	2	262	,000	
3	,634 ^c	,402	,386	1,35492	,200	28,892	3	259	,000	1,722

a. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL

b. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp

c. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp, CNFU-CCC, CNFU-UCC, CNFU-AOS

d. Dependent Variable: CBI

Appendix

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	110,992	2	55,496	21,420	.000 ^b
	Residual	683,987	264	2,591		
	Total	794,979	266			
2	Regression	160,384	4	40,096	16,554	.000 ^c
	Residual	634,595	262	2,422		
	Total	794,979	266			
3	Regression	319,506	7	45,644	24,863	.000 ^d
	Residual	475,473	259	1,836		
	Total	794,979	266			
a. Dependent Variable: CBI						
b. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL						
c. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp						
d. Predictors: (Constant), PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp, CNFU-CCC, CNFU-UCC, CNFU-AOS						

2. The effects of CBI – Simple regression models

2.1. The effects of CBI on Brand Loyalty and Repurchase Intention

Coefficients ^a													
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
			Std.				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Model		B	Error	Beta	t	Sig.							
1	(Constant)	4,282	,162		26,404	,000	3,962	4,601					
	CBI	,352	,041	,467	8,586	,000	,271	,433	,467	,467	,467	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty/Repurchase Intentions													

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.467 ^a	,218	,215	1,15565	,218	73,721	1	265	,000	2,050
a. Predictors: (Constant), CBI										
b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty/Repurchase Intentions										

Appendix

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	98,455	1	98,455	73,721	.000 ^b
	Residual	353,912	265	1,336		
	Total	452,367	266			
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty/Repurchase Intentions						
b. Predictors: (Constant), CBI						

2.2. The effects of CBI on PWOM

Coefficients ^a												
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,850	,199		19,388	,000	3,459	4,241				
	CBI	,413	,050	,451	8,228	,000	,314	,512	,451	,451	,451	1,000 1,000
a. Dependent Variable: PWOM												

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.451 ^a	,203	,200	1,41528	,203	67,701	1	265	,000	1,793
a. Predictors: (Constant), CBI										
b. Dependent Variable: PWOM										

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	135,605	1	135,605	67,701	.000 ^b
	Residual	530,797	265	2,003		
	Total	666,403	266			
a. Dependent Variable: PWOM						
b. Predictors: (Constant), CBI						

Appendix

2.3. The effects of CBI on Switching Intention

Coefficients ^a												
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	5,001	,215		23,299	,000	4,578	5,424					
CBI	,032	,054	,036	,583	,561	-,075	,138	,036	,036	,036	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Switching intentions

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.036 ^a	,001	-,002	1,52970	,001	,340	1	265	,561	2,064

a. Predictors: (Constant), CBI
b. Dependent Variable: Switching intentions

ANOVA ^a					
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Sig.
1	Regression	,795	1	,795	,340 ^b
	Residual	620,092	265	2,340	
	Total	620,887	266		

a. Dependent Variable: Switching intentions
b. Predictors: (Constant), CBI

Appendix

Appendix D – SPSS Outputs: Secondary tests

1. Hierarchical regression: including demographics

Coefficients ^a													
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4,053	,708		5,725	,000	2,659	5,447					
	Gender	-,175	,245	-,045	-,716	,475	-,657	,307	-,061	-,045	-,045	,976	1,024
	Place of Residence	-,458	,387	-,075	-,185	,237	-,1220	,303	-,096	-,074	-,074	,972	1,029
	Level of Education	-,132	,154	-,057	-,855	,393	-,435	,172	-,036	-,054	-,053	,864	1,158
	Income	,116	,116	,070	,999	,319	-,112	,343	,083	,063	,062	,797	1,254
	Age	,114	,100	,074	1,139	,256	-,083	,310	,098	,072	,071	,920	1,087
2	(Constant)	1,552	,801		1,937	,054	-,026	3,130					
	Gender	-,164	,230	-,042	-,712	,477	-,617	,289	-,061	-,045	-,042	,975	1,026
	Place of Residence	-,430	,365	-,070	-,179	,240	-,1,148	,288	-,096	-,074	-,069	,965	1,036
	Level of Education	-,117	,145	-,051	-,809	,419	-,402	,168	-,036	-,051	-,047	,862	1,160
	Income	,082	,109	,049	,750	,454	-,133	,297	,083	,047	,044	,788	1,269
	Age	,061	,096	,040	,636	,525	-,128	,250	,098	,040	,037	,882	1,134
	PBG	,327	,074	,265	4,387	,000	,180	,473	,194	,267	,256	,937	1,067
3	PBL	,258	,053	,295	4,825	,000	,153	,363	,256	,292	,282	,912	1,096
	(Constant)	,360	,847		,425	,671	-,1308	2,027					
	Gender	-,221	,226	-,057	-,979	,328	-,665	,223	-,061	-,062	-,056	,964	1,038
	Place of Residence	-,299	,357	-,049	-,838	,403	-1,003	,404	-,096	-,053	-,048	,955	1,047
	Level of Education	-,152	,141	-,066	-1,078	,282	-,431	,126	-,036	-,068	-,061	,858	1,165
	Income	,083	,107	,050	,776	,438	-,127	,293	,083	,049	,044	,785	1,274
	Age	,052	,094	,034	,550	,583	-,134	,237	,098	,035	,031	,866	1,154
	PBG	,265	,075	,215	3,538	,000	,118	,413	,194	,219	,202	,879	1,137
	PBL	,230	,053	,263	4,355	,000	,126	,334	,256	,267	,248	,889	1,125
4	BBSWarm	,145	,128	,080	1,134	,258	-,107	,397	,238	,072	,065	,659	1,518
	BBSComp	,371	,149	,177	2,493	,013	,078	,664	,278	,156	,142	,643	1,556
	(Constant)	-1,128	,771		-1,464	,145	-2,646	,390					
	Gender	-,370	,200	-,095	-1,851	,065	-,763	,024	-,061	-,117	-,092	,937	1,068
	Place of Residence	-,065	,314	-,011	-,208	,836	-,684	,554	-,096	-,013	-,010	,941	1,063
	Level of Education	,009	,126	,004	,070	,944	-,239	,257	-,036	,004	,003	,827	1,210
	Income	,079	,094	,047	,841	,401	-,106	,263	,083	,054	,042	,778	1,286
	Age	-,008	,083	-,005	-,092	,927	-,172	,156	,098	-,006	-,005	,845	1,183
	PBG	,189	,066	,153	2,868	,004	,059	,319	,194	,180	,143	,864	1,157
	PBL	,121	,048	,139	2,542	,012	,027	,216	,256	,160	,126	,827	1,210
	BBSWarm	,062	,112	,034	,550	,583	-,159	,283	,238	,035	,027	,653	1,532
	BBSComp	,296	,130	,141	2,272	,024	,039	,553	,278	,144	,113	,638	1,567
CNFU-CCC	,381	,065	,358	5,887	,000	,254	,509	,518	,352	,293	,667	1,499	
CNFU-UCC	,231	,079	,182	2,905	,004	,074	,387	,437	,183	,144	,628	1,592	
CNFU-AOS	,023	,057	,024	,409	,683	-,088	,135	,263	,026	,020	,737	1,357	
Dependent Variable: CBI													

Dependent Variable: CBI

Appendix

Model Summary^e										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.158 ^a	.025	.006	1,71058	.025	1,293	5	252	.267	
2	.382 ^b	.146	.122	1,60728	.121	17,716	2	250	.000	
3	.442 ^c	.195	.166	1,56652	.049	7,591	2	248	.001	
4	.628 ^d	.394	.365	1,36720	.199	26,860	3	245	.000	1,749
a. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income										
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, PBG, PBL										
c. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp										
d. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, PBG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp, CNFU-CCC, CNFU-UCC, CNFU-AOS										
e. Dependent Variable: CBI										

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18,924	5	3,785	1,293	.267 ^b
	Residual	737,375	252	2,926		
	Total	756,298	257			
2	Regression	110,460	7	15,780	6,108	.000 ^c
	Residual	645,839	250	2,583		
	Total	756,298	257			
3	Regression	147,713	9	16,413	6,688	.000 ^d
	Residual	608,585	248	2,454		
	Total	756,298	257			
4	Regression	298,335	12	24,861	13,300	.000 ^e
	Residual	457,964	245	1,869		
	Total	756,298	257			
a. Dependent Variable: CBI						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age , Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, PBG, PBL						
d. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, PBG, PBG, BBSWarm, BBSComp						
e. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Level of Education, Place of Residence, Income, BG, PBL, BBSWarm, BBSComp, CNFU-CCC, CNFU-UCC, CNFU-AOS						

Appendix

2. Independent samples t-test

Group Statistics					
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand buyer stereotypes - warmth	Male	69	3,2464	,93688	,11279
	Female	198	3,2210	,97662	,06941
Brand buyer stereotypes - competence	Male	69	3,1087	,85479	,10290
	Female	198	3,2677	,82378	,05854
Creative choice counterconformity	Male	69	4,0738	1,56843	,18882
	Female	198	4,4164	1,63749	,11637
Unpopular choice counterconformity	Male	69	3,8630	1,35376	,16297
	Female	198	3,7130	1,34691	,09572
Avoidance of similarity	Male	69	3,1063	1,69533	,20409
	Female	198	3,1358	1,76657	,12554

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Brand buyer stereotypes - warmth	Equal variances assumed	,061	,805	,188	265	,851	,02542	,13512	-,24064	,29147
	Equal variances not assumed			,192	123,155	,848	,02542	,13243	-,23672	,28755
Brand buyer stereotypes - competence	Equal variances assumed	,002	,962	-1,367	265	,173	-,15898	,11629	-,38795	,06999
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,343	114,984	,182	-,15898	,11839	-,39349	,07553
Creative choice counterconformity	Equal variances assumed	,098	,755	-1,513	265	,131	-,34266	,22648	-,78858	,10327
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,545	123,329	,125	-,34266	,22180	-,78168	,09637
Unpopular choice counterconformity	Equal variances assumed	,021	,885	,795	265	,427	,14994	,18854	-,22129	,52117
	Equal variances not assumed			,793	118,154	,429	,14994	,18901	-,22434	,52421
Avoidance of similarity	Equal variances assumed	,445	,505	-,121	265	,904	-,02952	,24445	-,51082	,45178
	Equal variances not assumed			-,123	123,112	,902	-,02952	,23962	-,50382	,44478

Abstract - German

Marken galten nur als Qualitätssignale, aber aus dem Konsumentenverhalten ist bekannt, dass Verbraucher und Marken Beziehungspartner sind. Auf diese Weise kann ihr gesellschaftliches Merkmal der Stereotypisierung anderer Menschen auch auf den Aspekt der Konsum-Marken Beziehung (consumer-brand identification) angewendet werden. Die vorhandene Literatur fokussiert sich hauptsächlich auf zwei Arten von Stereotypen: den Marken-Ursprungs Stereotyp (brand origin stereotype) und Marken Stereotyp (brand stereotype). Dennoch gibt es noch eine dritte, oft unbeachtete Art von Stereotypen in der Konsum-Marken-Beziehung, welche Aufmerksamkeit verdient - den Marken-Käufer Stereotyp (brand buyer stereotype). Während Marken-Käufer Stereotype die stereotypen Vorstellungen eines Verbrauchers von dem Käufer einer bestimmten Marke darstellen, hat die bestehende Forschung gezeigt, dass die Verbraucher auch dazu neigen, ihr Bedürfnis nach Einzigartigkeit auszudrücken (consumers need for uniqueness). Da zu erwarten ist, dass Marken-Käufer Stereotype und das Bedürfnis der Verbraucher nach Einzigartigkeit in einer Person nebeneinander existieren können, untersucht diese Forschung daher die individuellen und gemeinsamen Auswirkungen, welche Marken-Käufer Stereotype und das Bedürfnis der Konsumenten nach Einzigartigkeit auf die Markenbewertung haben. Die Forschung wurde im Februar 2018 bei Verbrauchern aus Bosnien und Herzegowina durchgeführt, um die Wahrnehmung ihrer Lieblingsmarke zu untersuchen und folgende Ergebnisse wurden erzielt: a) das Bedürfnis der Verbraucher nach Einzigartigkeit und Marken-Käufer Stereotypen sind für die Konsum-Marken Beziehung von Verbrauchern wichtig, b) das Bedürfnis nach Einzigartigkeit ist diagnostischer als Marken-Käufer Stereotype in der Konsum-Marken Beziehung, c) es besteht ein schwacher Zusammenhang zwischen dem Bedürfnis der Verbraucher nach Einzigartigkeit und Käuferstereotypen, d) die stereotype Dimension der Kompetenz eher diagnostisch als Wärme. Allgemein tragen die mit dieser Masterarbeit gewonnenen empirische Erkenntnisse zur Erforschung der Konzepte von Marken-Käufer Stereotypen und Konsum-Marken Beziehung bei und spiegeln sich in einigen theoretischen und betriebswirtschaftlichen Implikationen wider.

Schlüsselwörter:

Stereotyp-Content-Modell, Marken-Käufer-Stereotype, Konsumentenbedürfnis nach Einzigartigkeit, wahrgenommene Marken-Globalität, wahrgenommene Marken-Lokalität, Konsum-Marken Beziehung, Rückkaufabsicht, Markentreue, Wechselabsicht, positive Mundpropaganda