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THE GENDER DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANIMATED AND STATIC SOCIAL MEDIA  
CONTENT ON CONSUMERS' ENGAGEMENT.

Bachelor thesis

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This paper conforms to the requirements for a Research Paper

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(signature of the supervisor)

Admitted for defense “ ”..... (date)

I have written this Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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(signature of the author and the date)

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## Introduction

The number of social media platforms is increasing year by year, so does the number of people who are using them. “A successful community must attract a large number of participants who continually contribute to creating and sharing contents” (Shang, Wu and Li, 2016, p. 241). At this point of human development and technological progress it is hard to imagine modern existence without the social media platforms (SMP). Every SMP has separate target audiences and serves different purposes: I.e. LinkedIn points out an overview of current job market, Snapchat enables to reach and show friends what you’re doing at this exact moment and Spotify gives an opportunity to share music. Talking about numbers in various SMP, YouTube statistics state that there are 1 billion users each month and Flickr, which is a platform for photograph-sharing, claims in their statistics that they have 8 billion pictures uploaded by users (Putzke, Fischbach, Schoder and Gloor, 2014).

First social networking site (SNS) - Six Degrees was introduced to the audience only in 1997. The SM can be defined as a communication tool for people divided by long haul in order to support physical interactions between them (Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt & Chamorro-Premusic, 2012).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) describe SM as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. As for now, one can note that SM cannot be left without attention because of the emerging influence and power it carries. The total number of online users is 3,5 billion worldwide, which is roughly half of the globe’s population (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019).

This paper connects different study topics in it. It consists of gender study, SM engagement and difference in animated and static content. It was decided by the author to focus on the Facebook SM platform for a few reasons. Firstly, according to Statista (2020),

the Facebook platform is the leading platform in terms of active user. As of year 2020, the number of online users is 2449 million people. It also can be added, that this number is growing year by year. Comparing 2019 and 2020, this number grew by 74000 users. It is important to mention the social network usage of the Facebook platform - it is mostly focused on information sharing using different techniques and methods. Furthermore, it will be wise to conduct a study on SM engagement and take the most popular and used SM as the base for it. Lastly, it is advisable to highlight that this combined topic is quite narrow and has not been studied.

Pointing out the topicality of this research, from the researcher's point of view, the author believes that this study has potential for future investigation. As for the readers and society, it will be of interest to them to get to know how people (especially men and women separately) engage to SM and different types of content on SM. This is simply because for most of the people SM platforms is a way to spend spare time. But from a company perspective, they seek a greater profit which will come from advertisements on SM. It is hard to imagine a company nowadays, which does not have a page on SM platforms with their latest news and new products/services.

For instance, the study by Alnjadat et al (2019) explains the factors behind social media usage and how it affects academic performance among the two genders. Whereas this study aims to measure how education and genders are affected by social media but it does not specify the exact type of content (animated or static). The author aims to combine above mentioned study topics (gender study, consumer engagement and difference in animated and static content) in one paper in order to examine how each gender engages to animated and static content on social media. The results of this paper might be of interest for content creators and digital marketers.

The aim of this paper is to find out which format (animated or static) is more engaging (by liking, commenting and sharing) to each gender.

Research tasks of this paper are:

- To introduce the “consumer engagement” term and explain the significance and popularity of it
- To define terms and give theoretical background of “animated content” and “static content”, and present the empirical studies about comparison of animated content with static content
- To compile a survey using Google Forms and provide the author with main methodology approaches and techniques for future analysis
- To represent analysis of data gathered and check how different consumer engagement is between social media posts with animated and static content for each gender.

This bachelor thesis will consist of 2 chapters - theoretical and empirical. The theoretical chapter of this study contains subchapters 1.1 and 1.2. Subchapter 1.1 will provide the linking information about consumer engagement and genders in SM with supporting definitions. The main definitions of animated and static contents and their significance, as well as previously done study in similar fields, following with author’s own analysis and comparison of the studies will be discussed in next subchapter (1.2). Subchapter 2.1 of the empirical part provides information about main methodology methods and techniques the author is planning to use in the further examination with supporting theoretical background. Whereas the last subchapter (2.2) will bring up the results of the data analysis based on the survey questions, important conclusions and future research possibilities.

Keywords: social media, gender difference, animations, statics, consumer engagement.

## 1. Theoretical aspects of consumer engagement and animated and static content

### 1.1 Definition of consumer engagement and its relation to the gender differences

The social media and internet usage have played their roles in creating communication and information exchange tools for people. The concept of consumer engagement has been newly established to catch a set of behavioural activities from a firm.

In this subchapter the reader will be provided with important knowledge on “consumer engagement” term, the linkage to gender studies and viewpoint from companies’ side.

It is wise to say that the term “engagement” is described as a dynamic process where customers are engaged in the company’s interactivity (Viswanathan et al, 2018). Whereas the Consumer engagement (CE) phenomena has been used a lot from different sides and table 1 will provide some definitions for this term by various researchers.

Table 1

*Summary of interpretations for “consumer engagement” term*

Author & Year	Interpretation of consumer engagement
Van Doorn et al (2010)	“Behavioural construct that goes beyond purchase behaviour alone” (p. 253).
Brodie et al (2011)	“Psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experience with focal agent in focal service relationships” (p. 260).

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

According to Gummerus et al (2012) consumer engagement is measured through collaboration of brand communities’ page visits with liking of content, comments writing, sharing and news reading. They also mention and discuss consumer engagement importance for the companies. It is said that CE is vital for firms’ success and in order to keep customers,

firms have to provide them with fresh content so they would open Facebook platform, open brand's page and engage in transactional behaviors. It also important to mention Dhaoui (2014) who also states that liking, commenting and sharing are measures of consumer engagement.

SM platforms, at the same time, play the role of an intermediary in communication between company and customer. Companies post (put up) their products and services in SM channels for customers to observe and then engage with. It can be also defined as the form of communication in the modern world. Organisations benefit enormously from SM as it helps them to share their content and attract attention of new customers and keep loyal ones.

CE is considered as a vital psychological condition for managers. They seek to learn all the efficient instruments and models in order to comprehend all factors of CE. From the company's perspective it is a way to accomplish business performance. In other words, it is a set of guidelines which an organisation needs to follow to increase productivity. It is also worth mentioning customer - firm relationships, which have an impact on the business performance. (Bolton, 2011)

Recent empirical studies on SNS (Social Networking Sites) and gender difference use claim to have different results and conclusions about this topic. Findings of Gray (2018) prove that there is a gender difference in SNS use. While women are more interested in sharing photos and videos with their online community, men use SNS to play video games with their friends from around the globe. Additionally to that, Lim, Heinrichs and Lim (2017) bring out the reasons for SNS usage among genders: females use them for communication but males for sharing their opinions on specific cases. There is also a necessity to mention SM usage and psychological condition of users, which also includes addiction to SM, which most of the times occurs among adolescents. One of the studies which supports the previous statement is prepared by Twenge & Martin (2020).

All in all, Gray (2018), Lim, Heinrichs & Lim (2017) and Twenge & Martin (2020) have come to the same, but yet slightly different conclusions: all of them agree on the fact that women are more frequent SM users and they are more affected by social networking sites than men, but women also tend to have a lower psychological wellbeing than men. Also, females represent stronger relationships and consider information quality as the most crucial factor when using SNS. Males, on the other side, consider security as the most important factor.

However, these studies do not perfectly match an aim of this bachelor thesis. Thus, author of this paper will look deeply into gender difference in consumer engagement and determine if there is any.

Consumer engagement is a widely studied term but only few articles are dedicated to the relation of genders to the consumer engagement. One of them is the paper by Mansoor (2017). He mentions that satisfying the customer is the most important, but yet, hardest goal of every company in the competitive market environment. He believes that the role of the gender of customers has quite a significant impact.

It is wise to mention Customer Engagement Behaviour (CEB) discussed by van Doorn et al (2010). This technique enables managers to provide unifying base to think about the number of customers behaviours that have been examined beforehand. The concept of CEB slightly differs from the casual customer engagement concept which has been mentioned in this subchapter already. This concept is a demonstration of characters from customers towards a brand which comes from motivational drivers. These characters include Word-of-mouth (WOM) activities, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging and etc. This concept can be used in practice very effectively if it is used together with its 5 dimensions (in other words, measurements) - valence, form or modality, scope, nature of its

impact and customer goals. All in all, CEB is one of the integrated approaches for companies to understand their customers.

It can be concluded that the consumer engagement topic has been researched thoroughly in different fields. Some of the researchers even introduced and discussed new concepts (CEB by van Doorn et al (2010)). It is quite crucial for companies to understand customer logic, build relationships in the right direction with customers and pleasing the customer. Marketers are now being more and more intrigued in learning proper ways to attract the interest and maximize the possibility of engaging customers.

### **1.2 Investigation of a difference between animated and static content with previously done research in this field**

SM is a revolutionary phenomenon which presents popular interest to the companies operating in online environment. Companies which actively use SM will have more beneficial opportunities, but at the same time it should be effective and strategically developed in order to have the right effect on customers. Social media offer huge impact to areas such as politics, society, commerce and even human psychology and personal relationships.

The topic of difference between animated and static content can be considered a relatively new study. Still, there are some related to differences between animations and statics but not in SM. The gender difference factor is applicable in the statistical analyses and used as the variable.

Examining the differences between animations and statics has an increasingly popular trend in modern society as the marketers are now thriving to know which tool is better to use in the marketing campaigns to attract more customers to firms and gain more profit.

This subchapter will present previously made empirical studies in resembling fields and all beneficial definitions, such as “animation” and “static”. This subchapter will finish with the author’s own analysis, comparison of studies and conclusions.

No doubt that every researcher has his own view on a term and the same applies to defining the term “animation”. Table 2 provides most popular definitions presented by scientist. It is important to point out that the majority of definitions presented are relatively new (dated to year 2011 and later). Only one study by Baecker & Small (1990) has been mentioned because they were one of the first scholars who defined term “animation” and after that this paper has been widely used ever since in further studies.

Table 2

*Summary of interpretations for animations*

Author & Year	Interpretation of Animation
Baecker & Small (1990)	“A sequence of static images changing rapidly enough to create the illusion of a continuously changing picture” (p. 252).
Farrugia & Quigley (2011)	Sequence of images changing rapidly enough to establish an illusion of movement.
Guido et al. (2016)	Logo presentation format with an effect of movement.
Gürsimsek (2016)	Graphic Interchange format – GIF.
Miltner & Highfield (2017)	Slideshow of images with infinite looping feature.
Zheng et al. (2018)	Technique of moving objects contemporaneously.

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

Starting with the roots of this term, Baecker and Small (1990, p. 252) interpret animation as a “composition of sequences of static images changing rapidly enough to create the illusion of a continuously changing picture”.

More recent studies like Guido et al (2016) in their joint research interpret animation logos as the ones which are represented in the format of actual moving, not just presenting a feeling of movement. The most common example provided by authors is GIF - graphic interchange format that has been introduced to the World Wide Web in 1987. Miltner & Highfield (2017) and Gürsimsek (2016) define the animations as the slideshow of images with an infinite looping feature which is also represented in the format of GIF. It is also worth mentioning that GIF is polysemic – it carries different interpretations of one GIF to different audiences, and also carries specific emotions which makes it a perfect digital communication device for users. Additionally, the article studies GIFs as a cultural text and device (Miltner & Highfield, 2017). Zheng et al (2018) focused their paper on animated transitions, defining them as the technique of moving objects contemporaneously. Farrugia & Quigley (2011) argue that animations are defined as a sequence of images shown to give the illusion of movement in rapid succession.

Gürsimsek (2016) additionally points out the multimodal digital design and effect characteristics in the form of animated GIF. Talking about the design characteristics of animated GIFs, it gives the audience the chance to perceive the environment in a more creative way. A constant use of graphic designs on the internet is provided for two types of users: organizations which engage and communicate with their customers, and bloggers who distribute visual content.

As it was already mentioned, the author would like to say that the term “animation” has been mostly defined after 2010. As it may be seen from the table 2, only 1 definition is dated back to 1990. Combining all the given interpretations of term “animation” it can be

said that is a motion technical format for short slideshow of still images looping infinitely in an adjusted order without any sound but carrying specific meaning. It is an essential element in the context of social media and nowadays it is mostly known as GIF – a great communication tool for all the generations of people using SM platforms. GIFs are easy to find on the well-known giphy.com online database. Enthusiasts even can make their own GIFs using engines such as ezgif.com or hnet.com.

The usage of static content on social media platforms has been quite popular but there are noticeably less definitions provided compared to animated content. Most of the articles which are focus on comparison between animations and statics, present only definitions on animations. In this case, static content is described there as the opposite of animated content.

Cian, Krishna & Elder (2014) focus and study how static images generate an effect of movement. They describe static imagery as a capacity of the brain to generate stationary and still objects.

Table 3

*Summary of interpretations for statics*

Author & Year	Interpretation of Statics
Höffler & Leutner (2007)	Fixed presentation format.
Cian, Krishna & Elder (2014)	Capacity of brain to generate performance of stationary and still objects.
Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014)	Still image without any motion or sound.
Roggeveen, Grewal, Townsend, & Krishan (2015)	Simple presentation format using images.

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

Talking about the opposite meaning of animation - statics, Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) base their paper on animations and define it in the way of moving images with element of motion and sound. This means that a static picture is a still image without any motion or sound. Several benefiting reasons of animations and statics are brought up in the article written by Höffler & Leutner (2007). According to them, animation is pictorial presentation format which contains rapidly changing screen displays showing sense of motion. It implies that static image is a fixed presentation format. In the study about consumer preferences in online commerce stores scholars Roggeveen, Grewal, Townsend & Krishan (2015) discuss the usage of images in dynamic and static format in an environment when companies are visually presenting their products. They mention that a dynamic presentation format is compared with static ones. A dynamic format is mentioned as videos, while static - as images. The author combined all the definitions on the statics in table 3.

The author stresses that in order to compare these two terms, it is important for reader to look back to tables 2 and 3 to remind about main definitions. While some studies prove animations better engage and attract consumers (Roggeveen, Grewal, Townsend, & Krishan, 2015; Höffler, Leutner, 2007), others suggest that static images have a higher rate of engagement (Farrugia, Quigley, 2011; Hernandez-Munoz, Munoz-Leiva, 2015). Nevertheless, the impact, effect and level of engagement coming from animated and static posts remains the same.

After defining all crucial definitions, the author will analyse, compare and make conclusions based on various empirical studies which are brought out in table 4.

Table 4

*Summary of empirical studies on related topics*

Author & Year	Country	Method of research	Findings
Li & Bukovac (1999)	USA	Self-report questionnaire and online tracking.	It was proven that usage of animated banners results in better perception from customers' side.
Farrugia & Quigley (2011)	UK Ireland	Online web-based system designed for 2 experiment groups	Results of two experiments show that static images are better perceived from the points of time and accuracy.
Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014)	Iran	2 groups of participants presented with 5-session treatments.	After 2,5 weeks of an experiment it was found out that the difference between animated and static idioms is not significant, but statics are more effective.
Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015)	Spain	Mixed experimental design - eye tracking + questionnaire.	First test prove that text is noticed in the durable period of time, whereas second test say that consumers lean towards static banners.
Tikno (2017)	Indonesia	18 ad-sets conducted on Facebook advertising platform	After measuring each ad in a set, it was proven that video-used ads draw customers' attention by more than 20%
Afify (2018)	Saudi Arabia	Survey of 3 questions and presenting infographics	2 study groups of people engaged to e-learning through WhatsApp platform using different formats of infographics.

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

To start with a brief description of empirical studies related to the difference in engagement between animations and statics, it would be smart to start with one of the earliest studies made in this field. Written by Li and Bukovac in 1999, the main goal of the writers was to find the difference in customer response when using animated and static banner ads. For the purpose of the experiment, the participants were divided into two groups: the first group was tested through information-seeking condition and the second group using Web-surfing condition. After testing 224 people in 2 groups and analyzing the results by applying the t-test, it was proven that banner ads with animated content tend to have a quicker response rate than banners with static content.

Almost the same approach was used to investigate the difference in effect between animations and statics in a paper by Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015). The study, where main variables are gender, age, and experience level, is aimed to define the efficiency of online advertising in the hospitality and tourism sectors on various websites under the Web 2.0 concept. Two analyses form a basis of this empirical study – the first focuses on the type of elements banners contain (image versus text). The second is about the type of banners which are used in the tourism industry (animated versus static). To test all these, an experiment was conducted using a mixed experimental design methodology, which combines eye-tracking experiments and self-administered questionnaires. The results of the first analysis show that it takes a longer period of time for tourists to notice text in comparison with images. In the terms of this paper, the results of the second experiment are appropriate where it was proven that static banners are better perceived from the customers' side.

The author concludes that these two scholars used the same approach – eye-tracking and questionnaire. Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) measured the performance of an online ad in the tourism sector, whereas Li & Bukovac (1999) distinguished the difference in

static and animated banner ads. The results of their experiments had different results - Li & Bukovac (1999) conclude that animated ads are more preferred by the audience. This study also proves that the size of an advertisement matters - large ads have a more significant impact on the audience. In case of Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) it is said that static ads are more preferred by the audience. They also propose future research possibilities, for instance to compile this kind of experiment in other geographic regions, and then do cross-country and cross-cultural analysis.

It is also worth mentioning a paper by Farrugia & Quigley (2011), that targets the impact of the mode of presentation in order to understanding dynamic networks. Their empirical approach included two different but interrelated experiments. The first experiment was conducted through testing students of computer science departments. Participants of the first experiment had to be familiar with node link diagrams. Whereas attendees of the second experiment were supposed to be unspecialized. The results were found to be consecutive. Due to the small number of participants (only 7 men) in the first experiment, the numbers are not significant. The second experiment included 26 women and 33 men and these results can be considered statistically significant. It was concluded that static images are more effective, both in terms of time and accuracy.

Ghaderi & Afshinfar in 2014 prepared a study about analyzing the difference on how Iranian students are affected by animated and static idioms. Scholars also decide which type is better for the learning process. From the 87 possible participants for this experiment, 60 were chosen for the test. After that participants were divided equally into experimental and control groups. Throughout this research, an experimental group was taught idioms through 5 animated pictures and a control group was learning idioms through static pictures. The whole empirical study lasted for 2,5 weeks. The findings of an independent and sampled t-tests show that the difference in learning is not significant - there is no big difference whether

students learn idioms through animated or static pictures but it is preferably to use animated funny pictures to improve the learning process.

The author would like to sum up papers by Farrugia & Quigley (2011) and Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) and mentioned that they have some patterns in common: methods of empirical analyses were alike. While Farrugia & Quigley (2011) used online web systems and 2 separate groups of participants, Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) also used 2 different groups for the experiment and showed them 5-session treatments. They were studying graph drawings to get to know dynamic networks better and effects from animated and static idioms on education process, respectively. The results tend to differ: in case of Ghaderi & Afshinfar's (2014) paper animated idioms are more preferred by students. As for the outcome of a study by Farrugia & Quigley (2011), it was proven that static images provide better performance in dynamic network analysis. To extend their study, they suggested to study time density and differences between structural and analytical formulation of tasks.

The empirical study "Measuring performance of Facebook advertising based on media used: a case study on online shops in Indonesia" prepared by Tikno in 2017, whose main goal was a quality analysis of media types used on advertisement channels such as videos and photos on Facebook using 3 variables: gender, age group and product type as the interest group. In the terms of methodology, researcher uses 18 ad-sets, which are special advertising settings for the exact target audience on the Facebook platform. This approach was chosen because it has an effect on the chosen variables. After that a paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare engagement rates between ads with videos and ads with images. Above-mentioned 18 ad-sets had the same budget and period and were monitored every day in regards to the number of likes, comments and shares. The findings after 7 days of tests show that video-used ads are more engaging to the audience by more than 20%. This

information is valuable for the online shop marketers and advertising designers when making important marketing decisions.

It can be concluded by the author that the main goal of Tikno (2017) was to measure which format of ads is more engaging in e-commerce sphere in Indonesia. Results show that Indonesian e-commerce has more potential when using videos. This study helps online shop marketers and advertising for a wider understanding of interactions between customer and company, and when making advertising decisions which will bring more profit to the brand. Researcher points out various study limitations, for instance having no possibility to present all online shops in three categories (gender, age and interest to ads performance), and then suggest future analysis opportunities - to keep an eye on some internet shops and measure their user interaction.

One more study which needs to be mentioned, is prepared by Afify (2018) whose main goal is to see a pattern between animated and static infographics as well as finding out how e-learning can be affected by two various types of infographics. The word “Infographic” comes from combination of two separate words - “information” and “graphics”. Generally speaking, this means that infographics are used for the purpose of visualising the data in the easiest and most understandable form for human eye. For an experiment, 17 university students had to observe static infographics, while the other group consisting of 19 students had animated infographics to study from. The experiment was conducted via the WhatsApp mobile platform and contained 3 questions. The results of a paper tend to be in favour of static infographics as it was proven that students have higher e-learning outcomes from it.

Author sums up that Afify (2018) was studying how e-learning is affected by two types of infographics. Results show that e-learning is better studied when static infographics are used. It was also found that infographic technology in educational environment pulls more attention of students and boosts up learning opportunities.

The gender factor variable was taken into consideration in the papers by Farrugia & Quigley (2011), Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014), Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) and Tikno (2017). In the eye tracking experiment prepared by Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) 30 males and 30 females were tested. As a matter of fact, males and females tend to notice banners in the same way, whatever format. Thus, it was proven that there is no link between genders and how they fixate their eyesight on a banner.

Unfortunately for the author of this paper, some scholars did not bring up any results which are related to gender variable. Farrugia & Quigley (2011) had 2 experiments, the first one consisted of 7 males only. Whereas the second experiment contained 26 females and 33 males. Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) had 42 females and 18 male participants in their experiments. The experimental group (first) consisted of 10 males and 20 females, while the control group (second) contained 8 males and 22 females. Surprisingly, Tikno (2017) did not conclude any information regarding gender variable even though it was one of 3 main variables in the research. These scholars didn't make any separate conclusions for men and women, thus making a space for researching difference between genders when engaging to animated and static content.

Previously discussed studies have similarities and distinctions in between. They all have one topic in common - differences between animations and statics, but in different study fields: Tikno (2017) made his research in the field of e-commerce in Indonesia, Li & Bukovac (1999) discussed and tested how presence or lack of animation may affect the reaction speed of customer interaction, Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) pinpointed their attention on education field in Iran while tourism was the study field of Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015), for Farrugia & Quigley (2011) it was graphic visualisation field and Afify (2018) measured the effect of formats of infographics on e-learning.

As there are 6 papers represented, the results seem to differ. Farrugia & Quigley (2011), Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) and Afify (2018) prove that static images and text preferable. Animations and videos, on the other side, were proven to be preferable after the experiments of scholars like Li and Bukovac (1999), Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) and Tikno (2017).

All in all, the comprehension of content is changing completely. New applications and softwares are being established every year, so that the users can publish completely renewed posts to look unique on SNS. Applications such as Flixel, DrawMotion and Graphitii help to transfer static pictures to animated ones. Here arises the need to study how animated and static SM posts draw attention to the different genders and what consumer engagement effect does it provide.

## **2. Empirical part**

### **2.1 The methodology and sample size of survey**

The previous subchapter consisted of six empirical studies on the topic of differences between animated and static content. Scholars took different approaches when compiling their papers. Experiment methods were also different from one another. The mixed type was introduced in two of the researches (Hernandez-Munoz & Munoz-Leiva (2015) and Li & Bukovac (1999)) – a mix of quantitative analysis techniques (questionnaire) and special softwares (eye tracking) and Afify (2018) used survey as a method, while Tikno (2017) was measuring consumer engagement testing advertisement settings arranged on the Facebook platform. Some divided their participants into two groups and compiled experiments - in online web-based system (Farrugia & Quigley, 2011) and Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) had presented 5 - session treatment to participants. Also, scholars Li & Bukovac (1999) and Ghaderi & Afshinfar (2014) used a SPSS software and t-tests to analyse the results of their experiments. The author of this paper will proceed in the same way and analyse collected

data with the help of a SPSS software and use a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test which is a substitution of the parametric approach t-tests. This will be explained later in subchapter 2.2.

For the purpose of this study, it was decided to proceed with the online survey method to find out how men and women are engaged by animated and static content on the SM platform Facebook. In this case, surveys are widely used for descriptive studies and this paper is a proper fit for. To be precise, the survey research method was specified by Kate, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia (2003) as the most used technique in social science-related topics of research. The survey was prepared using the Google Forms platform. The Google Forms tool was rated by Gehringer & Cross (2010) as one of the most useful and appropriate when gathering data. The platform has several advantages:

- It's online - respondent can access it at any time of the day or night,
- It's free - for students it's very beneficial,
- It does not require any human contact to gather data,
- It is environmentally friendly,
- It is anonymous.

But at the same time, this platform has a few disadvantages, i.e. after gathering data using the platform it doesn't provide proper techniques to compile statistical analysis (Wright, 2005). That's why, after gathering the data through the Google Platform, the author will proceed to IBM SPSS.

The main variable which is going to be tested is the gender. The aim of this paper is to find out the differences between how males and females are engaged by two formats of SM content: animated and static. In other words, the aim is to figure out which type of post do women and men engage more with.

The target audience of this study are people who use Facebook on a daily basis. A snowball sampling method was used to distribute surveys to suitable respondents. Panacek & Thompson (2007, p. 76) define snowball sampling as “a process in which the subjects are drawn by convenience and these subjects then recruit people they know to participate, and they recruit people they know, etc.”. The survey has been distributed through Facebook and people which were asked to share the surveys with their friends. This is how snowball sampling method was achieved and survey was distributed to countries such as Estonia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Germany, UK and Sweden.

The survey starts with an accompanying letter where the author explains to participants the reasons and importance of filling in the survey. It is also mentioned that the survey is anonymous and the data will be used only for the purposes of this paper’s empirical research.

The survey contains 10 shoe advertisements of worldwide popular active sportswear brands. Each set contains one advertisement in .gif format and one in .png format. The shoe models were chosen on gender neutral basis. According to personal experience, the author can state that used shoe models “Adidas Superstar”, “Nike Air Force 1 Low”, “Fila Disruptor”, “Vans old Skool” and “Reebok Club C 85” can be equally worn by men and women. This means that they are unisex.

The advertisements (can be found in Appendices F and G) are displayed in animated (.gif) and static (.png) formats on the background of the Facebook news feed. Both advertisements were prepared by the author. Firstly, static pictures were prepared using canva.com. Following that, the animated ones were made through ezgif.com webpage and converted into needed format (.gif). The elements which the pictures consist of were downloaded from the brand’s official e-shop webpages.

Table 5

*Questions regarding consumer engagement metrics (liking, commenting, sharing)*

Nr.	Question	Measure of CE	Supporting theory
1.	Would you like this post?	Liking	Likert-scale question
2.	Would you comment on this post?	Commenting	Likert-scale question
3.	Would you share this post?	Sharing	Likert-scale question

Source: Compiled by author.

Survey contains 2 sections. The first section presents advertisements and supporting questions. In section 1 the pictures were presented in a random order to make the survey more interactive and engaging for the participants. After every advertisement is presented, respondents have to answer accompanying Likert-scale questions about their engagement to the advertisement. To measure consumer engagement, the author asked questions about each metric of CE: liking, commenting, sharing. The author decided to use seven-point Likert - scale ranging from “extremely unlikely” (1) to “extremely likely” (7). According to Nemoto and Beglar (2014), the Likert - scale tool is mostly implemented in studies when the aim is to measure psychological constructs. When measuring consumer engagement, the Likert - scale tool was used by scholars Chu & Kim (2011) following with statistical analysis. Table 5 shows questions asked from participants about their engagement to the advertisement. It is also significant to point out why the author decide to focus on active sportswear brands advertisements. According to statistics, the sportswear market is one of the most profitable ones in Clothing & Apparel industry (Statista, 2019). Brands such as Nike, Adidas, Fila, Vans and Reebok were selected because they represent some of largest and most recognizable brands in the world (Statista, 2019). The focus of the work by Ko et al (2011) is also directed on sportswear industry because “sales represent a large and growing market worldwide, with the use of sportswear becoming appropriate not only for sports activities but also for daily life” (p. 1566).

Next section of survey requires participant to answer social demographic questions which can be found in table 6. The survey finishes with the author thanking participants for spending their time and filling out the survey.

Table 6

*Social demographic questions of survey*

Nr.	Question	Supporting theory
1.	What's your gender?	Sample-related question
2.	What's your age?	Sample-related question

Source: Compiled by author.

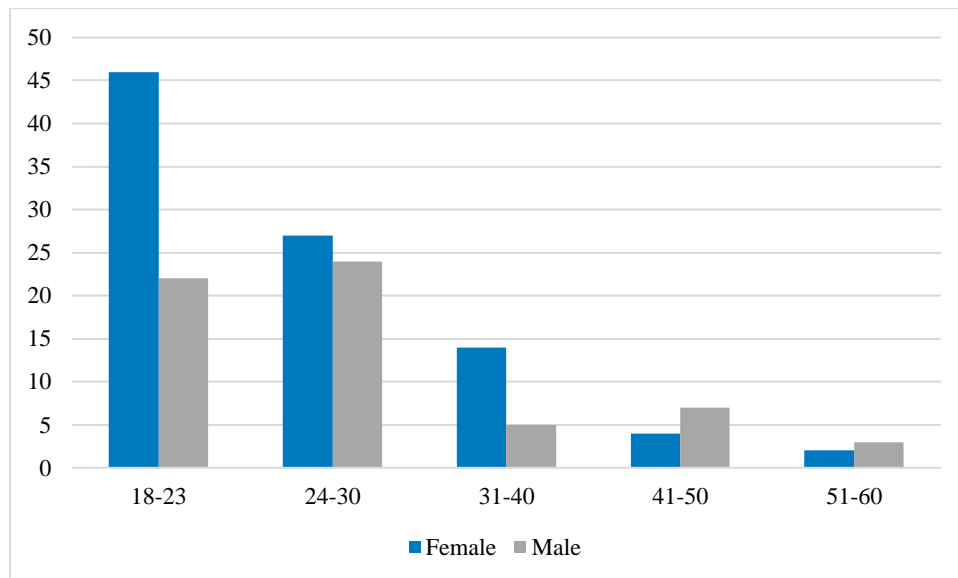
The initial sample size for the survey was 100 people, 50 men and 50 women. The survey was active for one week, starting from April 14th and was closed on April 21st, 2020. All the questions were in English language.

Talking about the statistical analysis, it is vital to consider the type of data the researcher is using. In terms of this paper, the author had two different types of data: the gender variable which is a nominal data type and CE measures (Likert-scale questions) which is of the ordinal data type. Therefore, the author decided to proceed with a non-parametric approach and Mann -Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney U test was applied in statistical analysis, which is the counterpart of an independent samples t-test for the parametric approach.

## **2.2. Analysis of survey results**

The following subchapter is compiled in order to present author's analysis from survey results gathered using Google Forms. Following tables and figures will be handy for

the reader to comprehend the information, which is going to be interpreted. Further data is analysed with the help of IBM SPSS software and all the figures are prepared using Microsoft Excel. By the end of this subchapter the author believes to provide appropriate results and conclusions.



*Figure 1.* Social demographic information about survey respondent

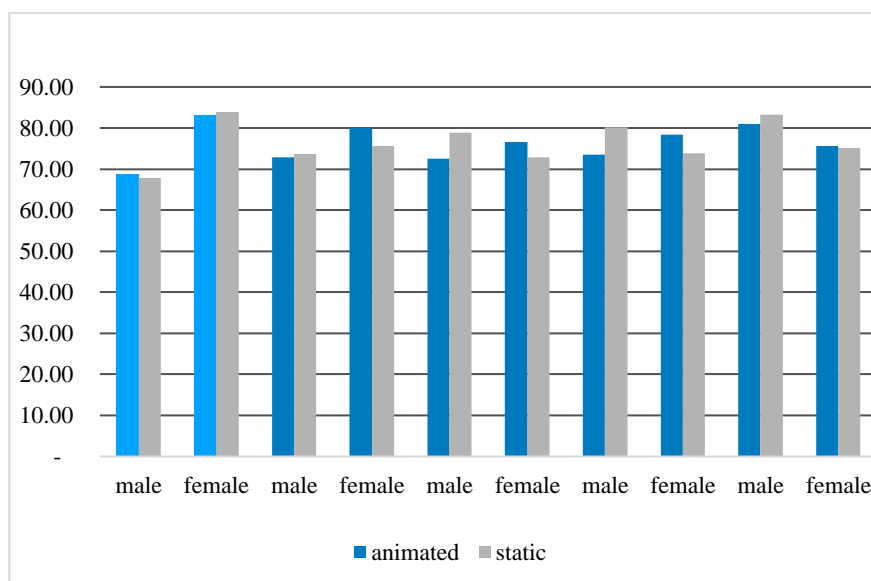
Source: compiled by author.

By the end of the survey there were 154 people who responded and filled it in. The number of female participants was slightly higher than the number of male ones (figure 1). The proportion of gender is 93 females to 61 males. When filling in the survey, women showed higher activity and willingness to do it. It can be linked to the fact, proved by Gray (2018), Lim, Heinrichs & Lim (2017) and Twenge & Martin (2020) in their researches, that women use SM platforms more actively than men.

When talking about the age distribution, most of the participants' age is located in the range of "18-30", which forms roughly 77% of the whole sample. This can be understood from the point that younger generations tend to spend more time on SM platforms than older

generations. Figure 1 below represents the age distribution among both genders. For additional information the reader can look into Appendix A.

To analyse data gathered from Google Forms, the file was imported into IBM SPSS. The author used a non-parametric method for the data analysis. To remind the reader, consumer engagement can be measured through liking, commenting and sharing posts on social media (Dhaoui, 2014 and Gummerus et al, 2012). For this matter, 3 questions about each measure accompanied every advertisement in survey (table 5). Furthermore, data will be analysed in 3 sections: **Liking**, **Commenting** and **Sharing**. This means that the analysis will be divided into the 3 following sections. Out of the SPSS results, author analysed “mean ranks”. Higher mean rank show how higher will be the answers of people in that group. The group with the highest mean rank should have a greater number of high scores within it.



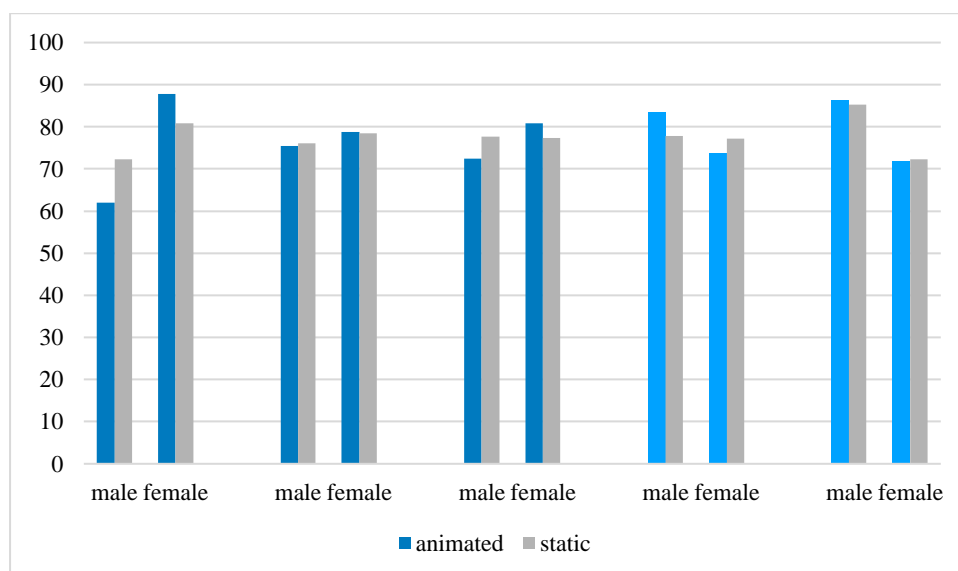
*Figure 2.* Mean rank of respondents on liking measure of CE.

Source: compiled by author.

In section 1 the author discusses and analyses consumer engagement measure - **liking**. The author applied Mann-Whitney U test to obtain the mean ranks of 5 advertisement sets (one animated and one static for each set). Therefore, in 4 out of 5 presented advertisement sets females showed a higher liking response in advertisements which contained animated

content, while men tend to engage by liking posts with static content. Figure 2 represents the proportion of mean ranks of males and females' engagement on animated and static posts. In numbers, the highest mean rank among women for animated content was 80 and for static content was 75,59. Among men, the highest mean rank for animated content was 81,05 and for static content 83,24.

But not all of the advertisements have similar outcomes. Looking at figure 2, the reader may see columns highlighted in a lighter color than the rest. This is an advertisement set, which had an opposite result where women engaged more into posts with static content and men did the opposite. Appendix B provides a complete table of mean ranks for liking measure of CE.



*Figure 3.* Mean rank of respondents on commenting measure of CE.

Source: compiled by author

Section 2 covers **commenting** measure of consumer engagement by testing data using the Mann-Whitney U test. Figure 3 shows that the majority of advertisements (3 out of 5) have the same result as a liking measure of CE - females have higher level of commenting under posts with animations. Men's consumer engagement by commenting remains the same again, as they choose to comment under posts which contain static content. To be precise, the

highest mean rank among women is 87,72 for animated content and 80,88 for static content. In case of males, the highest mean rank for animated content is 75,5 and for static content is 77,69. Columns highlighted in lighter color show the advertisement sets, which resulted in different outcome than others. In that case, females engaged more with static content and males engage with the animated (Appendix C).

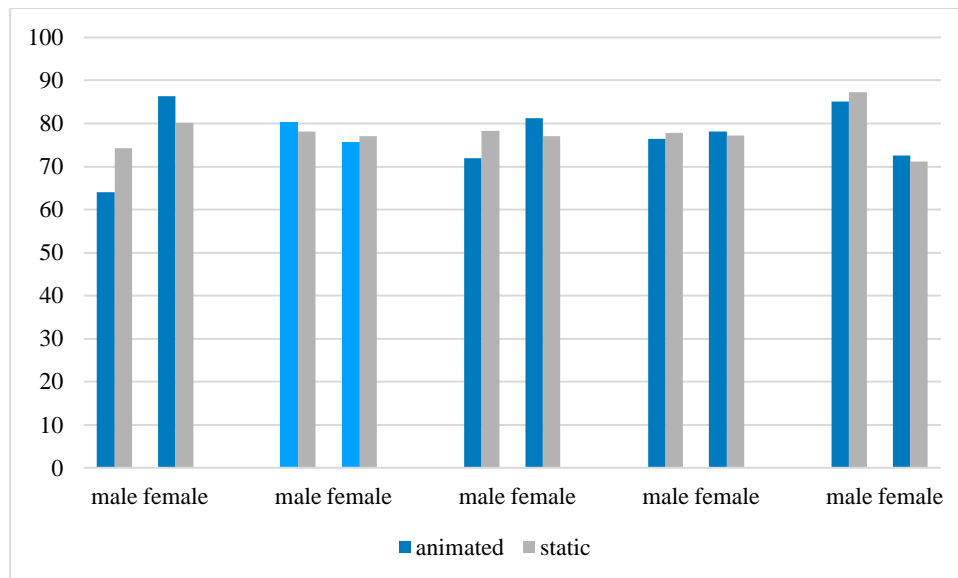


Figure 4. Mean rank of respondents on sharing measure of CE.

Source: compiled by author.

Finally, section 3 covers the metric of CE – **sharing**. When testing this measure with the Mann-Whitney U test, the highest mean rank among females for animated content is 86,35 and for static content is 80,19. When it comes to males, the highest mean rank for animated content is 85,04 and for static content it is 87,21. Therefore, responses from the majority of advertisements (4 out of 5) prove that female gender representatives prefer sharing posts with animated content and males tend to do vice versa – share posts which contain static content. Columns highlighted in lighter color show the advertisement set, which resulted in different outcome than others. Here females engaged more with static and males engage with animated content (Appendix D).

In order to check do genders have statistically significant difference, 2 hypotheses were inserted:

H0:  $m_1 = m_2$  which means that there is no statistically significant difference between gender and consumer engagement measures.

H1:  $m_1 \neq m_2$  which means that there is statistically significant difference between gender and consumer engagement measures.

Table 7

*Sig-values of test variables*

Sig-value	Like		Comment		Share	
	animated	static	animated	static	animated	static
ad set 1	.027	.036	.000*	.177	.001*	.263
ad set 2	.381	.252	.625	.707	.504	.847
ad set 3	.769	.237	.230	.960	.171	.830
ad set 4	.199	.346	.179	.922	.815	.928
ad set 5	.409	.520	.042	.032	.083	.007*

Notes: \*- statistically significant variables.

Source: compiled by author.

It is also worth mentioning the “sig” values. When looking at table 7, one can see that in most of the cases there is no statistical significance between gender and each measure of consumer engagement (sig-value are higher than 0.05). But there are 3 variables which are statistically significant (sig-value are lower than 0.05). Nevertheless, the author concludes that there is no statistical significance between gender and each measure of consumer engagement. Thus, H0 will be accepted. Additionally, appendix E provides results of test statistic test.

Table 8

*Summary of consumer engagement by gender by each measure*

CE measure	Female	Male
Like	Animated	Static
Comment	Animated	Static
Share	Animated	Static

Source: Compiled by author.

In order to conclude this subchapter, it is wise to say that when measuring consumer engagement, researchers need to take into consideration all three measures of it – liking, commenting and sharing and analyse all of them. One cannot say that one measure is more important or useful than the other one. Also, when measuring CE among gender groups, (men and women) results tend to differ from one gender to another. Females, who are more frequent users of SM platforms, are engaging with animation-contained posts by liking, commenting and sharing more on Facebook. On the other hand, men choose to engage with Facebook posts with static content. However, no statistical significance between gender and consumer engagement measures could be proven. Table 8 shows how each gender engages in every measure of consumer engagement, choosing posts with either animated or static content.

### **Conclusion**

The essence of consumer engagement is changing together with the development of an economic environment and market conditions. If companies focus more on consumer engagement and have special strategies for it, then the number of loyal customers will grow substantially. Nowadays, markets supply enough products and services to potential customers, which in turn have lots of choices to choose from. With the growth of consumer markets, it's getting more challenging for companies to stay afloat. The competition between companies which have overlapping target markets is constantly rising. Above-mentioned environment situations force companies to look into consumer engagement and develop proper strategies how to attract new customers, engage and keep emotional connection between brand and loyal customers and retain them.

Using social media platforms as a place for publishing advertisements is very important and profitable for companies. Social media platforms possess a great power of information spreading and as it was already mentioned in this paper, the number of social media users grows every year. This combination grants an ideal environment, and therefore an opportunity for brands to expand and promote their products or services on social media platforms. By doing that, marketing managers and content creators will increase the brand recognition and open new ways to engage customers.

The topic of this bachelor thesis is a mixture of 3 study fields: consumer engagement, gender studies and difference between animation and static content. The main focus of this paper was to measure which format of content (animated or static) is more engaging to men and women when using Facebook platform. In this study, the author examined consumer

engagement difference between females and males using measures of CE – liking, commenting and sharing.

Going back to theoretical aspects of this paper, the author starts with interpretation of “consumer engagement”. It is defined as psychological connection between customer and a brand. Then, terms such as “animation”, “static”. In this paper, the “animation” term is summed up as series of pictures with a continuously looping effect, while term “static” is represented as a static format without any effect of moving. Generally speaking, these two terms are opposites of each other. Furthermore, author analyses studies where animated and static contents are compared to each other in different countries and fields. A first half of an analysed studies state that people prefer static content, whereas second half conclude that animated content attracts more people. In order to fulfill the aim of this bachelor thesis the author proceeded with quantitative analysis technique and non-parametric approach. To gather data for the analysis, a survey containing 32 questions in total was launched and distributed through the Facebook platform. The number of respondents reached 154 people from different age groups and countries. During the analysis, consumer engagement was measured through liking, commenting and sharing metrics. Thus, it was concluded that in majority of cases women tend to engage (like, comment and share) more with Facebook posts with animated content rather than with static content. When it comes to men’s consumer engagement, the outcome is the opposite. It was concluded that in the majority of cases, men prefer to engage by liking, commenting and sharing posts on Facebook with static content. Furthermore, no statistical significance between gender and measures of consumer engagement was found.

Limitations of this study were mostly connected with the empirical part. The sample size was not perfect because it was challenging to reach people who would fill it in. It would be good to reach similar amount of people from each age category. Talking about methods of

research, using an eye-tracking experiment together with the survey would bring more accurate results. Future research possibility would imply conducting an eye-tracking experiment and survey at the end of it. Therefore, more aspects of it can be tested: attention, interest, eye fixation, gaze points and other.

To conclude, this paper contributed to this mixture topic, even considering its limitations. The author believes that research aim and tasks are fulfilled. Also, the author believes that this paper gave a well-constructed explanation of the difference between animated and static content.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

Age distribution of each gender.

Age	Female	Male
18-23 y.o.	46	22
24-30 y.o.	27	24
31-40 y.o.	14	5
41-50 y.o.	4	7
51-60 y.o.	2	3
Total	93	61

Source: compiled by author.

## Appendix B

Mann Whitney test table of liking measure of CE by gender.

	Mean Rank	
	animated	static
male	68,71	67,83
female	83,26	83,84
male	72,79	73,69
female	80	75,59
male	72,51	78,79
female	76,66	72,79
male	73,52	80,11
female	78,44	73,82
male	81,05	83,24
female	75,70	75,17

*Notes:* highlighted in red – ads with opposite result.

Source: compiled by author.

## Appendix C

Mann Whitney test table of commenting measure of CE by gender.

	Mean Rank	
	animated	static
male	61,93	72,35
female	87,72	80,88
male	75,5	76,1
female	78,81	78,42
male	72,42	77,69
female	80,83	77,38
male	83,39	77,87
female	73,64	77,26
male	86,3	85,34
female	71,73	72,35

*Notes:* highlighted in red – ads with opposite result.

Source: compiled by author

## Appendix D

Mann Whitney test table of sharing measure of CE by gender.

	Mean Rank	
	animated	static
male	64,01	74,3
female	86,35	80,19
male	80,18	78,16
female	75,74	77,07
male	71,87	78,25
female	81,19	77,01
male	76,48	77,83
female	78,17	77,28
male	85,04	87,21
female	72,55	71,13

*Notes:* highlighted in red – ads with opposite result.

Source: compiled by author

Appendix E

Test statistics results.

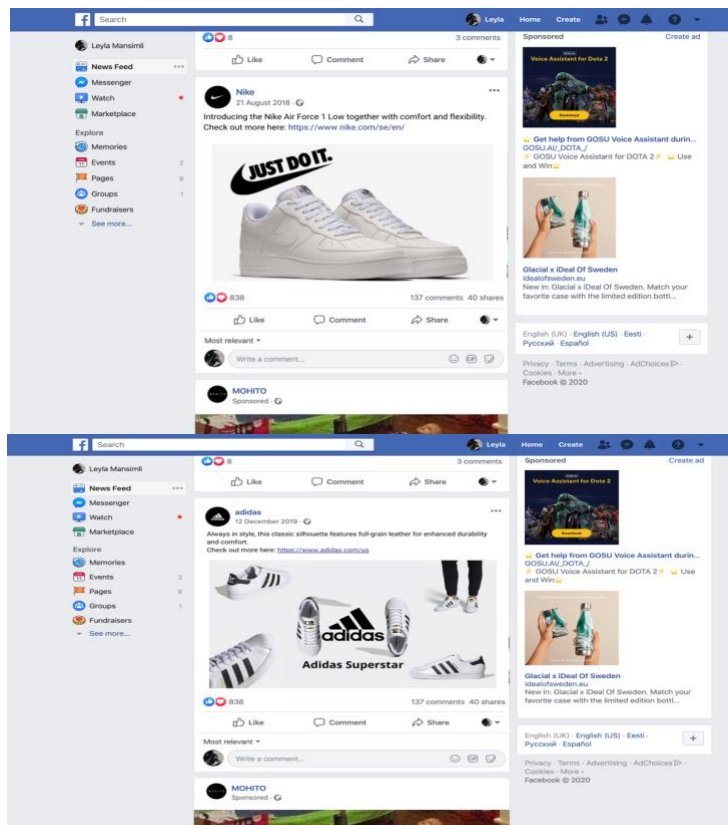
Mann-Whitney U	Like		Comment		Share	
	animated	static	animated	static	animated	static
ad set 1	2246.500	2300.500	1886.500	2522.500	2013.500	2586.500
ad set 2	2604.000	2549.000	4605.500	4642.000	7044.000	2796.500
ad set 3	2758.000	2532.000	2526.500	2825.000	2493.000	2791.000
ad set 4	2494.000	2594.000	2774.000	2814.000	2774.000	2816.500
ad set 5	2620.000	2669.500	2299.500	2358.000	2376.500	2244.000

Notes: grouping variable - gender

Source: compiled by author.

Appendix F

Advertisements in .PNG (static) format.





Source: compiled by author.

## Appendix G

Advertisements in .gif (animated) format

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=15SrLL4l4s5g5LE36T3nh5iFcWdi2tGUs>

*Notes:* there was no possibility to upload .gif format into Word document.  
Source: compiled by author.