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Challenging Traditional Culture? How Personal and National Collectivism-Individualism Moderates the Effects of Content Characteristics and Social Relationships on Consumer Engagement with Brand-Related User-Generated Content

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Consumers across the globe increasingly engage with user-generated content about brands on social networking sites (i.e., brand-related user-generated content [Br-UGC]). As online consumer behavior does not occur in a cultural void, the present study extends earlier research by explicitly examining how the collectivism-individualism dimension, both at the national and at the personal level, influences consumers' engagement ("liking," commenting on, and sharing) with different types of Br-UGC created by different sources. Results based on a diverse sample of participants from South Korea, Thailand, the Netherlands, and the United States ($N = 812$) suggest that collectivism-individualism at the national level moderates the effects of content characteristics and social relationships on Br-UGC engagement. Moreover, consumers who hold the same values as others in their national culture are more comfortable sharing informative Br-UGC.

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Online information about brands or products that is created voluntarily by consumers (brand-related user-generated content [Br-UGC]) has become a crucial source that other consumers use to evaluate products. It has been found to shape consumers' brand perceptions (Smith, Eileen, and Yongjian 2012), to influence consumers' intentions to discuss brand information (Kim and Johnson 2016), and even to affect their purchase intentions (Kim, Gupta, and Koh 2011). Considering that Br-UGC is highly influential on consumer attitudes and has been shown to be an important driver of online revenues (Boachie 2018; Smith, Eileen, and Yongjian 2012), it is imperative for marketers to understand the factors that influence consumers' engagement with Br-UGC.

Previous studies have shown that consumers' engagement with content about brands is highly influenced by the source–receiver relationship (e.g., Shan and King 2015) as well as characteristics of the content (e.g., Araujo, Neijens, and Vliegenthart 2015; Chow and Shi 2015). In particular, the perceived intensity of the relationship with a source positively influences how messages created by brands are evaluated (Cho, Huh, and Faber 2014; van Noort, Antheunis, and van Reijmersdal 2012) and how willing consumers are to share the content (Kim, Cheong, and Kim 2015). Moreover, different

characteristics of content (informativeness, entertainment value, sociability) have been found to enhance consumers' intentions to participate in brand communities (Jung et al. 2016), to pass along content (Chow and Shi 2015), and to purchase a product online (Kim, Gupta, and Koh 2011).

However, very little research has considered the role of cultural differences when investigating the impact of social relationships and content characteristics on consumers' engagement with Br-UGC. Previous studies have largely ignored the fact that consumers' engagement with content about brands does not occur in a cultural vacuum, although studies have found that individuals' desire for social integration and information seeking/giving differs depending on their culture or sociocultural system (Goodrich and de Mooij 2014; Kitirattarkarn, Araujo, and Neijens 2018). Moreover, when the role of culture in consumer behavior has been studied, cultural comparisons typically take place at the national level, and the analysis often stresses differences based on the country in which participants were born and reside, often relying on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Lee and Yoo 2012). Several researchers have recognized the limitations of this approach, suggesting that individuals in the same national culture may define their identity differently, and that tendencies toward both collectivism and individualism can coexist in one individual (Triandis 1996). Furthermore, considering the increasing relevance of globalization and a global consumer culture (GCC), it is worth studying whether acculturation to GCC operates in the context of online brand engagement—and, in particular, the extent to which personal values might be more important than national cultural values when individuals engage with Br-UGC.

We address these critical gaps in the literature by examining how personal and national collectivism-individualism influences the effects that content characteristics and social relationships with the content creator have on consumer engagement with Br-UGC. To address these gaps, this study draws from a sample of active Facebook users ($N = 812$) in South Korea (KR), Thailand (TH), the Netherlands (NL), and the United States (US). These countries were selected for three primary reasons. First, their national cultures are considered either highly collectivistic (KR, TH) or highly individualistic (NL, US) according to cross-cultural research (e.g., Hofstede 2001; Lewis 2010). Second, it has been suggested that the different role of social media in consumer decisions across these four countries might be culturally related (Goodrich and de Mooij 2014). Finally, all four countries have a high level of social networking site (SNS) usage (We Are Social 2016), thus allowing us to investigate Br-UGC engagement within a comparatively mature setting in terms of SNS usage.

By addressing these gaps, this study makes several theoretical and practical contributions. First, from a theoretical perspective, the results provide valuable and novel insights

into how the collectivism-individualism dimension influences consumer engagement with Br-UGC in general, as well as how both social relationships and (informative, entertaining, social) characteristics of content influence engagement with Br-UGC. This provides crucial information for determining the extent to which earlier findings are generalizable beyond one country or one national culture. Second, this study goes beyond traditional cross-cultural research designs, which primarily compare national cultures, and explicitly explores the role of collectivism-individualism both at the national and the personal levels. Third, from a practical perspective, our study provides meaningful insights for multinational companies on how to keep consumers engaged with their brand. In particular, understanding whether and under which circumstances online consumers follow or challenge their national culture when engaging with Br-UGC will provide global marketers the ability to properly monitor, analyze, and contextualize consumer engagement in SNSs and thereby design effective, culturally aware, yet personally meaningful social media campaigns.

In sum, this article answers the following research question: How does personal and national collectivism-individualism impact the influences of social relationships and content characteristics on consumers' engagement with Br-UGC?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Consumer Engagement with Br-UGC

In this study, we analyze consumer engagement in the context of responses to user-generated content about brands on Facebook—currently the most powerful platform for marketers. In our study, engagement with Br-UGC includes consumers' responses to Br-UGC in the form of "liking," making comments on, or sharing Br-UGC.

The Relationship between Content Characteristics and Br-UGC Engagement

Existing studies have indicated that functional, emotional, and social values of a product or content about a product are the main factors that influence consumer engagement with brands online (Jung et al. 2016; Lovett, Peres, and Shachar 2013). In particular, brand-related content that is informative, useful, and entertaining has been found to affect consumers' affective responses and usage intention (Kim and Johnson 2016). In addition, given that consumers respond to brand-related content on SNSs mainly for companionship, to receive social support, and to present a positive identity (Lin and Lu 2011), brand-related content containing elements of interactions and collaborations appears to help consumers develop their social identity and form social bonds with others in their network (Chow and Shi 2015).

In this study, we adopt the three elements of customer value theory (CVT; Sweeney and Soutar 2001) to investigate how different characteristics of Br-UGC affect consumers' engagement with the content. This study explores Br-UGC across the three CVT dimensions: (1) informative value, or the extent to which the content provides product-related information, including economic and performance aspects; (2) entertainment value, or the extent to which the content contains elements of relaxation and enjoyment that provide the consumers an enhanced emotional value; and (3) social value, or the extent to which the content emphasizes social interactivity and collaboration.

Building on CVT, researchers have indicated that the functional, emotional, and social values of a product, or content about a product, are key factors that influence consumers' intentions to participate in brand communities (Jung et al. 2016) and to spread electronic word of mouth (eWOM; Lovett, Peres, and Shachar 2013). Hence, we expect that these content characteristics contribute to consumers' engagement with Br-UGC:

> **H1:** The more informative the Br-UGC, the higher the engagement with Br-UGC.

> **H2:** The more entertaining the Br-UGC, the higher the engagement with Br-UGC.

> **H3:** The more social the Br-UGC, the higher the engagement with Br-UGC.

The Role of Social Relationships in Consumers' Engagement with Br-UGC

As social connectivity and relationships are the core of SNSs, the emphasis of social relationships in SNSs is considered highly important for the examination of consumer response to Br-UGC. Existing studies have demonstrated that tie strength is one of the focal social relationship–related variables that characterizes the nature of social relationships and impacts online brand-related communication (e.g., Chu and Kim 2011; Lin and Lu 2011). Granovetter (1973) defined the strength of social ties as "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy or mutual confiding, and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (p. 1361). In reality, people normally maintain a wide range of relational ties in their online networks, ranging from strong ties to close friends and family members to weak ties with acquaintances and strangers.

Studies have indicated that the perceived intensity of the relationship between the content creator and the receiver influences how consumers evaluate the messages. For example, Cho, Huh, and Faber (2014) found that a viral advertisement sent by a friend was perceived as more informative, more entertaining, and less irritating than one

sent by an unknown person, the former of which ultimately generated a positive attitude toward the advertised brand.

In addition to influencing how the messages are evaluated, studies have found that tie strength directly influences consumers' online brand-related activities. For instance, it positively influences users' continued intention to use SNSs (Chu and Choi 2011), encouraging them to pass along viral advertising (van Noort, Antheunis, and van Reijmersdal 2012). Chu and Kim (2011) suggest that the extent to which consumers feel close to the source can have a considerable impact on their decision to share opinions on SNSs. Shan and King (2015) specifically found that information from a close friend was perceived as more influential in eWOM referral intention than information obtained from a weak-tie source (e.g., a brand). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **H4:** Br-UGC posted by a strong tie has a more positive effect on consumers' engagement with the Br-UGC than Br-UGC posted by a weak tie.

Cultural Individualism and Collectivism

Culture is the rich complex of beliefs, practices, norms, and values prevalent in a society (Schwartz 2006). These values are the cultural ideals of a given culture and tend to be its most central feature (Hofstede 2001). In this study, we specifically focus on the cultural individualism-collectivism construct, as this dimension has served as a practical means to compare communication styles and content across cultures, particularly in advertising research (Lee and Yoo 2012).

According to Triandis (1996, 2001), people in individualistic cultures, such as those from Northern and Western Europe and North America, are autonomous and independent from their social groups. Their personal goals are usually valued over the goals of their in-groups. As such, their behaviors are usually based on their own attitudes rather than the norms of their social groups. In contrast, people in collectivistic cultures, such as those from Asian countries, are interdependent with their in-groups or social groups. They generally behave according to the norms of their groups because their priority is placed on the goals of social groups.

When it comes to the communication context, people in individualistic cultures tend to engage in low-context communication that is straightforward, explicit, and direct (Hall 1977). However, people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to have high-context communication, which is abstract, implicit, and indirect (Hofstede 2001). These differences between high-context and low-context communication styles are also evident in content such as advertising messages (Pae, Samiee, and Tai 2002) and eWOM (Men and Tsai 2012).

It is also important to note that in every culture, whether collectivistic or individualistic, some people can be classified as "horizontal" (valuing equality) while

others are "vertical" (valuing hierarchy). These distinctions are related to personal values such as self-direction and conformity (Singelis et al. 1995; Triandis 1996). Even though, on the national level, countries in North America and Northern Europe are considered individualistic societies and countries in Asia are often defined as collectivistic, on the personal level, individuals in these countries might hold different degrees of collectivistic-individualistic values with respect to the horizontal and vertical dimensions (Singelis et al. 1995). In short, within the same national (collectivistic-individualistic) culture, it is likely that some individuals hold more individualistic values, while others hold more collectivistic ones.

The Role of National Collectivism-Individualism in the Relationship between Content Characteristics and Br-UGC Engagement

Although the three dimensions of brand-related content (informativeness, entertainment value, and sociability) have been found to influence consumer engagement with online brand-related activities, it is unclear whether different characteristics will have the same effect on consumer response toward Br-UGC across cultures. Cross-cultural research has taught us that the role of marketing communication varies across individualistic and collectivistic cultures. More specifically, Pae, Samiee, and Tai (2013) found that, in individualistic cultures, advertising must persuade and tends to be informative, relying on facts and the unique benefit of the advertised product; in collectivistic cultures, the purpose of advertising is to build a relationship and trust between seller and buyer. Advertising in Asian countries seems to utilize indirect messages that employ appeals to emotion and harmony seeking.

Studies of online communication have also confirmed that cultural variability in individualism and collectivism also plays a role in how consumers engage with different types of brand-related content. For example, Men and Tsai (2012) found that corporate posts on Facebook tended to provide information directly related to the company and its offering, while corporate posts on Renren (a Chinese SNS) were more likely to provide entertainment content and to promote users' socialization with the company. In other words, in collectivistic high-context culture, implicit and indirect messages emphasizing entertainment and socialization are typically used to cultivate consumer engagement and relationships. However, in an individualistic low-context culture, marketing communication is more explicit and straightforward, with more product-related information, discounts, and statements of corporate achievements.

As discussed, consumers in individualistic cultures or ones who are autonomous in their decision making tend to place greater importance on efficacy and directness, leading them to base their decisions on a personal assessment of the informative value of the content. Therefore, we predict the following:

> **H5:** The effect of informative content on Br-UGC engagement is greater for people living in individualistic cultures than for those living in collectivistic cultures.

In contrast, consumers in collectivistic cultures or those who emphasize the implicit meaning of communication tend to be influenced by the emotional value of a message when deciding whether to engage:

> **H6:** The effect of entertaining content on Br-UGC engagement is greater for people living in collectivistic cultures than for those living in individualistic cultures.

Besides informative and entertaining content, the element of sociability in Br-UGC could also affect consumers' decisions to engage with the content, especially in collectivistic cultures. Research on self-construal suggests that interdependent people or those from collectivistic societies appear to enjoy sociability when using social media and are thus more likely to engage with social content than people from individualistic societies who tend to underscore the importance of independence and self-achievement (Chu, Windels, and Kamal 2016). Men and Tsai (2012) support this notion, finding that Chinese collectivistic users value trust and the relationship with the company more than explicit product information. In such a context, Chinese companies were more likely to feature messages addressing the consumers' social needs, emphasizing being personal and acting like a caring friend when communicating with their consumers on brand pages compared to American companies. Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

> **H7:** The effect of social content on Br-UGC engagement is greater for people living in collectivistic cultures than for those living in individualistic cultures.

The Role of National Collectivism-Individualism in the Relationship between Tie Strength and Br-UGC Engagement

Although we have argued that people appear to have a positive attitude toward messages delivered by a strong-tie source, it is still unclear whether this effect will be the same for people from collectivistic and individualistic

cultures as well as for people holding collectivistic and individualistic values.

The existing cross-cultural research on eWOM indicates that the impact of tie strength on SNS relationships differs from culture to culture, and these relationships reflect the prevailing norms for the individual's role within a specific cultural context. Notably, the concept of strong and weak tie strength is potentially related to cultural individualism and collectivism (Chu and Choi 2011; Tsai and Men 2014). Chu and Choi (2011) indicate that while people from individualistic cultures prefer to have a greater number of weak ties and larger networks that could help them exchange information and foster their social status, people from collectivistic cultures view relationships with friends as stronger and more influential in their SNS use. Moreover, consumers from collectivistic cultures tend to be more dependent on social media, as they tend to rely heavily on personal networks (e.g., close friends, family) for brand-related information and social support. In contrast, consumers from individualistic cultures are less dependent on social media and prefer to consult a wider range of information sources (Tsai and Men 2014).

Even though tie strength and Br-UGC engagement across cultures has not been explicitly investigated, drawing on these findings we can assume that people in collectivistic cultures will be more likely to engage with Br-UGC from a strong-tie source compared to people in individualistic cultures. This premise is based on the focus on peer bonding among collectivistic people, who are more likely to emphasize intimate social relationships and to interact with like-minded people for social purposes (Liu, Ainsworth, and Baumeister 2016). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

> **H8:** The effect of tie strength on Br-UGC engagement is greater for people living in collectivistic cultures than for those living in individualistic cultures.

The Role of Personal Collectivism-Individualism in Br-UGC Engagement

While previous cross-cultural studies have generally operationalized collectivism-individualism based on the country in which participants were born and reside, individuals in the same country or with the same national culture might not hold the same cultural identity (Triandis 1996). In addition, with the increase of globalization and acculturation, it is likely that consumers living in Asia or in developing countries might adapt their values toward those common in Western or developed countries, leading to GCC (Berry 2008). There is also a possibility that
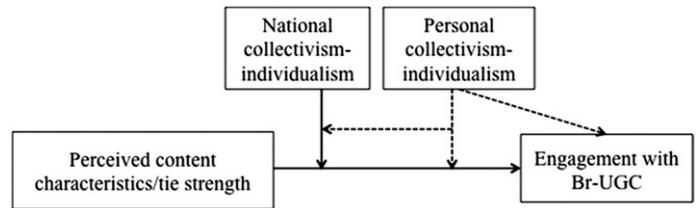

FIG. 1. Conceptual model of consumers' engagement with Br-UGC. In the analysis, national collectivism-individualism = collectivistic culture; personal collectivism-individualism = collectivistic values. Dotted lines represent research questions. Separate analyses were conducted for different independent variables (perceived content characteristics and tie strength) and dependent variables ("liking," commenting on, and sharing Br-UGC).

some people might resist these global forces, especially those with a strong desire to preserve their national cultural values, leading them to maintain their original culture.

Besides having an effect at the national level, there are possibilities that the effect of content characteristics on Br-UGC engagement will differ across consumers holding collectivistic values and individualistic values at a personal level. Moreover, earlier studies indicate that the consistency of national culture and individuals' self-construals can have a stronger effect on their information processing and persuasion (Lee, Aaker, and Gardner 2000). Lee, Aaker, and Gardner (2000) found that Americans with a dominant self-construal as independent placed more emphasis on promotion-focused information than Americans whose self-construal was less independent, and Chinese with a dominant self-construal as interdependent put more emphasis on prevention-focused information than Chinese whose self-construal was less interdependent. Nevertheless, the examination of the effect of collectivism-individualism at a personal level on Br-UGC engagement is yet to be fully explored. Considering the lack of earlier literature, we propose the following research question to investigate this topic:

> **RQ1:** How does personal collectivism-individualism play a role in consumers' engagement with Br-UGC?

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model that illustrates the roles of personal and national collectivism-individualism in the relationships between content characteristics, as well as tie strength and Br-UGC engagement.

METHOD

The experiment was conducted using a structured online questionnaire. Participants were randomly exposed

to a brand-related post created by their Facebook friend (a stimulus in our study). In this section, we examined how tie strength and content characteristics affected the likelihood of engaging with a Facebook post. A $2 \times 2 \times 2$ online experiment was conducted, with tie strength (strong/weak), content characteristics (informative/entertaining), and sociability of content (nonsocial/social) serving as between-subject factors. We asked about participants' demographic information as well as personal collectivism-individualism. For KR, NL, and TH, the questionnaire was translated using a translation/back-translation procedure to ensure cross-cultural content equivalency.

Stimuli Development

We chose sportswear as the product category because fitness and healthy living tend to become a global trend that people value as part of their well-being. Thus, this product category would appeal to consumers across the world (Okazaki, Mueller, and Diehl 2013), including our respondents. We chose sneakers as the product because they would be considered equally important to male and female consumers. To minimize country-of-origin bias in the research design, the German brand Adidas was chosen (because Germany was not a country involved in the study).

We designed informative and entertaining posts based on texts and visuals used in actual online brand-related posts. For informative content, we included practical information about the sneakers (e.g., specifications, discount information). For entertaining content, we included thank-you messages for a birthday gift (the sneakers) in a post as it conveyed emotional connections between a poster and his or her friends. Besides text, we added emoticons in captions as these are associated with emotional cues in the content (Araujo, Neijens, and Vliegenthart 2015). We believed that a graphics interchange format (GIF) or animated GIF would convey emotions better than just text or a still photo. Thus, instead of using a simple picture, we converted two similar pictures into animated GIFs and added them to the posts. For the element of sociability (e.g., interactivity with others), we employed the Facebook activity function by inserting the phrase "looking for opinion" in the posts and adding a question at the end of a caption. The examples of brand-related posts can be found in the Online Appendix.

To manipulate tie strength, we randomly asked participants to indicate three names of either "people on Facebook that you are *very close to*" and "people on Facebook that you only know *very superficially.*" Subsequently, one of those names was randomly selected to represent a source of a Facebook post. We presented the sentence "Thinking about [NAME], please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements."

Pretest

We tested the manipulated Facebook posts using an online questionnaire. A multiple snowball technique was employed by the first author to recruit participants. The first author sent a survey link to Facebook friends via Facebook Messenger, a messaging platform on Facebook. To recruit more participants, participants who completed the survey were asked to send the survey link to their Facebook friends. Participants were American, Dutch, Korean, and Thai Facebook users older than 18 years. They were asked to indicate their opinion on three elements of the message—perceived informativeness, perceived entertainment value, and perceived sociability—by completing 12 items on a 7-point Likert scale. Detailed information about the measures can be found in the following section. Participants took approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey in their native language.

We conducted a preliminary analysis and found problems with both the Dutch ($N = 37$, 81.1% female) and Korean ($N = 26$, 73.1% female) samples. In the Dutch sample, the manipulated informative posts were not perceived as informative. In the Korean sample, the manipulated entertaining posts were not perceived as entertaining. The mean scores of these two scales were below the midpoint. We assumed that this occurred because we collected responses only from highly educated people (master's of science and doctoral students). We revised both the manipulated informative and entertaining posts by consulting Dutch and Korean people who were active Facebook users and conducted the second round of the pretest with Dutch ($N = 78$, 52% female) and South Korean ($N = 61$, 62.5% female) Facebook users. In this round, we used an online panel from Qualtrics to collect both samples. We collected American responses ($N = 106$, 72.5% female) from the crowdsourcing platform Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). A multiple snowball technique was employed for the Thai sample ($N = 78$, 54% female), which now included participants of all educational levels. The same questionnaire used in the first round was employed in the second round of the pretest. We found that the revised posts could be used as informative, entertaining, and social posts (see Online Appendix). Figure 2 presents the process of stimuli development.

Participants and Manipulation Check

Regarding the main study, we used an online panel from Qualtrics to administer the 15-minute online survey.

A total of 812 Facebook users living in KR, NL, TH, and US, all of whom had engaged with Br-UGC earlier, participated in the study. The participants were 49.3% female. Regarding age, 48% of participants were 18 to 34 years old, 35.4% were 35 to 54 years old, and 16.6% were older than 55. The samples were comparable in terms of age and gender across the four countries. Table 1 presents the distribution of demographic characteristics.

While the manipulation of tie strength worked as expected, the manipulated content characteristics did not

work as intended across the four countries. American participants saw no significant difference in perceived informativeness between the manipulated informative and the manipulated entertaining posts. Similarly, South Korean respondents saw no significant difference in perceived entertainment value between the manipulated informative and the manipulated entertaining posts. We should note that several studies have shown that personalized messages manipulated by researchers do not automatically match how those messages are perceived (the degree to which consumers see a match between a message and themselves; De Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker 2015). De Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2015) found that perceived personalized advertising messages appeared to be more relevant than the actual personalized advertising messages. In our study, it is likely that participants tended to subjectively evaluate the characteristics of the Br-UGC (our stimuli) based on their personal preferences and interests. Thus, in line with previous research, we employed participants' perceptions toward the three content characteristics in the analysis as outlined in the next section.
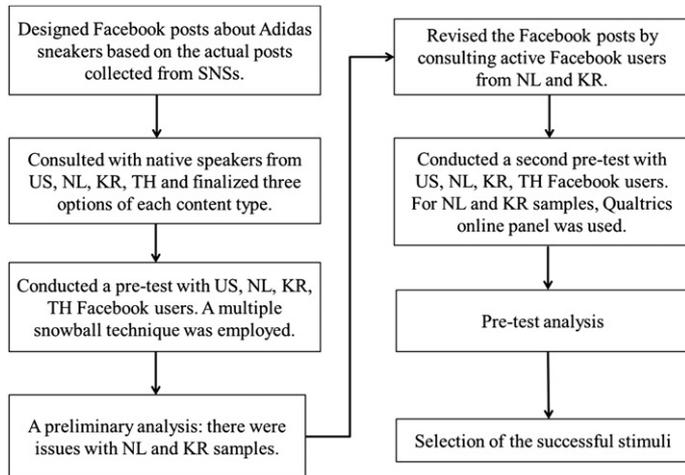
FIG. 2. The process of stimuli development.

Measures

Validated scales derived from previous studies were used to measure independent variables, dependent

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics by Country.

	US (%)	NL (%)	KR (%)	TH (%)
Gender				
Male	45.8	49	52.7	50
Female	54.2	51	46.8	50
Age				
18 to 34	39.4	41	41.8	40.9
35 to 54	40.9	39	41.3	40.4
55 and older	19.7	20	16.9	18.8
Education				
Below secondary school	19.7	0.5	–	0.5
Secondary school and above	30.5	15.5	14.9	16.8
Undergraduate and above	40.9	73	76.1	74.5
Master's degree and above	8.9	11	9	8.2
Income[a]				
Below average	31.1	22.7	12.5	20.2
Average	26.5	22	19.4	31.7
Above average	42.4	55.3	68.1	48.1

Note. N = 812. US = the United States; NL = the Netherlands; KR = South Korea; TH = Thailand.
[a]Participants answered level of income using a scale with anchors at 1 = *Lowest income* and 10 = *Highest income*. The average income per month of US, NL, KR, and TH was USD 2,224, EUR 2,193, KRW 1,813,458, and THB 20,000, respectively (OECD 2017).

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables by National Culture and Bivariate Correlations of Variables.

| | COL (N = 409) | | IDV (N = 403) | | | | | | | | | | |
Variables	M	SE	M	SE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
INF	4.52	1.29	4.12	1.70	1								
ENT	4.52	1.25	4.47	1.61	.74**	1							
SOC	4.71	1.14	4.73	1.23	.57**	.54**	1						
TIE	5.02	1.33	5.12	1.60	.37**	.37**	.27**	1					
LIKE	5.31	1.50	4.93	1.99	.58**	.64**	.38**	.47**	1				
COM	4.62	1.75	4.25	2.08	.55**	.59**	.42**	.54**	.68**	1			
SHARE	3.76	1.79	3.19	2.18	.59**	.51**	.43**	.33**	.47**	.60**	1		
PERSON	.05	1.82	.76	2.04	.06	.13**	.13**	.19**	.13**	.10**	.03	1	
NATION	—		—		.13**	.02	−.01	−.03	.11**	.10**	.14**	−.18**	1

Note. National collectivism-individualism was included as a dichotomous variable in which 0 = individualistic cultures (NL, US), 1 = collectivistic cultures (KR, TH). COL = collectivistic cultures; IDV: individualistic cultures; INF = perceived informativeness; ENT = perceived entertainment value; SOC = perceived sociability; TIE = perceived tie strength; LIKE = likelihood of "liking"; COM = likelihood of commenting; SHARE = likelihood of sharing; PERSON = index of personal collectivism-individualism; NATION = national collectivism-individualism.
**$p < .01$.

variables, moderators, and control variables. Factor analyses and Cronbach's alphas were computed to assess the applicability and reliability of the measures among participants in each sample. All of the measures in our samples demonstrated good reliability, ranging from .77 to .93 (see Appendix). Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the key variables for the collectivistic cultures (KR, TH) and individualistic cultures (NL, US) samples, as well as bivariate correlation coefficients.

Independent Variables
Characteristics of Br-UGC

Participants assessed the brand-related content on three constructs: informativeness, entertainment value (Edwards, Li, and Lee 2002), and sociability (Chow and Shi 2015) by completing 12 items on a 7-point Likert scale. Informativeness items included "The Facebook post I saw was helpful, important, informative, and useful." Entertainment value items included "The Facebook post I saw was attractive, enjoyable, entertaining, and fun." Finally, sociability items included statements related to social presence (e.g., "The author was counting on getting a lot of responses"), interactivity (e.g., "There was a sense of human contact in the post"), and collaboration (e.g., "The author was asking for help from other users").

Tie Strength

Participants evaluated tie strength with the Facebook poster by completing eight items on a 7-point Likert scale. Six items were taken from a social tie strength scale (Shan and King 2015), for example, "I am committed to maintaining my relationship with this person" and "I feel very strongly linked to this person." We added two items: duration of being friends and social distance, as Gilbert and Karahalios (2009) have proposed that these factors strongly associate with tie strength.

Dependent Variables
Br-UGC Engagement

Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to respond to the brand-related post on a 7-point scale (1 = *Very unlikely*, 7 = *Very likely*). The responses included *I would "like" this post*, *I would comment on this post*, and *I would share this post with all of my Facebook friends*.

Moderators
National Collectivism-Individualism

According to the collectivism-individualism dimension of Hofstede (2001), NL and US are individualistic countries with very high scores: 80 and 91, respectively. On the other hand, KR and TH are considered highly collectivistic societies, with low scores: 18 and 20, respectively. In the analysis, the country of the sample was coded as a dummy variable, where 0 = individualistic culture (NL, US), and 1 = collectivistic culture (KR, TH).

TABLE 3
Bivariate Correlations of HI, VI, HC, VC, Index, and Other Variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
HI	1											
VI	.33**	1										
HC	.37**	.25**	1									
VC	.35**	.31**	.58**	1								
Informativeness	.15**	.34**	.26**	.35**	1							
Entertainment	.17**	.27**	.32**	.36**	.74**	1						
Social	.21**	.30**	.39**	.36**	.57**	.54**	1					
Tie	.20**	.15**	.32**	.37**	.37**	.37**	.27**	1				
Like	.17**	.22**	.26**	.36**	.58**	.64**	.38**	.47**	1			
Comment	.17**	.30**	.28**	.36**	.55**	.59**	.42**	.54**	.68**	1		
Share	.14**	.30**	.23**	.28**	.59**	.51**	.43**	.33**	.47**	.60**	1	
INDEX	−.28**	-.46**	.53**	.54**	.06	.13**	.13**	.19**	.13**	.10**	.03	1

Note. HI = horizontal individualism; VI = vertical individualism; HC = horizontal collectivism; VC = vertical collectivism; INDEX = index of personal collectivism-individualism.

Personal Collectivism-Individualism

We employed the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the individualism-collectivism scale to measure each participant's collectivistic-individualistic values, as this scale has been validated and used to measure the extent of collectivism-individualism at the personal level (Singelis et al. 1995). Participants assessed 16 items on a 7-point Likert scale: (1) four items of horizontal individualism (HI) measure the extent people strive to be unique and do their own thing (uniqueness); (2) four items of vertical individualism (VI) assess the extent people want to be the best (achievement oriented); (3) four items of horizontal collectivism (HC) evaluate the extent people merge themselves with their in-groups (cooperativeness); and finally (4) four items of vertical collectivism (VC) measure to what extent people submit to the authorities of the in-group and are willing to sacrifice themselves for their in-group (dutifulness). The scale indicates good reliability, ranging from .79 to .86. To examine the degree of collectivism-individualism of each individual, we need an index or a composite figure, which summarizes collectivistic-individualistic values at the personal level.

To create the index, we computed means of HI, VI, HC, and VC into an index of individuals' collectivistic-individualistic values: [(HC + VC) − (HI + VI)]. Negative values denote individualistic values, and positive values indicate that the respondent tends to be more collectivistic. Our index of personal collectivism-individualism showed notably strong correlations with the independent and dependent variables (see Table 3). Thus, the index appears to have a high degree of validity (Taras, Steel, and Kirkman 2012).

Control Variables

Demographic information (gender, age, educational level, income), Facebook use intensity, brand attitude (Sengupta and Johar 2002), brand familiarity (Zhou, Yang, and Hui 2010), and personality traits—extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and imagination (Donnellan et al. 2006)—served as control variables in the study.

Analysis

To test our hypotheses, we conducted 12 separate analyses for four independent variables (perceived informativeness, entertainment value, sociability of the content, and perceived tie strength with a source) and three dependent variables (the tendency to "like," comment on, and share Br-UGC). In these 12 models, personal and national collectivism-individualism served as moderators. A moderated moderation analysis using Hayes's approach (Hayes 2013, Model 3) was employed to analyze our data.

RESULTS

We examined whether different perceived content characteristics and perceived tie strength had a direct effect on consumers' engagement with Br-UGC and, in particular, how cultural collectivism-individualism at the personal and national levels influenced these associations.

The Effect of Perceived Content Characteristics on Consumers' Engagement with Br-UGC
Main Effect

The first three hypotheses stated that informative, entertainment, and social values of the content made Br-

TABLE 4
Predictors of "Liking" BR-UGC.

| | "Liking" BR-UGC | | | | | | | |
| | Informativeness | | Entertainment Value | | Sociability | | Tie Strength | |
Variables	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI
Constant	−.09	[−1.28, 1.10]	−.50	[−1.65, .64]	−1.50	[−2.83, −.18]	−1.35	[−2.70, .003]
NATION (COL)	.42	[−.22, 1.06]	.76*	[.11, 1.42]	1.26**	[.38, 2.14]	.36*	[−.41, 1.12]
Independent variable	.55***	[.45, .64]	.67***	[.58, .77]	.44***	[.31, .57]	.55***	[.36, .56]
Independent variable × NATION	−.07	[−.21, .64]	−.11	[−.24, .03]	−.22*	[−.40, −.04]	−.02	[−.16, .13]
PERSON (COL)	.21*	[.04, .38]	.12	[−.06, .30]	.44**	[.19, .69]	.08	[−.13, .28]
Independent variable × PERSON	−.03	[−.07, .007]	−.02	[−.05, .02]	−.08*	[−.13, −.03]	−.001	[−.04, .04]
Independent variable × NATION × PERSON	.01	[−.05, .07]	.004	[−.05, .06]	.06	[−.02, .15]	−.02	[−.08, .05]
R^2	.43		.47		.36		.37	
F	28.11***		34.01***		21.05***		20.72***	

Note. Given the length of this article, we report the effects of control variables in the Online Appendix. We also conducted additional analyses to examine the effects of each dimension of horizontal and vertical collectivism and individualism. We created new models using each mean of these dimensions (instead of the index). In general, the explained variances of these new models (measured as adjusted R^2) were almost the same or even lower than those of the current models. Considering the predictive validity of our index, we believe that the current analytical approach works best to address the main aims of our study. $N = 812$. CI = confidence interval; NATION = national collectivism-individualism; PERSON = index of personal collectivism-individualism.
*$p < .05$;
**$p < .01$;
***$p < .001$.

UGC engagement more likely. As expected, people were more likely to engage with the Br-UGC the more that they perceived that the content was informative ($b_{like} = .55$, $p < .001$; $b_{comment} = .53$, $p < .001$; $b_{share} = .68$, $p < .001$), entertaining ($b_{like} = .67$, $p < .001$; $b_{comment} = .59$, $p < .001$; $b_{share} = .64$, $p < .001$), and social ($b_{like} = .44$, $p < .001$; $b_{comment} = .55$, $p < .001$; $b_{share} = .69$, $p < .001$). Thus, the results supported hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Moderating Effect of National Collectivism-Individualism

With respect to "liking," we did not find any difference between cultures (see Table 4). When it comes to commenting and sharing, several differences were found. Contrary to our hypotheses, however, when Br-UGC was perceived to be more entertaining, consumers living in individualistic cultures were more likely to share the content than those living in collectivistic cultures ($b_{share} = −.19$, $effect_{IDV} = .60$, SE = .07, 95% confidence interval

(CI) [.46, .74], $p < .001$; $effect_{COL} = .50$, SE = .11, 95% CI [.29, .71], $p < .001$). Moreover, when the Br-UGC was perceived to have elements of social interactivity, consumers living in individualistic cultures were more likely to engage in both commenting ($b_{comment} = −.25$, $effect_{IDV} = .45$, SE = .08, 95% CI [.29, .60], $p < .001$; $effect_{COL} = .30$, SE = .11, 95% CI [.09, .52], $p = .006$) and sharing ($b_{share} = −.33$, $effect_{IDV} = .64$, SE = .09, 95% CI [.47, .81], $p < .001$; $effect_{COL} = .52$, SE = .12, 95% CI [.27, .76], $p < .001$) than consumers from collectivistic cultures (see Tables 5 and 6). Thus, our hypotheses (hypotheses 5, 6, and 7) were not supported.

The Effect of Tie Strength on Br-UGC Engagement
Main Effect

Hypothesis 4 stated that tie strength with a source would positively influence consumers' engagement with Br-UGC. The results supported hypothesis 4 by

TABLE 5
Predictors of Commenting on BR-UGC.

Variables	Informativeness		Entertainment Value		Sociability		Tie Strength	
	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI
Constant	−1.54	[−2.82, −.27]	−1.42	[−2.69, −.16]	−2.30	[−3.69, −.91]	−1.58	[−2.99, −.16]
NATION (COL)	.39	[−.30, 1.07]	.65	[−.06, 1.37]	1.56**	[.63, 2.49]	−.36	[−1.17, .44]
Independent variable	.53***	[.43, .63]	.59***	[.49, .70]	.55***	[.41, .69]	.49***	[.39, .59]
Independent variable × NATION	−.04	[−.19, .10]	−.06	[−.21, .09]	−.25**	[−.44, −.06]	.15*	[.001, .31]
PERSON (COL)	.10	[−.08, .28]	.10	[−.09, .30]	.25	[−.02, .51]	−.07	[−.28, .15]
Independent variable × PERSON	−.01	[−.05, .03]	−.02	[−.06, .02]	-.05	[−.10, .009]	.02	[−.02, .06]
Independent variable × NATION × PERSON	.02	[−.05, .03]	.02	[−.04, .09]	.05	[−.04, .14]	-.03	[−.10, .04]
R^2	.44		.45		.39		.40	
F	29.57***		30.84***		23.69***		23.52***	

Note. See note for Table 4. $N = 812$. CI = confidence interval; NATION = national collectivism-individualism; PERSON = index of personal collectivism-individualism.
*$p < .05$;
**$p < .01$;
***$p < .001$.

demonstrating that when people were exposed to Br-UGC created by a strong-tie source, they were more likely to engage with such Br-UGC ($b_{like} = .55$, $p < .001$; $b_{comment} = .49$, $p < .001$; $b_{share} = .68$, $p < .001$).

Moderating Effect of National Collectivism-Individualism

The results also supported our hypothesis (hypothesis 8) that people in collectivistic cultures were more likely to comment on Br-UGC created by strong-tie friends compared to those in individualistic cultures ($b_{comment} = .15$, indirect effect$_{COL} = .61$, SE = .09, 95% CI [.43, .80], $p < .001$; indirect effect$_{IDV} = .54$, SE = .06, 95% CI [.42, .66], $p < .001$).

The Effect of Personal Collectivism-Individualism on Br-UGC Engagement

Regarding research question 1, we investigated whether personal collectivism-individualism influenced the likelihood of "liking," commenting, and sharing Br-UGC. The results showed that personal collectivism-individualism directly affected consumers' engagement with Br-UGC. Specifically, personal collectivism-individualism positively affected the likelihood of "liking" informative ($b_{like} = .21$, $p < .05$) and social ($b_{like} = .44$, $p < .05$) Br-UGC. We did not find a direct effect of personal collectivism-individualism on commenting and sharing Br-UGC.

Regarding a moderating effect, we found that consumers holding individualistic values were more likely to "like" social Br-UGC content than those holding collectivistic values ($b_{like} = −.08$, effect$_{IDV} = .24$, SE = .09, 95% CI [.07, .42], $p = .007$; effect$_{COL} = .21$, SE = .07, 95% CI [.07, .35], $p = .003$). However, there was no moderating effect of personal collectivism-individualism on the impact of the type of content on commenting, nor on sharing Br-UGC, meaning that collectivistic and individualistic participants were as likely to comment on and share the Br-UGC. We also did not find a moderating effect of personal collectivism-individualism on tie strength and engagement with Br-UGC.

Moreover, the results of the PROCESS macroanalysis showed a three-way interaction effect between informative content, national culture, and personal values on sharing Br-UGC ($b = .07$, $p = .03$). Notably, a simple

TABLE 6
Predictors of Sharing BR-UGC.

| Variables | Sharing BR-UGC | | | | | | | |
| | Informativeness | | Entertainment Value | | Sociability | | Tie Strength | |
	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI	B	95% CI
Constant	.39	[−1.01, 1.78]	−.07	[−1.53, 1.39]	−.23	[−1.79, 1.32]	1.57	[−.06, 3.20]
NATION (COL)	.53	[−.23, 1.28]	1.34**	[.51, 2.17]	1.98**	[.95, 3.02]	−.24	[−1.18, .70]
Independent variable	.68***	[.57, .79]	.64***	[.52, .76]	.69***	[.53, .85]	.68***	[.11, .36]
Independent variable × NATION	−.07	[−.23, .09]	−.19*	[−.37, −.02]	−.33**	[−.54, −.11]	.12	[−.04, .32]
PERSON (COL)	.04	[−.16, .24]	.05	[−.18, .28]	.07	[−.22, .37]	−.21	[−.46, .04]
Independent variable × PERSON	−.009	[−.05, .03]	−.02	[−.06, .03]	−.02	[−.08, .04]	.04	[−.006, .09]
Independent variable × NATION* PERSON	.07*	[.0004, .14]	.04	[−.04, .12]	.08	[−.01, .18]	−.02	[−.10, .07]
R^2	.40		.35		.33		.27	
F	25.13***		20.14***		18.28***		13.64***	

Note. See notes for Tables 4 and 5. $N = 812$. CI = confidence interval; NATION = national collectivism-individualism; PERSON = index of personal collectivism-individualism.
*$p < .05$;
**$p < .01$;
***$p < .001$.

slope analysis showed that the people who held collectivistic values and lived in collectivistic cultures were more likely to share informative Br-UGC than the people who held individualistic values and lived in collectivistic culture.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate how personal and national collectivism-individualism influences the impact of content characteristics and social relationships on consumers' engagement with Br-UGC. Based on responses of more than 800 active Facebook users living in South Korea, Thailand, the Netherlands, and the United States, our results provide several insights that align with earlier research, as well as extend it.

The results contribute to the advertising and marketing literature by demonstrating that the perceived informativeness, entertainment value, and sociability of Br-UGC increase how likely consumers across cultures are to not only share the content (Chow and Shi 2015; Lovett, Peres, and Shachar 2013) but also "like" and comment on it. While previous studies that employed CVT focused on

content created by brands (not by consumers), our results extend the use of CVT to investigate consumers' engagement with brand-related content generated by another consumer (consumer–consumer relationships). In addition to showing the importance of content characteristics, the results indicate that the role of social relationships with the source is also crucial in how consumers engage with Br-UGC. Specifically, consumers from both collectivistic and individualistic cultures are more likely to respond to Br-UGC created by a person they know very well rather than an acquaintance. Our finding validates the positive effects of tie strength on how eWOM is evaluated across cultures (Shan and King 2015), as well as the intention to share product reviews (Kim, Cheong, and Kim 2015).

While the results confirm that informative, entertaining, and social Br-UGC created by strong-tie source increases the likelihood of Br-UGC engagement across cultures, we found interesting results regarding the different levels of Br-UGC engagement. For instance, at the lowest level of engagement—in this study, "liking" Br-UGC—no differences were found among consumers from different cultures. This can be explained by the fact that the "like" function on Facebook is less public and less

intrusive than is commenting or sharing. "Liking" might be the most comfortable way for consumers across cultures to safely express their personal preferences and interests. This finding adds to our understanding of how different online brand-related activities require different levels of consumer engagement.

Nonetheless, when it comes to higher levels of engagement—namely, commenting and sharing—differences were found. Our results reveal that, contrary to our expectations, consumers from individualistic cultures indicated a higher likelihood of making a comment and sharing social Br-UGC than consumers from collectivistic cultures, regardless of who created the content. However, the effect of having a strong tie with the creator on commenting was greater for consumers from collectivistic cultures than for those from individualistic cultures. Given that replying or commenting are among the strongest predictors of peer bonding (Liu, Ainsworth, and Baumeister 2016), and because people engage in conversation with others in this way, this may imply that consumers from collectivistic cultures tend to prefer building and strengthening lifetime relationships, which reinforces the concept of peer bonding that is emphasized in collectivistic societies. These outcomes would suggest that engaging with social Br-UGC serves as a means for consumers in individualistic cultures to extend their networks, while engaging with Br-UGC created by strong-tie friends is a way for consumers in collectivistic cultures to strengthen social relationships with existing friends. Thus, reinforcing social relationships with existing friends (bonding social capital) tends to be more relevant to group-oriented collectivistic cultures (Korean and Thai cultures in our study).

Moreover, in line with earlier cross-cultural consumer research, our results go one step further by investigating the extent to which individual characteristics—namely, personal collectivism-individualism—have a moderating influence in the effect of content characteristics and tie strength on Br-UGC engagement. We did not find a significant difference between how collectivistic and individualistic participants comment on and share Br-UGC. However, the effect of both personal and national collectivism-individualism on Br-UGC engagement presents an interesting finding. Specifically, when Br-UGC is perceived as useful and helpful, collectivistic South Korean and Thai participants appear to share more Br-UGC than those who are more individualistic when the content is perceived as informative.

This three-way interaction effect could be explained in this way: When Br-UGC is perceived as highly informative, collectivistic individuals will decide whether to share this depending on the audience who will receive the content. As noted by self-disclosure studies (Leary and Kowalski 1990), individuals who hold the same values as others in their networks tend to feel more connected and more comfortable expressing their opinions. In addition, our findings emphasize the important role of national collectivism-individualism in how consumers engage with Br-UGC. Although people from the same culture hold different degrees of personal collectivism-individualism, when they engage with Br-UGC they tend to comply closely with their national culture or the sociocultural system to which they belong. Even though our South Korean and Thai participants are Facebook users who have probably been exposed to global media and individualistic Western ways of thinking, their behavior still seems to essentially conform to the hierarchical order and highly contextualized context emphasized in South Korean and Thai societies (Lewis 2010).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

From a practical perspective, this study illustrates how the elements of informativeness, entertainment value, and sociability appear to prompt consumers across cultures to engage with Br-UGC. Particularly, Br-UGC published by close friends or family on SNSs could serve as a credible consumer review, possibly generating a positive attitude about the brand, as well as encouraging the consumer to share the information (Cho, Huh, and Faber 2014). Thus, encouraging consumers to discuss brands on SNSs can contribute to brand awareness and positive attitudes toward the brand.

The study also suggests that social relationships within networks are more influential for consumers from collectivistic cultures than for consumers from individualistic cultures. This implies that marketers should recognize that individuals from collectivistic cultures are more likely to agree with the opinions of their friends and how they perceive a brand will tend to be significantly influenced by their friends. Thus, brands might want to consider emphasizing the benefits of social relations when marketing in collectivistic countries (e.g., values of friendship, social support). We further found that Br-UGC containing an element of sociability increases engagement among consumers from individualistic cultures more than it does among consumers from collectivistic cultures. This suggests that consumers from individualistic societies like to interact with their peers to express their opinions or help others. Hence, if a company can provide a channel or a social-related function for consumers, especially those from individualistic societies, where they can freely express ideas about a product or a brand and get their friends on SNSs involved, this would help the company generate content and spread the word about the brand.

Given that different online brand-related activities require different levels of consumer engagement with Br-UGC, we recommend that brand managers view consumers' commenting and sharing Br-UGC as powerful strategies to engage the consumers. In this way, Br-UGC that

is shared and responded to by one consumer can reach a wide range of other consumers. More important, consumers appear to be expressing a desire for social interaction and integration when they comment on Br-UGC and share it (Kitirattarkarn, Araujo, and Neijens 2018). Thus, promoting social Br-UGC would encourage even more participation among users.

Moreover, when considering personal collectivism-individualism, marketers need to be aware that consumers are embedded in their national culture. This cultural embedding might overrule personal considerations and, as we have seen, affect how and when they express their preferences and interests on Facebook.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

While our findings offer significant insights into cross-cultural advertising research, this study has a number of limitations that should be recognized and addressed. First, even though our study extends traditional cross-cultural research designs by comparing differences both between collectivistic-individualistic national cultures and the degree of personal collectivism-individualism in the same research design, it must be noted that there are different ways of investigating differences at the personal level, such as personality traits (Triandis 2001) or the degree of autonomy, hierarchy, and mastery (Schwartz 2006). Moreover, we did not consider participants' ethnic backgrounds; thus, it is possible that people from individualistic countries who were raised in a collectivistic family (for example, Asian Americans or Mexican Americans) may hold more collectivistic values than the Americans on whom Hofstede based his classifications. Second, it is worth noting that our results represent Facebook users only and cannot be generalized to the general populations of these countries. In particular, our participants are well educated, especially in the case of the South Korean and Thai participants; thus, this group might be more cosmopolitan and less dependent on traditional values due to higher exposure to global media and communication. Third, although we consulted extensively with Facebook users from the four countries before developing the stimulus materials, the manipulation of informative and entertaining content did not work as we had intended. As individual and subjective interpretations of content appear to be inevitable, more effective methods need to be developed to evaluate this. Finally, because our results are based on an online experiment and not on people's everyday lives, the issue of ecological validity needs to be mentioned. In addition, the stimuli used in the present study focused on a single product category and contained only positive Br-UGC. It remains to be seen whether the results would be the same for negative

Br-UGC, as negative comments might also affect consumers' decision making across cultures.

In the future, researchers can validate and extend our work in at least three ways. First, as studies using Hofstede's dimensions have found cultural changes in national collectivism-individualism (Taras, Steel, and Kirkman 2012), societies identified in the past as the most individualistic might not necessarily be the most individualistic. To validate our study's results, future cross-cultural research could consider replicating this study by looking more closely at the role of personal values related to individuals' personality traits or ethnic backgrounds and investigate how these personal values affect engagement with Br-UGC. Second, future research may need to investigate other product categories, as consumers' motivations for engaging with brands can differ as a result of different product categories. Finally, our findings could be further substantiated by using actual behavioral data on social networking sites (e.g., by tracking consumers' responses to brand-related content).

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

An Online Appendix (Tables 8–17; Figures 3 and 4) can be accessed on the publisher's website at https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1590884.

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APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF THE KEY MEASURE RELIABILITY

Construct and Measurement Items	US		NL		KR		TH		ALL	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Facebook use intensity Facebook is a part of my everyday activity. I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook. Facebook have become part of my daily routine. I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while. I feel I am part of a Facebook community. I would be sorry if Facebook shuts down.	5.77	1.26	4.48	1.24	4.30	1.36	5.21	1.03	4.94	1.36
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.93		.88		.88		.93		.92	
Tie strength I am committed to maintain my relationship with this person. I want our relationship to last for a long time. I feel very strongly linked to this person. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future. I am oriented toward continuing this relationship long term. The relationship with this person is important to me. I have become Friend with this person on Facebook long time ago. This person and I have the same social class background.	5.66	1.38	4.56	1.62	4.74	1.39	5.34	1.13	5.08	1.45
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.85		.91		.91		.92		.90	
Perceived informativeness "The Facebook post I just saw was . . ." Helpful Important Informative Useful	4.76	1.65	3.48	1.50	4.41	1.38	4.72	1.11	4.35	1.51
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.94		.90		.94		.92		.93	

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*).

Perceived entertainment value "The Facebook post I just saw was . . ." Attractive Enjoyable Entertaining Fun	4.97	1.58	3.96	1.47	4.37	1.40	4.67	0.98	4.50	1.42
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.94		.91		.95		.91		.93	
Perceived sociability The author is counting on getting a lot of responses. The author is asking for help from other users. The author is expressing his/her idea to other users. There is a sense of human contact in this post.	5.09	1.26	4.39	1.08	4.62	1.12	4.92	1.06	4.76	1.16
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.76		.63		.80		.84		.77	
Brand attitude I think the brand Adidas is a very good brand. I think the brand Adidas is very useful. My opinion of the brand Adidas is very favorable.	5.78	1.02	5.13	1.11	5.42	1.02	5.99	0.76	5.58	1.04
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.88		.85		.94		.90		.90	
Brand familiarity The brand Adidas is very familiar to me. I'm very knowledgeable about Adidas. I have seen many advertisements about Adidas.	5.46	1.27	4.92	1.24	5.46	0.98	5.78	0.86	5.41	1.14
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.86		.82		.77		.83		.83	
Collectivistic-individualistic values Horizontal individualism I would rather depend on myself than others. I rely on myself most of the time. I rarely rely on others. I often do my own thing. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.	5.87	0.97	5.42	0.94	5.52	0.88	5.68	0.82	5.63	0.92
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.81		.79		.82		.80		.80	

(*Continued*).

Vertical individualism	4.63	1.34	4.10	1.14	4.93	0.94	4.88	1.11	4.64	1.19
It is important for me to do my job better than the others.										
Winning is everything.										
Competition is the law of nature.										
When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.										
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.80		.75		.79		.82		.79	
Horizontal collectivism	5.76	0.95	5.15	0.99	5.03	0.96	5.33	0.86	5.32	0.98
If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.										
The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.										
To me, pleasure is spending time with others.										
I feel good when I cooperate with others.										
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.81		.80		.84		.82		.83	
Vertical collectivism	5.75	0.94	4.88	1.20	4.90	1.16	5.93	0.87	5.37	1.15
Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.										
It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.										
Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.										
It is important to me that I respect the decision made by my groups.										
Cronbach's alpha (α)	.78		.85		.86		.87		.86	

Note. US = American sample; NL = Dutch sample; KR = South Korean sample; TH = Thai sample; ALL = four composite sample.