Understanding the Antecedents of Brand Hate: A Conceptual Model of Consumer Responses

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ABSTRACT

Brand hate has become a growing area of interest in consumer behavior research, yet its antecedents remain insufficiently examined. This conceptual paper aims to explore the key antecedents that trigger brand hate and shape consumers' negative emotional responses toward brands. The proposed model identifies four major sources of brand hate: perceived price unfairness, poor-quality relationships between consumers and brands, neglect of consumer voice, and antecedents outside the firm's control such as social, cultural, environmental, or situational influences. Each of these factors can evoke strong negative emotions, leading to hate toward a brand. By studying these antecedents, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how brand hate originates and develops, offering insights for both researchers and practitioners to better prevent and manage consumer hostility.

INTRODUCTION

Brand hate is an emerging area of significance. The firm and academics aim to explore the management strategy of this concept. The evolving literature studying these gabs is little ignored (Mednini and Damak Turki, 2024). Kucuk (2019) proposed that such strategy from the firm like compensation, policy, and process improvement leads to consumer satisfaction after a service failure. Moreover, in the brand hate context, Ahmed and Hashim (2018) found that an excuse with an explanation plus compensation conducts to desire to reconciliation. In fact, the previous research has been scarcely investigated the negative emotion management from the part of consumer behavior (Senan et al., 2025).

This paper aims to discuss this lack of research to form a broader perspective, which conducts us to add a more encompassing conceptualization of brand hate. First, Prior research indicates that facilitating customer complaints can enhance satisfaction (Sparks and McColl-Kennedy, 2001). This concept, known as consumer voice, suggests that when customers are given a platform to narrate their negative experiences, they are more inclined to grant brand forgiveness (Harisson-Walker, 2019). Furthermore, modern consumers increasingly seek to voice concerns on a wide range of issues, including environmental, social, and personal well-being (Sarkar and Kotler, 2018). However, the role of this expressed consumer voice as a potential antecedent to corporate-related brand hate remains an under-explored area in the literature. Second, corporate oversight or neglect can be a significant source of customer dissatisfaction. The existing literature on brand hate has primarily focused on two categories of antecedents: those related to brand (e.g., Zarantenello et al., 2016; Hashim & Kasana, 2019; Pinto et al., 2021; Taqi et al., 2025) and those stemming from the personal characteristics of consumers (e.g., Ali et al., 2020; Valenzuela et al., 2022). However, antecedents that are external to the firm and beyond its direct control remain a notably under-investigated area of research.

The current research illustrates the following objective, studying the antecedents of brand hate. Our research on brand hate is expanding but at these, early stage linked on conceptual study including emerging empirical studies.

The article is structured as follows. The paper start with an examination of the brand hate literature to construct the broader view of our principal concept. Second, this study represents the buildings blocks for models developments, which include several hypotheses. Finally, response consumer toward brand hate model will be discuss, before address the research contributions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Current approaches

According to the literature, we find that the majority of the previous studies on brand hate focused on the antecedents and consequences of this emotion (Bryson et al., 2013, Kucuk 2016, 2019a; Zarantonello et al., 2016, Hegner et al., 2017; Hashim and Kasana, 2019; Husnain et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2020; Joshi & Yadav, 2020). Little attention has been discussed the management strategies for negative emotion (Kucuk, 2016, 2019; Ahmed and hashim, 2018; Curina et al., 2019). Other authors have focused on its composition (Kucuk, 2019; Fetscherin, 2019; Zhang and Laroche, 2020). In fact, the work of Zarantenello et al. (2018) demonstrated the importance of the trajectories of brand hate, more precisely, their study made it possible to understand the development of this one by asking respondents to expose their feelings towards a brand for the past, present, and future. Several publications have appeared in recent years documenting this resentment in the food sector (Islam et al. 2019; Bryson et al., 2018), in the tourism sector (Fahmi et al., 2018; Farhat and Chaney, 2020) and in the luxury sector (Bryson et al., 2013).

Moreover, the work of Bottin (2016) introduces a general review of this concept by exploring its compositions and the various characteristics of hate customers. In his work, he proposed and examined a new reliable measurement scale. Finally, Kucuk (2019) has been discussed the importance of the big five personalities of hate consumers.

Current Gaps in the Brand Hate Literature

Scrutiny of the brand hate literature shows that the dominant approach to brand hate highlights the importance of this feeling. Negative experiences toward brand received less attention from the practitioners until we began to see consumer hostility toward brand hate (Kucuk, 2019).

For several years, great effort has been devoted to the study of antecedents brand hate. In fact, the firm should know the reasons that push the consumer to transform on hater. However, most of the previous research does not take into account many other antecedents. First, very few publications can be found in the literature that discusses the impact of price unfairness of such product or service on brand hate. Ali at al. (2020) is the only authors that investigate this effect mediates by dissatisfaction. Second, few studies have recently been presented the relation between poor quality relationships and brand hate (Hashim and Kasana, 2019). Third, the consumer who uses his voice to express his negative feeling toward the brand is more satisfied than the consumer who did not find the firm listening to his complaint (Harisson-Walker, 2018). The consumer voice concept has been studied in service recovery (Harisson-Walker, 2018; Sparks et McColl-Kennedy 2001, Robertson & Shaw, 2006; Iacobucci et Ostrom& Grayson, 1995). The current research will discuss this concept as an antecedent of brand hate. Fifth, such consumer has negative feeling toward the brand because of antecedent outside control the firm. In fact, Covid-19 was a pandemic that change the feeling of people in general and the consumer in particular. The literature on brand hate shows only two types of antecedents, which are company and consumer related brand hate antecedents (Kucuk, 2019). However, in our knowledge, no study has been mentioned this antecedent.

Finally, the paper addresses the current gaps which relate to effect antecedents on brand hate and construct strong relation with hater after his negative experience.

Buildings Blocks for Model Development

From Building Blocks to Model Development: Consumer Response to Brand Hate Model

Based on Adams's (1965) equity theory, price unfairness reflects the customer's perception of a discrepancy

between price and quality—specifically, between the price paid and the quality offered compared with competitors (Kaura et al., 2015). With the advent of the Internet, consumers can easily find out what others are paying online (for example, through chats, blogs, Facebook, or Instagram). This perception of inequity may generate highly detrimental outcomes for consumer behavior, such as terminating the business relationship, spreading negative information, or even taking legal action (Gerlick and Liozu, 2020). Consequently, this inequity leads to dissatisfaction and unpleasant emotional states such as anger or guilt, as well as other negative impacts (Adams, 1965). Price unfairness has been identifies as an antecedent of consumer dissatisfaction (Ali et al., 2020). Herrmann et al., (2007) noted that perceived price unfairness refers to the divergence between the internal reference price and the external reference price. Certain firm propose a poor product with high price, more precisely, overpriced and leads the consumer to transform on hater (Kucuk, 2019). The conceptual research of Kucuk (2019) reveals that 34% of clients propose that price unfairness is among the brand hate antecedents. While there is no empirical study has studying the direct relation between brands hate and price unfairness, which leads to the proposition:

H1: Price unfairness leads to brand hate

The concept of relationality is a key sales tactic, prompting salespeople to build strong consumer relationships based on the inherent mutual affinity between companies and their customers (Ghzaiel and Akrout, 2012). The foundation of the consumer-salesperson relationship is a dynamic exchange process. Although the context is commercial, the relationship's nature is inherently social, making the quality of the interpersonal connection paramount (Kanagal, 2009). Consumers conduct a cognitive evaluation, first appraising the firm's relational activities and then extrapolating that judgment to its products. This perception of relationship quality is intrinsically linked to the concept of consumer value, defined by Liljander and Strandvik (1995) as the "relational perceived value" formed when consumers weigh their perceptions of service quality against the sacrifices incurred. Poor relationship quality is linked with the concept of relationship equity (Hashim and Kasana, 2019). Kim et al. (2013) noticed that the consumer who has forte relation with brand, which conduct him to memorized this relation in the form of relational schema. Fournier (1986) stated that the positive relation between consumer and brand affect love toward brand, while negative relation can destroy this relation and leads to brand hate (Hashim and Kasana, 2019) which leading us to propose that:

H2: Poor relationship quality leads to brand hate

Albert Hirschman's (1970) theory proposes three key concepts: exit, voice, and loyalty. Voice and exit are mediated by customers' loyalty to a specific organization (Allen, 2020). Hirschman (1970) posits that exit and voice work in tandem to improve organizational performance (Allen, 2020). From the customer's perspective, there are at least two distinct decisions: one regarding exit and another regarding voice, as these are not mutually exclusive alternatives (Barry, 1974; Keeley & Graham, 1991). According to Hirschman (1970), companies can lose market share to their competitors if customers decide to "exit"—that is, to purchase a product or service from a rival firm. The concept of voice is defined as the customer's ability to express complaints or concerns directly to the organization (Goodwin & Ross, 1992). It is considered a mechanism that helps companies become aware of customer dissatisfaction and their own performance failures in addressing problems (Hirschman, 1970, as cited in Allen, 2020).

Harrison-Walker (2019) proposed that customers allowed exposing their feeling toward the brand are more likely to forgive service failure. In the complaint context, Bernnett (1997) noted that the firm should actively encourage its consumers to "*explode*" their complaints. This fact induces the consumer to feel good after the incident and maintain positive attitudes toward the firm. According to Bernnett (1997), the antecedent for positive purchasing was because negative emotion had been dissipated. The act of listening reduces the negative resentment (Cottle, 1990). In this perspective, the study of Goodwin and Ross (1992) has shown that when the voice is allowed to be exposed but deliberately ignored, then conducts to increased frustration among persons. In this perspective, kucuk (2019) noted that poor communication between consumer and company leads to negative emotion, which leads to the hypothesis:

H3: Consumer voice leads to brand hate

According to the Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotion (Lazarus, 1991), the way an individual cognitively perceives a stressful situation influences the nature and intensity of their emotional responses. The Covid-19 crisis has had a profoundly negative impact on businesses and various organizational domains (Herrmann et al., 2022), including education (Daniel, 2020), healthcare (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020), tourism (Qiu, Park, & Song, 2020), retail (Hao et al., 2021), manufacturing (Gordon, 2020), and logistics (Fulconis & Paché, 2020). Indeed, a negative effect of the pandemic is evident when comparing consumer satisfaction levels before and during COVID-19 (Brettner et al., 2021). Consumers are particularly sensitive to health-related information (Cappuccio & Pravst, 2011; Syiam et al., 2025).

External factors such as unexpected environmental conditions, social disruptions, or global crises (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) may negatively influence consumers' experiences with a brand, even when the firm itself is not directly responsible. According to McColl-Kennedy and Sparks (2003), such uncontrollable events can generate emotional responses that shape customer perceptions of satisfaction and service quality. When consumers experience frustration or disappointment due to these external circumstances, they may still attribute part of the blame to the brand, leading to negative emotions and, in some cases, brand hate.

H4: The antecedents outside the firm leads to brand hate

The theoretical basis for the model has been studied with the conceptualisation of research hypothesis that discuss the antecedents of brand hate. The hypothesis are now corporate in the research model as show in Figure 1.
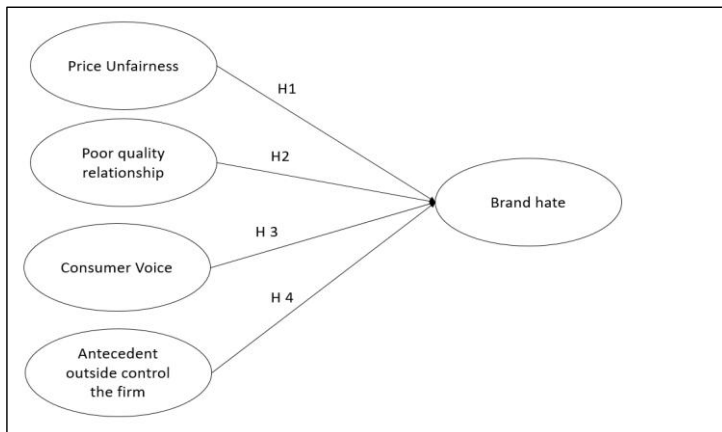

Figure 1: Consumer Response to Brand Hate Model

The models depicts the impact of price unfairness, poor quality relationship, consumer voice, and antecedents outside control the firm.

Research Contributions

The current study supports managers by providing a framework for understanding response consumers to brand hate. Certain firms confirmed the neglecting of the hater toward the brand whereas Bear (2016) disagree that by the following state: *"haters are not the problem. . . . Ignoring them is"*. This study confirms that the antecedents of brand hate have been gaining importance in recent years. These antecedents are suggested, based on the extension of established theory and justified evidence. In fact, our research model proposes five antecedents of brand hate.

Certain consumers perceive injustice price of the brand, price high than its quality what leads to hate feelings. Other consumers do not construct a strong relationship with her actual firm. In that respect, when the consumer complains toward the brand, he aims to find employee who listens to his problem. Then, the absence of the consumer's voice leads to brand hate. Moreover, such marketing messages have often relied on racial attitudes to convey persuasive appeal

In addition, brand practitioners may invest significant resources in service recovery activities without fully understanding the consumer personality effect on brand. In fact, emotional intelligence improves the management of consumer feeling toward brand whereas the lack of this capacity can lead to strong negative resentment. This research highlights the complexity of emotion and the impact of emotional ability in reducing this resentment. More generally, firms need to develop comprehensive strategies across the consumer capacity to reduce his negative emotion and take into consideration the consumer personality in the recovery strategy. Customers who have negatively experienced with a specific brand, they need to feel their frustrations to have been heard to forgiving the transgressor. Accordingly, voice has an important role in health care that there is a direct effect (as well as the indirect impact via Forgiveness) of voice on the outcome of reconciliation (Harisson-Walker, 2018). Based on this point, in order to reconcile with the consumers, the practitioners should develop listening technologies with their consumers.

Our study shows the important effect of this issue on the consumer health and precisely on his emotions. Moreover, additional antecedents are needed to study for example the antecedents outside control of the firm. Accordingly, the managers do not know such reason for hate toward the brand. There are not just antecedents related to the company but also antecedents related to extern factor like Covid-19. Harisson-Walker (2018) indicated that "*if marketers can gain a certain level of forgiveness, repurchase intentions are also likely to increase.*" In fact, our work noted that forgiveness is an important level and help the company in relation restoration, and particularly it is needed in the brand hate issue to ignore the negative intense and repurchase from the brand.

CONCLUSION

The key point of departure for this research is the analysis of consumer response toward brand hate. The study contributes understanding of the consumer role in reestablishing the relation with brand haters and forgiving the brand through exploration of consumer ability emotional. Moreover, the current paper explores the antecedents of brand hate.

The consumer response to brand hate model contributes to knowledge in many important domains. Firstly, our model addresses a focus on the role of the customer in reducing negative emotions. In line with this argument, the established relation does not just need the brand activities but also the consumer acceptance of the service failure, the model proposes new antecedents of brand hate namely price unfairness, consumer voice and the antecedents outside control of the firm.

The paper invites other members of the anti-brand research and consumer behavior to engage in future anti-consumption research and interact in the scholarly exchange of ideas.

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