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## Journal of Business Research

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jbusres](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jbusres)

## Consumer - brand relationship: A brand hate perspective

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Brand Hate  
Negative Brand Experience  
Negative Brand Personality  
Brand Avoidance  
Brand Switching  
Customer Complaining Behaviors

## ABSTRACT

In recent times brands have experienced consumer backlash in the form of brand hate due to perceived unacceptable behaviors. The failure of brands to meet customers' expectations tend to generate negative feelings and experiences about brands. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine an integrated model of antecedents and consequences of brand hate. Specifically, we test the brand constructs like negative brand experience and negative brand personality as antecedents of- and brand switching, brand avoidance and complaining as consequences of- brand hate. The moderating role of gender on the antecedents of brand hate is tested. This study contributes by testing an integrated model of brand hate consisting of multi-dimensional negative brand experience and negative brand personality. Findings have managerial and practical implications for brand managers.

## 1. Introduction

A recent 'Forbes' article highlights a major shift in consumer behavior around the world (Da Silva 2019). It suggests the growing importance of brand hate. Companies become more susceptible to 'brand hate' when they fail to meet community expectations or not consider what consumers and the society care for. In an era of growing transparency, Da Silva (2019) suggests that brands are deemed as a by-product of the organisation's internal culture. In similar vein, Atwal (2021) notes that consumers have high expectations from a luxury brand. In case actual performance fails to meet the expectations, consumers tend to form severe negative feelings towards the brand (Anaza et al., 2021). Hence, there is a growing interest in understanding the negative interactions between brands and consumers. Brands that act in ways that are unacceptable are at the centre of consumers' brand hate. Consumers are more likely to talk about a negative experience or post negative reviews related to brand wrongdoings (Christodoulides et al., 2021) This has caused brands to become more sensitive towards any negative information directed at their companies. Incidents like forceful dragging of a customer from the aircraft by United Airlines and the intentional use of defeat device in Volkswagen cars exemplify brand behaviors that make consumers experience negative emotional states in

relation to the brands. These negative experiences are outcomes of the violation of consumer expectations (Bryson et al., 2013). A solution towards avoiding this intense hatred towards brands is to understand brand hate itself. However, compared to the positive consumer-brand relationships constructs like brand loyalty (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995; He, Li, & Harris, 2012), brand love (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Roy et al., 2013) and brand attachment (Park et al., 2008; Park et al., 2010), brand hate research is still in its fledgling stage. In a recent systematic review of literature Yadav and Chakrabarti (2022) identified only 61 articles pertaining to 'brand hate' across all domains of social science and without any periodicity.

Brand hate may be defined as a "as a psychological state in which a consumer forms an intense negative emotion and hatred toward a brand, a hatred that reveals itself with anti-branding activities" (Kucuk, 2018, p. 566). It is a "more intense emotional response that consumers have toward a brand than brand dislike" (Hegner et al., 2017, p. 14). Kucuk (2019a, 2019b) states that brand hate may take forms of anger, contempt, disgust towards the brand which is subsequently endorsed by Japutra et al., (2021). Existing research has conceptually explored brand hate and its antecedents (Bryson et al., 2013; Pantano, 2021) and examined the trajectories of brand hate with an aim to understand how brand hate feelings develop over time (Zarantonello et al., 2018). Most recently,

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Received 20 July 2021; Received in revised form 9 February 2022; Accepted 19 February 2022

Available online 3 March 2022

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Fetscherin (2019) and Zhang and Laroche (2020) argued that brand hate is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of emotions such as anger, contempt, disgust, sadness and fear and explored its negative behavioral outcomes. Other studies like Zarantonello et al. (2016) and Hegner et al. (2017) have investigated antecedents and outcomes of brand hate.

A major gap in the fledgling literature on brand hate remains to be the identification of factors that lead to the development of this phenomenon (Bryson et al., 2013, 2021; Pantano, 2021). Specifically, past literature has overlooked how and to what extent, key brand related constructs like brand experience and brand personality may lead to this complex phenomenon of brand hate. As a deviation from the existing studies we consider brand experience and brand personality as multi-dimensional constructs. Marketing practice focussed literature has warned about negative outcomes of brand hate (Da Silva, 2019; Atwal, 2021). However, limited studies have examined the negative behavioral outcomes of brand hate (Platania et al., 2017; Bryson & Atwal, 2019; Pantano, 2021) such as brand switching, brand avoidance and complaining (public and private).

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009, p. 52) define brand experience, as “sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments”. These authors identified four dimensions of experiences (i.e., sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual) which results from the brand stimuli such as colors, shapes, designs, and slogans. Iglesias et al. (2011) suggest that brand experiences may elicit strong positive or negative emotional consumer responses. Nysveen et al. (2013) also state that there is a negative relationship between brand experience dimensions and customer satisfaction and loyalty. This indicates that brand experience may not necessarily be a positive concept. Brakus et al. (2009) does not distinguish between positive and negative experiences. Therefore, this research aims to examine the impact of negative brand experience (NBE) on brand hate using negatively valence brand experience scale.

Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). It consists of five personality dimensions which are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. In contrast, Haji (2014, p. 24) define negative brand personality (NBP) as “a set of characteristics ascribed to a brand by the consumer to reflect emotions that stimulate tension, anxiety or incongruity”. The NBP scale is multidimensional consisting of four dimensions which are, egotistical, boring, lacking logic and socially irresponsible. Extant literature suggests that offensive and/or unpleasant brand personality is perceived negatively resulting in adverse consequences for the brand, such as a purchase reluctance (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). Our research, therefore, addresses the importance of examining the impact of NBP on brand hate.

Social psychology has studied the relationship between attitude and behavior (Harrington, 2004). Psychology considers hatred as an attitude or disposition (Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology; Harrington, 2004, Japutra et al., 2021). Therefore, from a marketing perspective it becomes imperative to study the behavioral outcomes of brand hate using an integrated model. The integrated model of brand hate would enable practitioners and theorists to understand probable antecedents/ causes of brand hate and how consumers may behave as a result of this hatred. Interestingly, Kucuk (2021) in a review paper has identified antecedents and outcomes of brand hate from past literature. However, that integrated model of brand hate is still elusive. Limited research on behavioral outcomes of brand hate has thrown up a disparate set of constructs like brand avoidance (Hegner et al., 2017; Platania et al., 2017), brand switching (Park et al., 2013; Fetscherin, 2019), and revenge (Bayarassou et al., 2020) that gets expressed through complaining (Platania et al., 2017; Fetscherin, 2019). However, to the best of our knowledge extant literature is bereft of any study that has considered these outcomes in an integrated model. Whilst the existing studies underscore the importance of understanding the negative emotions, the brand hate literature appears to be fragmented which asks for a comprehensive framework

relating brand hate and the behavioral outcomes as well as the antecedents. Thus, the objectives of this study are the following:

1. To identify the antecedents and outcomes of brand hate.
2. To test the impact of multi-dimensional negative brand experience on brand hate.
3. To test the impact of negative brand personality on brand hate.

We contribute to the literature on ‘brand hate’ by developing and testing an integrated model of brand hate. Most studies in consumer brand relationships considered an overall measure of negative customer experience (e.g., Hegner, Fetscherin, & Van Delzen, 2017). Based on the extant literature on brand experience (e.g., Brakus et al., 2009) this study considers the multi-dimensional nature of negative customer experience and examined their relationships with brand hate which is a welcome addition to the brand hate literature. The next contribution of this study emanates from examining the relationship between consumers’ negative personality traits and brand hate. This has been identified as an important gap for research on brand hate (Haji, 2014). Marketing literature has widely accepted the role of gender in understanding consumer-brand relationships (Das, 2014; Chen, King & Lee, 2018). We test the moderating role of ‘gender’ between brand hate and its antecedents. This study is conducted in the service context as compared to most of the previous studies on brand hate (Zarantonello et al., 2016; Hegner et al., 2017; Fetscherin, 2019; Rodrigues, Brandão, & Rodrigues, 2020; Pantano, 2021) which were done with product brands. Since product brands and service brands are fundamentally different (Berry, 2000) the results of this study conducted in the services context adds to the literature on consumer-service brand relationships (Zhang & Bloemer, 2008). There is a lack of research on negative emotions towards service brands which warrants more research on brand hate in service environments (Jayasimha et al., 2017; Sweeney et al., 2014). Findings of this study enables brand managers to gain insights on the detrimental effects of negative brand experience and brand hate. Research findings also helps managers to be on guard against negative brand experience faced by customers. In addition, this study warns brand managers on the effects of communicating a negative brand personality to the customer.

The next section of the study discusses in detail literature relating to the constructs and their relationships. The relationships discussed are thereby used to develop research hypotheses. Subsequently, the research model is constructed from these hypotheses. The third section reports the research methodology applied for the study, the reliability and validity tests conducted for the model, and their findings thereof. The findings are interpreted and discussed in the following section. Section five elaborates on the contributions that our study makes to existing theory and marketing practitioners. The study concludes by discussing the limitations of this research and scope for advancing the present research theme in the future.

## 2. Literature review and research model

### 2.1. Brand hate

‘Hate’ has been researched in multiple disciplines including psychology, social psychology and marketing (Harrington, 2004). In psychology hate is defined as “an attitude or disposition that includes intense feelings of dislike, animosity, hostility, and aversion toward a person, group, or object” (Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology, p.230). On the other hand, in the marketing literature, Johnson, Matear and Thomson (2011) conceptualize hate as a ‘strong opposition to brands’ in the consumer-brand relationships context. These authors argue that the more ‘self-relevant’ a consumer-brand relationship is, greater is the likelihood of anti-brand behaviors such as negative word-of-mouth, complaining, and even acts of theft, threats, and vandalism. Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2012) suggest that negative brand-related emotions

can contribute to consumers' engaging in activities such as complaining, brand switching and engaging in negative word-of-mouth. Bryson et al. (2013) define brand hate as an "intense negative emotional affect towards the brand" (p. 395) while identifying the antecedents of brand hate in case of the luxury brands.

Zarantonello et al. (2016) empirically investigated the nature of the phenomenon of brand hate, its antecedents and its outcomes. They alluded brand hate with negative behavioral outcomes such as complaining, negative word-of-mouth, and protest and patronage reduction/cessation. They identified the multi-dimensionality of the 'brand hate' construct and developed a scale to measure it (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thereafter, Hegner et al. (2017) empirically explored the concept of brand hate and presented a taxonomy of the main determinants and outcomes. These authors argue that brand hate results from customers' past negative experiences, ideological incompatibility, and symbolic incongruity. These lead to three negative behavioral outcomes namely: (a) brand avoidance; (b) negative word-of-mouth; and (c) brand retaliation. Kucuk (2019a, p. 561) conclude that brands are "intangible and emotional economic indicators" and forms the core of consumers' decision making. Findings suggest that companies with a lack of social initiatives and an increasing number of consumer complaints would have brands that are the most hated across markets (Kucuk, 2019b). Recently, Zhang and Laroche (2020) note that brand hate gets manifested through anger, sadness and fear.

## 2.2. Negative brand experience (NBE) and brand hate

Behavioral theories in social psychology suggest that experience forms attitudes in human beings that result in their behavior in social contexts (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). Branding literature, also suggest that positive brand experience namely, (a) sensory; (b) affective; (c) behavioral; and (d) intellectual, creates favorable attitude in customers towards the brand which entails positive behavioral outcomes for the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias, Markovic & Rialp, 2019; Jhamb et al., 2020). Past research operationalizes brand experience using selected items with negative polarity from the original scale of Brakus et al. (2009). However, no study has used the entire scale with negative polarity or valence.

The existence of 'negative brand experiences' has frequently been mentioned in multiple studies across different contexts such as consumer anxiety in online discussion about negative brand experiences (Brandão & Popoli, 2022; Wakefield & Wakefield, 2018), ability of defectors (consumers who used the brand previously but has stopped) to consider the brand for future purchase (Bogomolova & Romaniuk, 2010) and in anti-consumption and brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009). Baumeister et al. (2001) also suggest that the likelihood of people sharing negative experiences is more than one sharing an equally positive experience. Fournier (1998, p. 355) calls negative brand experiences as an "unimaginable experience" that could lead to negative feelings amongst consumers, which in turn could cause them to withdraw themselves from a brand. Based on the preceding discussion this study considers Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization of brand experience to advance the following hypothesis:

**H1.** Negative brand experience dimensions (a) sensory, (b) affective, (c) behavioral and (d) intellectual have positive effects on brand hate.

## 2.3. Negative brand personality (NBP) and brand hate

Extant consumer – brand relationships literature suggests that consumer – brand personality fit results in positive attitude formation among consumers (Bairrada, Coelho & Lizanets, 2019; Japutra & Molinillo, 2019). Rooted in the self-concept theory (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Rosenberg, 1979) the brand personality literature posits that congruence of brand's personality and the individual's (perceived) own personality results in positive attitude formation

towards the brand. In such a scenario the individual considers the brand as a natural extension of the self (Fournier, 1998).

The most prominent measure of brand personality is brand personality dimensions of Aaker (1997). Additionally, Geuens et al. (2009) has worked on Aaker (1997) scale to improve upon the dimensionality of the measures. However, one key feature of these scales is that they consider brands to have only positive personalities (Haji, 2014). Thus, Haji (2014, p. 24) conceptualize NBP and define as "a set of characteristics ascribed to a brand by the consumer to reflect emotions that stimulate tension, anxiety or incongruity". NBP consists of four dimensions which are: a) egotistical - inflated importance of false pride, b) boring - repetitive and tedious practices, c) lacking logic - irrational or disapproved social norms, and d) socially irresponsible - defiance of good faith practices (Haji, 2014). Sirgy (1985; 2018), Malär et al. (2011) used Rosenberg's (1979) self-concept to suggest that consumer will show positive attitude formation and behavioral intentions towards a brand if he/ she believes that the brand's personality/ image matches his/ her personality or self-image. We use self-concept to posit that negative brand personality will result in negative attitude formation. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H2.** Negative brand personality dimensions (a) egotistical, (b) boring, (c) lacking logic and (d) socially irresponsible have positive effects on brand hate.

## 2.4. Brand hate and brand switching

Brand switching behavior expressed as the probability that the customer will change brands (Deighton et al., 1994). Several studies have examined the influence of emotions on switching behaviors. Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) found that in the context of services, angry consumers may take part in switching behaviors and the emotion of regret felt by consumers is directly related to switching behavior (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). They state that an experience of regret may imply that there was a better brand alternative available, hence, the consumers would be inclined to switch to an alternative service provider. Romani et al. (2012) found that in brand-related contexts, brands that evoke worried emotions from customers would experience brand switching behaviors as individuals are naturally induced by feelings to seek safety from a potential threat.

Within the brand hate literature, research shows that when an individual holds negative feeling towards a brand, this would increase the likelihood of avoidance (Grégoire et al., 2009; Hegner et al., 2017; Zarantonello et al., 2016) and distancing (including switching) behavior. Johnson, Matear and Thomson (2011) state that switching brands is the easiest way to avoid a brand. Fetscherin (2019) investigate brand hate outcomes and described brand switching as a "take flight" response that is triggered by consumers having emotions of disgust. Hence, this study builds on the understanding of brand switching as an outcome of brand hate and propose the following hypothesis:

**H3.** Brand hate impacts brand switching positively.

## 2.5. Brand hate and brand avoidance

Rooted in the expectation – confirmation theory (ECT) and anti-consumption literature negative brand phenomena results in brand avoidance (Odoom et al., 2019). Marketing literature has viewed the concept of brand avoidance through a variety of different lens (Fetscherin, 2019; Hegner et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2009). Brand avoidance is defined as "incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand" (Lee et al., 2009, p. 170). Brand avoidance suggests that the consumer may not necessarily purchase that brand to avoid it, as an individual could simply "avoid" a brand without having purchased it (Hegner et al., 2017; Fetscherin, 2019). Research also shows that avoidance over time may represent a lack of forgiveness from consumers toward brands (Grégoire et al., 2009). In addition, it is also argued that



brand avoidance is non-confrontational and even a passive type of behavior (Zarantonello et al., 2016; Hegner et al., 2017).

Research on brand avoidance also argues that negative brand phenomena including brand hate may result in brand avoidance (Grégoire et al., 2009; Odoom et al., 2019; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Similarly, according to Bryson et al. (2013), brand avoidance may be a behavioral response to brand hate and therefore, brand managers should try and prevent brand hate from developing, due to its long-term adverse consequences. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4.** Brand hate impacts brand avoidance positively.

## 2.6. Brand hate and complaining

Bearden and Oliver (1985) suggests that a broad view of complaining encompasses both private and public reactions. Romani et al. (2012) found that in brand-related contexts, customer's experiencing a form of anger will lead to complaining, as it motivates individuals to actively find a solution to the situation. Zarantonello et al. (2016) propose brand hate as a complex construct consisting of different negative emotions, which provides support for various outcomes to occur. Bayarassou et al., (2020) argues that revenge is a behavioral outcome of brand hate. However, measures they used to measure revenge can attributed to complaining behaviour. Regarding the possible consequences of brand hate, recent studies have classified two different types of complaining; public and private (Fetscherin, 2019; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Public complaining involves addressing larger audiences that include the company itself, consumer protection groups and government agencies, and this can be done through online blog posts, or posting on online websites or social media platforms (Brandão & Popoli, 2022; Fetscherin, 2019; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Complaining on online platforms may allow consumers to freely voice their dissatisfaction, as some may have difficulty complaining face-to-face (Kucuk, 2019b), whereas private complaining involves talking negatively about a brand to people close to us, such as family or friends (Fetscherin, 2019; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

Zarantonello et al. (2018) suggest that complaining could be a form of a constructive hateful behavior, as complaining to a company may change them to become more aligned to the customer's expectations and values, in order to establish congruence between consumers and brand. Research also shows that not all service failure situations will lead to some form of complaining (Grégoire et al., 2009). Based on the preceding discussion we propose the following hypothesis:

**H5.** Brand hate impacts (a) public complaining and (b) private complaining positively.

## 2.7. Moderating role of gender

In the consumer-brand relationships literature gender is used as a moderator in multiple studies across a variety of different contexts, such as a tourist's brand experiences (Chen, King & Lee, 2018), an e-brand experience's influence on trust and loyalty (Khan & Rahman, 2016), examining retail brand personality or store loyalty (Das, 2014) and understanding brand personality perceptions (Rup, Gochhayat & Samanta, 2018). Research suggests that the presence of significant gender related differences shape brand experiences, where brand managers have an opportunity to develop targeted marketing to enhance tourists' experiences and satisfaction (Chen et al., 2018). In another study Khan and Rahman (2016) find no significant difference in brand trust due to brand experience. However, they note that females to be less likely to make a repeat purchase due to their e-brand experience. Both studies by Das (2014) and Rup, Gochhayat and Samanta (2018) argue that males and females themselves have contrasting personality traits, hence their view of a brand's personality would also vary.

To the best of our knowledge none of the existing studies have examined the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between

brand hate and its antecedents. It would not be surprising if found that males and females have a different reaction to a NBE, for example, males may be strongly influenced by the behavioral and intellectual dimensions of NBE, whereas females more driven by the sensory and affective dimensions. Extant literature also suggests that in response to stress males tend to show hypertension and aggressive behavior more than females (Joon Jang, 2007; Verma, Balhara & Gupta, 2011). Chaplin (2015) posits that females tend to express more positive emotions than males while internalizing negative emotions like sadness and anger. It may thus be deduced that males may be more likely to develop brand hate than females. In this regard we acknowledge that Japutra et al. (2021) did consider demographic variable as moderator in their model. However, they had considered age as the moderator and overlooked the probable impact of gender as a moderator. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H6.** Gender moderates the effects of negative brand experience on brand hate, such that these effects are stronger for males than females.

**H7.** Gender moderates the effects of negative brand personality on brand hate, such that these effects are stronger for males than females.

## 2.8. Model specification

Based on the proposed hypotheses in the previous section the research model is shown in Fig. 1. We posit that brand hate has two antecedents: negative brand experience (NBE) and negative brand personality (NBP). NBE is manifested through four types of experience namely sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual. NBP is manifested through the personality types egotistical, boring, lacking logic and socially irresponsible. The relationships between brand hate and its antecedents are moderated by gender. We consider brand hate to result in brand switching behavior, brand avoidance behavior and complaining behavior (private and public).

## 3. Research methodology

Kucuk (2019b) argue that brand hatred intensity may vary drastically and is heavily dependent on the product or service brand itself. Majority of studies on brand hate have been conducted with product brands (Bryson et al., 2013; Pantano, 2021) and a mix of both product and service brands as participant's in the study (Fetscherin, 2019; Hegner et al., 2017; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Berry (2000) argues that service brands are fundamentally different from product brands therefore inferences drawn from product brands should not naturally be generalised for service brands as well. The emic approach also suggests that the brand hate phenomenon should be studied from within its context. Limited research has examined brand hate in the service context (Curina et al., 2020; Farhat & Chaney, 2021). We therefore address this gap by examining brand hate in the services context. Unlike most studies in the brand hate literature we examine multiple service brands given the growing size and importance of service brands in the modern economy (Lee & McKibbin, 2018).

### 3.1. Selection of measures

This study operationalized constructs using validated past scale items from existing studies (see Table 1). Brand hate items were adapted from the six-item scale of Hegner et al. (2017). Negative brand experience (NBE) scales were adapted from the twelve-item scale of Brakus et al. (2009). The fifteen-item negative brand personality scales were adapted from Haji (2014). Negative behavioral outcomes of brand switching (three-items) from Fetscherin (2019), brand avoidance (five-items) from Hegner et al. (2017) and complaining (public and private, three-items each) from Fetscherin (2019).

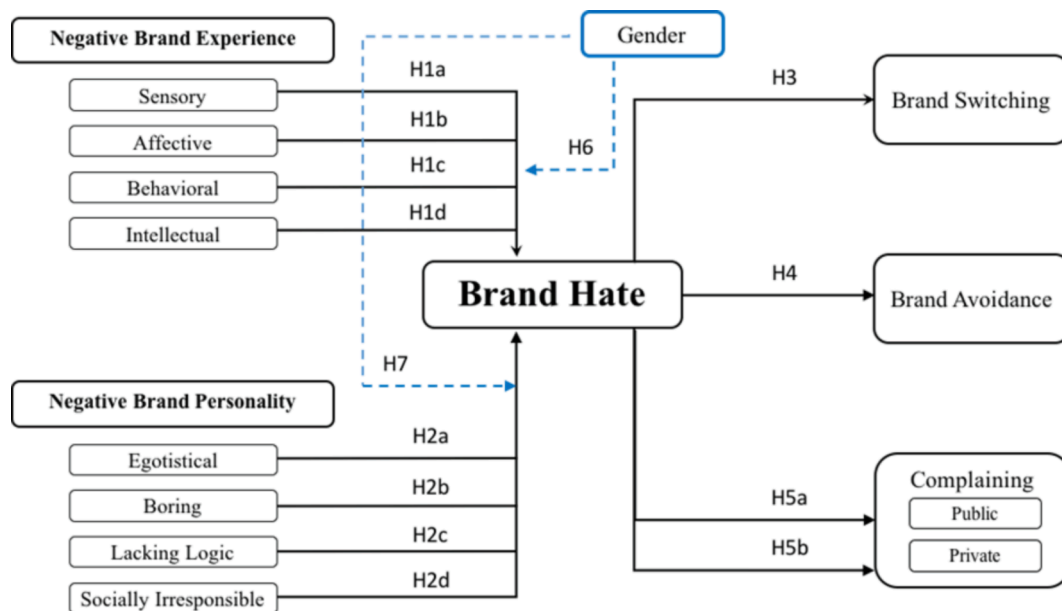


Fig. 1. Research model.

### 3.2. Selection of service brand stimulus

The respondents in this study are citizens of USA. Therefore, we chose American service brands so that the respondents have good knowledge about the brands thereby enabling them to respond to the survey objectively. Brands that were consistently listed as ‘Top Brands in the United States’ in recent years were considered for data collection. 25 brands were selected based on their brand value. These chosen brands ranged across multiple industries such as retail, airline, fast-food, technology and others.

### 3.3. Data collection

We chose to conduct our research on participants from the United States as we expect a diverse set of participants who hold different opinions and perspectives on the brands provided in the study. In addition, we are aware of the United States being known as the hub of the marketing and advertising industry, where the ‘Made in America’ notion holds significant weight and prestige (Bhasin, 2018). Online survey was conducted through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) panel service. We ensured that our participants met certain qualifications (i.e. being citizens of the United States and having a good record on MTurk through a 90% + acceptance rate). The sample size for the study followed Hair et al. (2013) suggestion of minimum ten times the maximum number of paths into any dependent variable.

An online survey protocol was developed through Qualtrics, a sophisticated survey software tool that allows the development of the most detailed research projects. We developed the survey for administration in only English for our participants located in the United States. The survey consisted of six different sections; one – the introduction and consent form, two – the series of demographic questions, three – the question that addressed what brand they hated most out of the list of 25 brands, and sections four to six had the statements to measure the constructs examined in this study. We used the seven-point Likert type scale anchored at ‘1-strongly disagree’ and ‘7-strongly agree’.

We started with a raw dataset of 300 cases. We searched for unwanted observations, which were either in the form of duplicate observations or cases with missing data. In the initial raw dataset, there were only 3 duplicate observations and these observations were simply dropped. There was no missing data, hence no imputation based on other observations was required for any missing values. Thus, we were

left with a final usable sample size of 297 participants. Our sample of 297 respondents includes 50.2% females and 49.8% males, providing good control over the gender distribution, which is important as this study investigates the moderating role of gender. A total of 14.8 percent of respondents were between 18 and 24 years, 41.8 % between 25 and 34 years, 29.6 % between 35 and 44 years, 7.7 percent between 45 and 54 years, and the remaining 6.1 percent aged 55 years and above. Of these respondents, close to half, 49.8 % had at least a bachelor’s degree, 26.3 % had at least a high school graduation or equivalent and 17.2% had up to a master’s degree as their highest education level. Moreover, the majority 61.6 percent of respondents worked full time, 14.5 % worked part time and 9.8 % are self-employed. Most of them are either American or Caucasian (31 percent each), 12.1 % are Black/African American, and 9.8 % are Asian, and 76 % had an annual household income of less than \$USD 70,000.

### 3.4. Model testing and validity tests

The conceptual model was tested through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method using WarpPLS software. We considered PLS-SEM as the appropriate method as PLS-SEM is similar to regression and can simultaneously model the structural paths. In addition, it provides flexibility in distributional assumptions and has the capacity of handling complex predictive models and/or constructs with few items (Hair et al., 2011). We tested the reliability of our model through Dijkstra’s PLSc Reliability test. Subsequently, the construct validity of the model was tested using convergent and discriminant validity tests (Hair et al., 2014).

#### 3.4.1. Common method bias (CMB)

This study used the guidelines provided by Podsakoff et al. (2003) to test CMB using both procedural and statistical methods. Concerning the procedural remedies, respondents were instructed that there are no right or wrong answer. They were asked to answer the survey questions as honestly as possible. In addition, the respondents were assured of anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Regarding the statistical methods, the results of the Harman’s single-factor test showed that the first factor explained only 30% of the total variance (less than the cut-off value of 50%). Next, In the common method factor approach a marker variable (e.g., intention to use mobile apps) was introduced in the model. The inclusion of the marker variable

**Table 1**  
Measurement properties.

Constructs and measurement items	Loadings	t-values	α	CR	AVE
<b>Brand Hate (BH) (Hegner, Fetscherin &amp; Delzen, 2017)</b>					
I am disgusted by brand X	0.754	14.634	0.83	0.8	0.63
I do not tolerate brand X and its company	0.777	15.141			
The world would be a better place without brand X	0.806	15.782			
I am totally angry about brand X	0.801	15.667			
Brand X is awful	0.755	14.662			
I hate brand X	0.846	16.652			
<b>Negative Brand Experience (Brakus et al., 2009)</b>					
<i>Sensory</i>					
The brand makes a strong negative impression on my visual sense or other senses.	0.791	15.449	0.79	0.88	0.7
I find this brand uninteresting in a sensory way	0.885	17.538			
This brand does not appeal to my senses	0.838	16.479			
<i>Affective</i>					
This brand induces negative feelings and sentiments	0.874	17.296			
I do not have strong negative emotions for this brand	0.9	17.867	0.85	0.91	0.77
This is an emotional brand	0.864	17.075			
<i>Behavioural</i>					
I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I use this brand	0.744	14.424	0.63	0.8	0.58
This brand results in bodily experiences	0.761	14.779			
This brand is not action oriented	0.772	15.028			
<i>Intellectual</i>					
I engage in a lot of negative thinking when I encounter this brand	0.515	9.631			
This brand does not make me think	0.786	15.333	0.61	0.75	0.59
This brand does not stimulate my curiosity and problem solving	0.866	17.118			
<b>Negative Brand Personality (Haji, 2014)</b>					
<i>Egotistical</i>					
Pompous	0.826	16.216	0.87	0.91	0.67
Snobby	0.825	16.204			
Arrogant	0.84	16.521			
Stubborn	0.693	13.327			
Pretentious	0.881	17.437			
<i>Boring</i>					
Cheap	0.652	12.449	0.6	0.79	0.59
Confused	0.741	14.348			
Monotonous	0.844	16.619			
<i>Lacking logic</i>					
Barbaric	0.813	15.937	0.68	0.8	0.66
Naïve	0.813	15.937			
<i>Socially Irresponsible</i>					
Deceiving	0.801	15.665	0.87	0.91	0.67
Immoral	0.855	16.868			
Fake	0.703	13.535			
Selfish	0.851	16.775			
Manipulative	0.856	16.889			
<b>Brand Avoidance (Hegner et al., 2017)</b>					
I do not purchase products of brand X anymore	0.915	18.21	0.94	0.96	0.82
I reject services/products of brand X	0.875	17.31			
I refrain from buying X's products or using its services	0.918	18.29			
I avoid buying the brands products/using its services	0.913	18.171			

**Table 1 (continued)**

Constructs and measurement items	Loadings	t-values	α	CR	AVE
I do not use products or services of brand X	0.899	17.85			
<b>Brand Switching (Fetscherin, 2019)</b>					
I buy brand X less frequently than before	0.761	14.793	0.71	0.84	0.64
I stop buying Brand X and I will not buy it anymore	0.82	16.076			
I switched to a competing brand	0.81	15.866			
<b>Private Complaining (Fetscherin, 2019)</b>					
I discourage friends and relatives to buy Brand X	0.869	17.183	0.83	0.9	0.75
I say negative things about Brand X to others	0.854	16.83			
I recommend not to buy Brand X to someone who seeks my advice	0.867	17.124			
<b>Public Complaining (Fetscherin, 2019)</b>					
I became involved in organizations or clubs united against Brand X	0.943	18.859	0.94	0.96	0.89
I complained to law enforcement about Brand X	0.947	18.939			
I complained to external agencies (e.g., consumer unions) about Brand X	0.943	18.86			

Notes: α: Cronbach's alpha; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted.

did not result in a significant increase in the variance of any variable. We also used a common latent factor linked to all measurement items to detect CMB (Hulland, Baumgartner & Smith, 2018). Based on the these results it can be concluded that CMB is not a major issue in this study.

### 3.5. Measurement model results

The measurement model is evaluated using bootstrapping t-values computed on the basis 297 cases and 5000 samples. As shown in Table 1, the measurement model meets all common requirements.

#### 3.5.1. Dijkstra's PLSc reliability

WarpPLS recently introduced a new statistical analysis option "Explore Dijkstra's consistent PLS outputs", which enables users to obtain statistical outputs based on the Dijkstra's consistent PLS technique (Kock, 2018). Dijkstra's PLSc can be considered a better approximation of the true reliabilities and provide more robust results than the usual Cronbach's alpha and CR coefficients (Kock, 2018). The results showed that all values had significantly increased and now all values exceeded a minimum threshold of 0.60.

### 3.6. Convergent and discriminant validity

Hair et al. (2014) suggest that AVE > 0.50 to have adequate convergent validity. The AVE values for the constructs exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50, hence we can assume that convergent validity has been achieved. Thereafter, the discriminant validity was examined (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014). We analysed the latent variables correlations and found that discriminant validity existed for all constructs as all square roots of AVE values are higher than the correlations (see Table 2). In addition, we used the HTMT approach to provide additional support for the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT values were less than the cut-off value of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), thus providing additional support for discriminant validity of the measurement model.

**Table 2**  
Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. BH	<b>0.791</b>												
2. BSW	0.426	<b>0.797</b>											
3. BAVD	0.433	0.759	<b>0.904</b>										
4. PRVC	0.547	0.49	0.505	<b>0.863</b>									
5. PUBC	0.236	0.068	-0.039	0.179	<b>0.944</b>								
6. NBES	0.434	0.377	0.346	0.319	0.262	<b>0.839</b>							
7. NBEA	0.703	0.462	0.485	0.58	0.063	0.426	<b>0.88</b>						
8. NBEB	0.462	0.213	0.243	0.352	0.52	0.434	0.397	<b>0.759</b>					
9. NBEI	0.352	0.265	0.213	0.229	0.368	0.451	0.306	0.503	<b>0.717</b>				
10. NBPEGO	0.397	0.336	0.295	0.362	0.164	0.262	0.395	0.217	0.134	<b>0.815</b>			
11. NBPBOR	0.317	0.213	0.184	0.299	0.465	0.442	0.275	0.429	0.433	0.166	<b>0.75</b>		
12. NBPLL	0.353	0.175	0.147	0.331	0.584	0.32	0.212	0.538	0.325	0.235	0.582	<b>0.813</b>	
13. NBPSI	0.645	0.454	0.437	0.56	0.029	0.283	0.659	0.287	0.132	0.566	0.283	0.295	<b>0.815</b>

Note: Bold diagonal elements are the square root of AVE for each construct. BH = Brand Hate, BAVD = Brand Avoidance, BSW = Brand Switching, PUBC = Public Complaining and PRVC = Private Complaining, BSW = Brand Switching, NBES = Negative Brand Experience Sensory, NBEA = Negative Brand Experience Affective, NBEB = Negative Brand Experience Behavioral, NBEI = Negative Brand Experience Intellectual, NBPEGO = Negative Brand Personality Egotistical, NBPBOR = Negative Brand Personality Boring, NBPLL = Negative Brand Personality Lacking Logic, NBPSI = Negative Brand Personality Socially Irresponsible

3.7. Hypotheses testing

PLS-SEM was adopted for this study as it has gained wide acceptance in marketing research (Hair et al., 2012). PLS-SEM can be used to handle complex models and allows the estimation of a system of relationships (or paths) between constructs, much like multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2014). PLS-SEM can be a strong method to use as it is lenient in terms of its demands on measurement scales, sample size and statistical assumptions (Hair et al., 2014). In view of this study’s relatively small sample size, the usage of PLS-SEM was appropriate.

WarpPLS was used to test the defined structural model. It was assessed by first, examining the various path coefficients and p-values, second, by exploring the amount of variance explained through the R<sup>2</sup> values and finally, by looking at the effect sizes for path coefficients and the Stone-Geisser Q<sup>2</sup> values. Table 3 below provides a summary of the path coefficients and p-values, where ‘p < 0.05’ would indicate a significant effect between constructs.

H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d proposed that each of the NBE dimensions will impact brand hate positively. Results show that the sensory dimension has a significant direct impact on brand hate (β = 0.122, p < 0.05) suggesting that H1a is supported. Out of all NBE dimensions, affective dimension has the strongest positive direct effect on brand hate (β = 0.433, p < 0.05), hence, H1b is also supported. Behavior dimension has the least significant positive direct impact on brand hate (β = 0.111, p < 0.05). Therefore, H1c is supported. Finally, H1d is also supported as the Intellectual dimension has a significant direct impact on brand hate

**Table 3**  
Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	p-value	Validation
H1a	NBE Sensory → BH	0.122	0.016	Supported
H1b	NBE Affective → BH	0.433	<0.001	Supported
H1c	NBE Behavioral → BH	0.111	0.026	Supported
H1d	NBE Intellectual → BH	0.138	0.008	Supported
H2a	NBP Egotistical → BH	-0.005	0.463	Not Supported
H2b	NBP Boring → BH	0.028	0.315	Not Supported
H2c	NBP Lacking logic → BH	0.098	0.044	Supported
H2d	NBP Socially irresponsible → BH	0.216	<0.001	Supported
H3	BH → BSW	0.438	<0.001	Supported
H4	BH → BAVD	0.431	<0.001	Supported
H5a	BH → PUBC	0.269	<0.001	Supported
H5b	BH → PRVC	0.553	<0.001	Supported

Note: BH = Brand Hate, BAVD = Brand Avoidance, BSW = Brand Switching, PUBC = Public Complaining and PRVC = Private Complaining.

(β = 0.138, p < 0.05),

H2a, H2b, H2c and H2d proposed that each of the NBP dimensions will impact brand hate positively. Results show that the egotistical dimension has a negative effect on brand hate (β = -0.005, p > 0.05). Therefore, H2a is not supported. In addition, out of all the NBP dimensions the boring dimension has the least positive direct effect on brand hate (β = 0.028, p > 0.05) but did not have a significant association, hence, H2b was not supported. Lacking Logic dimension has the least significant positive effect on brand hate (β = 0.098, p < 0.05) thereby supporting H2c. Lastly, the Socially Irresponsible dimension has the most significant positive direct effect on brand hate (β = 0.216, p < 0.05) thus supporting H2d.

H3 proposed that brand hate positively effects brand switching. The results show that brand hate has a positive and significant direct effect on brand switching (β = 0.438, p < 0.05) suggesting that H3 was supported. H4 proposed that brand hate positively effects brand avoidance. The results show that brand hate has a positive and significant direct effect on brand avoidance (β = 0.431, p < 0.05) thereby supporting H4. H5 proposed that brand hate positively effects public and private complaining. Brand hate is observed to have significant positive effect on public complaining (β = 0.269, p < 0.05) as well as on private complaining (β = 0.553, p < 0.05). Therefore, both H5a and H5b are supported.

Kock (2018) states that the effect sizes calculated through WarpPLS can provide researchers with an indication as to whether the effects of the path coefficients are small (≥0.02), medium (≥0.15), or large (≥0.35). Effect sizes prove to be an important complement to p-values as they provide significance through practicality, in terms of the effect size (Selya et al., 2012). Although on WarpPLS, the effect sizes are calculated differently to Cohen’s (1988) f<sup>2</sup> coefficients, they still have a similar

**Table 4**  
Structural Model Effect Sizes

Relationship	Effect Size
NBES → BH*	0.062
NBEA → BH**	0.306
NBEB → BH*	0.054
NBEI → BH*	0.059
NBPEGO → BH	0.002
NBPBOR → BH	0.010
NBPLL → BH*	0.035
NBPSI → BH**	0.140
BH → BSW**	0.185
BH → BAVD**	0.192
BH → PUBC**	0.072
BH → PRVC**	0.306

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.001



interpretation (Kock, 2018). Table 4 provides the effect sizes for all the relationships, where all values are  $\geq 0.02$ , which suggests that the effects can be considered relevant from a practical point of view (Kock, 2018; Selya et al., 2012). Similarly, it is important to note that the NBP (Egotistical) and NBP (Boring) relationships have the two lowest effect sizes and they also proved to be non-significant results in the hypothesis testing.

Hair et al. (2016) suggest examining the Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  value in addition to the  $R^2$  values as a form of valuation criterion for cross-validated predictive relevance. The  $Q^2$  coefficient can be derived through a blindfolding procedure and is often referred to as a resampling analogue of the  $R^2$  coefficient (Kock, 2018). Both coefficients prove to be very similar, however the  $Q^2$  coefficient considers negative values more easily and in terms of appropriate predictive validity, any value over '0' is deemed acceptable (Kock, 2018). Table 5 provides the  $Q^2$  coefficients for all the endogenous variables and all coefficients are greater than '0' (positive nature), hence, indicating acceptable predictive validity for all endogenous variables within the defined structural model.

### 3.8. Moderation analysis

Gender's moderation role within our model had to be examined differently with the adoption of a multi-group analysis on WarpPLS because 'Gender' is deemed as a categorical variable and not a continuous variable (Kock, 2018). We had to delete gender as a latent variable from our original defined model in order to use the multi-group analysis procedure. Through the 'Explore multi-group analyses' setting on WarpPLS, we grouped the variable type of 'Gender' as an unstandardized indicator and followed the 'Satterthwaite' analysis method (Kock, 2014; Kock, 2018). Kock (2014) suggest that the 'Satterthwaite' analysis multi-group method proves to be straightforward and easy to use. In this process, the path coefficients of 'males' and 'females' were examined and then compared to understand whether there are significant differences between them (Kock, 2014). Table 6 below provides a summary of the p-values that suggests no moderated relationship has significant effect on brand hate ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, H6a to H6d and H7a to H7d are not supported.

### 3.9. Other model fit and quality indices

WarpPLS provides a few other model fit indices and quality indicators. We evaluated and compared these model fit and quality indices for two models: (1) the original defined model and (2) the model excluding all the non-significant results. The latent variables of NBP (Egotistical) and NBP (Boring) along with the moderating role of Gender, have been removed from the original defined model. This allowed for a more accurate representation of the model fit and quality indices without any direct effect from such non-significant results.

First, we examined the Tenenhaus Goodness of Fit index (GoF) which measures the defined model's explanatory power (Kock, 2018). These GoF values are interpreted by the following guidelines in terms of small, medium or large explanatory power; small =  $> 0.1$ , medium =  $> 0.25$  and large =  $> 0.36$ . Both models with a GoF of '0.416' and '0.435' respectively, had a significantly large and acceptable explanatory power. Second, we looked at the Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR), which follows a rule of thumb where values are acceptable if  $> 0.700$  and

**Table 5**  
Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$

Endogenous Variable	$Q^2$
Brand Hate	0.651
Brand Switching	0.185
Brand Avoidance	0.195
Public Complaining	0.073
Private Complaining	0.309

**Table 6**  
Gender Moderation (Multi-Group Analysis)

Hypothesis	Relationship	p-value	Validation
H6a	Gender $\times$ NBE Sensory $\rightarrow$ BH	0.421	Not Supported
H6b	Gender $\times$ NBE Affective $\rightarrow$ BH	0.175	Not Supported
H6c	Gender $\times$ NBE Behavioral $\rightarrow$ BH	0.204	Not Supported
H6d	Gender $\times$ NBE Intellectual $\rightarrow$ BH	0.154	Not Supported
H7a	Gender $\times$ NBP Egotistical $\rightarrow$ BH	0.079	Not Supported
H7b	Gender $\times$ NBP Boring $\rightarrow$ BH	0.394	Not Supported
H7c	Gender $\times$ NBP Lacking logic $\rightarrow$ BH	0.395	Not Supported
H7d	Gender $\times$ NBP Socially irresponsible $\rightarrow$ BH	0.376	Not Supported

**Note:** 'Gender x' refers to the moderating role of gender on the relationships

should ideally = 1. As shown in Table 7, our original model actually had a below acceptable SPR of '0.600' but the final model without the non-significant results met the ideal value required of '1'. Third, we explored the average full collinearity VIF, average block VIF and the full collinearity VIF's of all the latent constructs. In terms of the average block VIF and average full collinearity VIF for both models, (Table 7) the values of '1.909' and '2.153' for the original model proved to be acceptable on the basis of the rule of thumb; acceptable if  $< 5$  and ideally  $< 3.3$  (Kock, 2018).

In addition, for the significant results model the values of '1.704' and '2.172' also proved to be acceptable. For full collinearity VIFs for each of the latent constructs, none of the values exceeded 3.3. Kock (2018) suggests that a 3.3 or lower value would indicate the absence of multicollinearity in the model and no common method bias. Finally, we also explored the  $R^2$  contribution ratio, where values are acceptable if  $> 0.9$ , and ideally should = 1 (Kock, 2018). Our original model consisted of a  $R^2$  contribution ratio of '0.902', therefore, proving to be acceptable. However, our significant results model had an increase in terms of the  $R^2$  contribution ratio and ended up with the perfect and ideal value of '1.000'.

## 4. Discussion

Results suggest that all four dimensions of negative brand experience impacts brand hate positively. Interestingly, as shown earlier in there was a recurring theme within the past literature on brand hate that identified 'negative past experiences' as an antecedent of brand hate (Hegner et al., 2017; Zarantonello et al., 2018). Both sensory and intellectual dimensions of NBE also have a significant positive association

**Table 7**  
Model Fit and Quality Indices

Model Fit and Quality Indicator	Original Defined Model	Significant Results Defined Model (excluding all non-significant results)
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.416	0.435
Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	0.600	1.000
Average block VIF	1.909	1.704
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.153	2.172
$R^2$ contribution ratio (RSCR)	0.902	1.000

**Note:** GoF = goodness of fit index, SPR = Simpson's paradox ratio, VIF = variance inflation factor, AFVIF (average full collinearity VIF), RSCR =  $R^2$  squared contribution ratio



with brand hate. [Zarantonello and Schmitt \(2010\)](#) suggest that consumers who are heavily influenced by affective, sensory and intellectual experiences can be profiled as ‘inner-directed consumers’. They give more attention to experiences that generate emotion, sensory appeal, stimulate their thinking and are less interested in bodily experiences in the form of physical actions. Our results suggest that the respondents were primarily ‘inner directed consumers’. This also resulted in the behavioral dimension of NBE having the least significant positive association with brand hate.

Results show that the ‘egotistical’ dimension of NBP and the ‘boring’ dimension of NBP does not impact brand hate significantly. This could be because consumers may not have the intentions to develop hateful feelings towards a brand when a brand reflects either of these personalities. [Haji \(2014\)](#) states that the egotistical dimension of NBP has a positive direct effect on brand loyalty, which increases consumer’s purchase intentions. Therefore, an egotistical brand personality would be more likely to have a negative association with brand hate. [Haji \(2014\)](#) also expresses that the boring dimension of NBP does not stimulate consumer’s cognitive processes. This logically explains why ‘boring’ dimension has insignificant effect on brand hate. In terms of significant findings, both the ‘lacking logic’ and ‘socially irresponsible’ dimensions of NBP have a positive impact on brand hate. These two dimensions may have had a significant impact on brand hate. This could be due to reasons like brand which lacks logic and socially irresponsible brand represent personalities that result in consumer’s having emotions which can potentially stimulate tension, anxiety or incongruity ([Haji, 2014](#)).

H6 and H7 are not supported. It suggests inconclusive evidence that gender plays a moderating role on relationships between NBE, NBP, and brand hate. Extant research in psychology suggests that negative emotions are stronger than positive emotions and their behavioral outcomes are generally not significantly different among genders ([Baumeister et al., 2001](#); [Vaish et al., 2008](#)). Here, it must be noted that our study is focussed on negative brand experience and negative brand personality in the service context. Additionally, research on these constructs is miniscule in numbers as compared to that on positive brand experience and positive brand personality. It will thereby be difficult to draw direct comparisons in outcomes between these studies. Notwithstanding this fact the results support conclusions made by [Khan and Rahman \(2016\)](#) and [Yeh et al. \(2016\)](#) that there is no significant impact of customer’s gender on brand experience effects. Similarly, [Nikhashemi and Valaei \(2018\)](#) suggest no major differential impact of customer’s gender on brand personality effects. However, there are also literature that show presence of significant gender-related differences across studies on both brand experience and brand personality ([Chen et al., 2018](#); [Das, 2014](#); [Rup et al., 2018](#)). Given this inconclusive understanding of the differences in behavior among genders in this study, we believe that future research should further examine the role played by gender in consumer-brand relationships with negatively valence constructs. This would provide greater clarity on the contradictory hence confounding results shown in past literature. The moderating role of gender may provide strong implications for brand managers who endeavour to develop marketing strategies that consider both similarities and differences between males and females.

This study investigates the impact of brand hate on behavioral outcomes such as brand switching, brand avoidance and complaining (public and private). Results suggest brand hate positively effects all three negative behavioral outcomes supporting H3, H4 and H5. Interestingly, based on the explained variance of the outcome variables through the  $R^2$  values, we may infer that private complaining would be the most prominent negative behavioral outcome for consumer’s experiencing brand hate, followed by brand avoidance and brand switching and with public complaining as the least common in this study. Notwithstanding the relatively high explained variances for private complaining (30%), brand avoidance (19%) and brand switching (18.5%), it remains quite low for public complaining (7.2%). Similar to

[Hegner et al. \(2017\)](#) study our findings suggest relatively high explained variance for the construct of brand avoidance as did. This provides enough evidence for brand avoidance to be deemed as a negative behavioral outcome of brand hate. [Fetscherin \(2019\)](#) found dissimilar results to our study. The multi-dimensional nature of brand hate examined in his study induced explained high variances of public complaining (51–62%) as compared to private complaining and brand switching.

## 5. Contributions

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

This study extends the research on negative consumer brand relationship ([Anaza et al., 2021](#)) by developing and testing a comprehensive framework of brand hate relationships considering. This is a welcome addition to the scarce literature on negative emotions towards brands ([Pantano, 2021](#)). We also extend the literature on brand hate relationships by utilising the multi-dimensional structure of negative brand experience and testing the relative impact of each of these dimensions on brand hate ([Brakus et al., 2009](#)). This study responds to several studies such as [Brakus et al.’s \(2009\)](#) call to use a negatively valence version of their brand experience scale. It is an important contribution because past research seems to have placed heavy emphasis on understanding the positive consumer-brand relationship of brand love but not many studies have empirically examined NBE as antecedents of brand hate. This study thereby adds novel antecedents of brand hate to the literature over and above what is already known. Hence, this study advances our understanding of the role of negative brand experiences in developing an extreme negative emotional reaction from consumers in the form of brand hate.

The findings of this study expand the literature on consumers’ negative emotions towards service brands by examining the antecedents and consequences of brand hate in a service environment. This is consistent with the propositions in literature ([Jayasimha et al., 2017](#); [Sweeney et al., 2014](#)). Next, another novelty of this study lies in examining the relative impacts of different dimensions of negative brand personality on brand hate. Findings of this study answers calls for more research on disentangling the relationships between the multi-dimensional NBP and brand hate ([Haji, 2014](#)). The adoption of [Haji \(2014\)](#) NBP scale in a moderation model that considers negative behavioral outcomes such as brand switching, brand avoidance and complaining is a welcome addition to the NBP literature as it provides a more in-depth understanding of the construct. In testing these relationships, this study responds to the works of [Bryson et al. \(2013\)](#), [Zarantonello et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Hegner et al. \(2017\)](#) that advise a better understanding of the antecedents of brand hate.

This study disaggregates NBE and NBP to understand the individual effects of each of their four dimensions (NBE: sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual; NBP: egotistical, boring, lacking logic and socially irresponsible) on brand hate. This is an important contribution as it highlights that the four dimensions of both NBE and NBP have differential effects on brand hate. Hence, this provides academics with deeper and more substantial insights regarding the multi-dimensional nature of the constructs of NBE and NBP. The negative effect of the egotistical dimension of NBP in contrast to the positive effects of the other dimensions is evidence of this contribution.

Our study also addresses the paucity of empirical studies on brand hate. Conducting an empirical study on the topic of brand hate provides the opportunity to test relationships using data which helps to validate hypotheses, drive the conclusions being drawn and eventually results in verifiable empirical evidence. In addition, study extends this line of research to the services context by studying the role of brand hate towards service brands. Brand hate traditionally been contextualised from product point of view ([Zarantonello et al., 2016](#); [Fetscherin et al., 2019](#); [Rodrigues, Brandão, & Rodrigues, 2020](#)) therefore, our study adds to the

growing body of research on brand hate in the services context (Curina et al., 2020; Farhat & Chaney, 2021). The study enhances our understanding of what factors result in consumer's developing hate towards a service brand and what negative behaviors they partake in once that hate has developed towards that service brand. This is a critical contribution to marketing literature as service brands are continuously growing and becoming more prominent in today's dynamic environment (Brodie et al., 2009).

### 5.2. Implications for managers

Results of this study provides significant insights to the practitioners and managers. From the perspective of brand managers, brand hate can be quite detrimental for a firm, therefore we recommend the following three strategies:

First, service firms should try to prevent all kinds of negative brand experiences (sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual) that could lead to development of brand hate. Cliched as it may be brand managers inadvertently tend to arouse brand hate among consumers by generating the above-mentioned negative brand experiences. For example, Spirit Airlines faced consumer backlash for costly refreshments and excessively high baggage fees or Chipotle's brand reputation crisis in 2015 caused due to food contamination illness. Brand managers therefore must ensure that marketing and brand related stimuli do not evoke these four negative brand experience dimensions as consumers are searching, shopping and consuming brands. Ensuring reliable and high quality product, offering a price that seems fair and just or providing the right ambience and environment (e.g., sound, scent, music etc.) are few case in points that would help to enhance all the dimensions of brand experience and reduce the possibility of brand hate from developing. Furthermore, service firms and brand managers should understand their customer's expectations and use these to design their services accordingly, in order to meet and exceed the customer expectations, which would in turn enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Finally, firms should also recruit the right kind of employees and continuously train them so that they always deliver a positive brand experience to their customers and reduce the possibility of any negative brand experience, to avoid brand hate.

Second, service firms should ensure that their brands are not perceived as being socially irresponsible or lacking logic because these may also lead to the development of brand hate. Successful brands like Wal-Mart faced backlash from industry groups for paying abysmally low wages. The same cause thereby spiralled into consumer outrage due to poor services by Wal-Mart's service personnel (www.designmantic.com, 2016). Most importantly, firms must ensure that are perceived to be humane in nature and practices. SeaWorld had to terminate its killer whale show as general public and animal rights activists protested the stress the orcas at SeaWorld experienced due to captivity. Kucuk (2019b) also state that companies without CSR initiatives would have brands that are the most hated across markets. In other words, firms should ensure they are not viewed as reflecting disapproved or irrational social norms or viewed as reflecting the defiance of good faith practices. Firms should have regular monitoring of their corporate social responsibility and their employee's wellbeing to ensure they aren't prone to negligent professional behaviors.

Third, service firms should ensure that their customers do not partake in negative behavioral outcomes once the brand hate has developed. This is the most difficult challenge because these customers have already developed these strong feelings of brand hate, are either complaining in private or in public and even contemplating leaving the service firm or taking other negative actions. The most important issue is to overcome the problems of brand switching. Firms should have loyalty management programs in place, which would act as a brand switching barrier that encourages customers to regularly use their services for potential benefits. However, in case the customer has a just cause to be irritated or hateful towards the brand the service firm must have the

courage and compassion to accept its fault and atone for the same thereby showing its humane face to the customer and wider audiences.

## 6. Limitations and future research

Our study provides significant understanding of the phenomenon of brand hate, and its antecedents and consequences. However, our research also has some limitations that future research should address. First, as our study's sample was collected only from respondents in the United States. Future research should test our research model and validate our findings across different countries. Second, this current study adopted an empirical approach due to the lack of empirical research within the brand hate literature. However, there is a lack of research in this area as a whole, hence, future research should be conducted based on grounded theory, experiments, case studies or even consider a theory triangulation method which may provide new insights by drawing on multiple theoretical perspectives. Third, notwithstanding the fact we considered several antecedents and outcomes of brand hate, future research should consider other antecedents and outcomes to enrich the literature on brand hate. Future research may examine whether any positive antecedents lead to brand hate because in this current study the egotistical dimension of NBP proved to be negatively related to brand hate, hence positive brand personalities opposing the egotistical dimension of NBP may have a positive association with brand hate.

Fourth, our study has not considered the multi-dimensional nature of brand hate as proposed by Fetscherin (2019). Therefore, future research should assess the extent to which our findings can be replicated while considering brand hate as a multi-dimensional construct. This may provide some unique insights. Fifth, we examined NBE through a fully negatively valenced version of Brakus et al. (2009) brand experience scale. Future research should further conceptualise NBE to provide a more pronounced understanding of the construct. Past research proposes that brands simultaneously have a substantial group of brand lovers and brand haters (Kucuk, 2019a; Osuna Ramírez et al., 2019). Therefore, future researchers may look into joint effect of positive consumer brand relationship like brand love, and negative consumer brand relationship like brand hate. Finally, we adopted gender as the only moderator within this study. Future research on brand hate therefore should consider other moderators.

### CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Sanjit K. Roy:** Supervision, Validation, Software, Conceptualization, Methodology. **Apurv Sharma:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Software, Investigation, Formal analysis. **Sunny Bose:** Writing – review & editing. **Gaganpreet Singh:** Writing – review & editing.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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