

# TRAJECTORY FROM BRAND HATE TO CONSUMER DECISION MAKING PROCESS

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the trajectories of brand hate leading towards the consumer decision making process. Brand hate is an emotional state of the consumer wherein the intensity of consumers' hatred and their self congruence could determine their actions towards the brand. 432 respondents spread across the main cities of Gujarat, India were administered a structured questionnaire. Principal axis factoring method along with Regression test were applied. Findings revealed a total accumulated variance of 59.943% for the four factors extracted using the PAF method. Four factors identified from the study were Simple brand hate, Negative personal experience, Negative brand image and Poor corporate social responsibility. The regression analysis revealed that respondents across age group, gender, income and occupation would not want to be consumers again of the brand that they hated. The second regression analysis indicated that respondent across age and gender had made financial sacrifice to not be consumers of the brand they hated. Brand and marketing

managers need to closely understand and study these consumers who hate the brand because in today's well connected competitive world, negativity about brands can spread like wild fire and damage control would be difficult if not impossible.

**Keywords:** Brand hate, Negative personal experience, Negative brand image, Poor corporate social responsibility, Consumer decision making process.

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing experts have traditionally emphasized on the positive aspects of consumption, and its practical implications rather than negative ones; for example, understanding whether and to what extent consumers are willing to buy or use a company's product has been more important than understanding why they are not inclined to do so (Dalli et al., 2006). Negative associations or feeling towards the brand is a trajectory from brand dissatisfaction to brand dislike to ultimately brand hate. Customers have different ways of framing their dissatisfaction

that help them understand the betrayal from the company or brand (Ward & Ostrom, 2006, p. 227-228) Research has indicated that negative emotions have an effect on consumer actions, resulting to various types of possible negative behavioural responses towards the brand. Customers can be silent about their dislikes or vocal resulting in severe damaging behaviour for the brands. Customer demographics are one of the many factors that would influence brand dislike or brand hate. These emotions cover a continuum of feelings between simple dislike and hate, in which the latter is the highest form of negative emotion (Romani, Sadeh & Dalli, 2009). This highest form, brand hate, is an intense emotional affect towards the brand (Bryson, Atwal & Hulsén, 2013).

### **Brand Hate**

Bryson et al (2010) has defined brand hate “as an intense negative emotional affect towards the brand”. Sternberg (2003) identifies three components of hate:

- 1) repulsion and disgust; 2) anger and fear; and
- 3) devaluation through contempt.

### **Bad Personal Experience**

Zarantonello (2016) has indicated that the strongest and ultimate factor that leads towards brand hate is defilement of consumer’s expectations. Disappointment, and frustration are typically the emotions the consumer undergoes when the brand does not live up to its indicated performance.

### **Negative Brand Image**

Negative information about the brand can cause severe damage to the brand equity. Negative publicity could change the way a consumer thinks about a firm, in a negative sense. Through

mass media, the internet and social media, a corporate crisis and negative information cannot be held secret for very long (Ward & Ostrom, 2006).

### **Poor Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate irresponsible behaviour is explained by Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2013) as both ethical and social transgressions. Sweetin et al.,(2013) found empirical evidence that consumers who encounter corporate irresponsible behaviour are more willing to punish the brand.

Research conducted by Fetscherin (2019) suggests that when consumers become sufficiently angry, they are willing to make a financial sacrifice to hurt the brand.

Numerous researches have been carried out to understand the relationship between consumers and brands but despite this increased interest, it can be argued that brand hate has been rather neglected in marketing literature (Bosse, 2014; Bryson, Atwal, & Dreissig, 2010; Delzen, 2014; Salvatori, 2007).

The purpose of this research paper was to understand consumer’s relationship with Brand Hate and the consequences of the same. This study was carried across diverse age groups, gender, income and occupation from October 2020 to December 2020.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the association between demographic factors of respondents and their dimensions of brand hate.
2. To identify the reasons leading to consumer’s hating brands
3. To identify the consequences of brand hate impacting their buying behaviour

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A total of 432 users of different various categories of products were the target population of this study. A structured questionnaire consisting of 4 questions pertaining to age, gender, occupation and monthly income, 5 pertaining to previous experience with the brand utility and consumption and 11 scale items relating to the core essence of the study was developed and administered wherein respondents were free to choose their options without any bias. All these items of the constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The study results confirmed that the Cronbach's alpha values of the variables were above 0.675 which was above the threshold of 0.60 (Pallant, 2013). Principal axis factoring method along with Regression test were applied to generate statistical interpretations

## RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

There were 65.7% respondents in the 15 to 25 years followed by 15.5% respondents in the age group of 25 to 35 years of age and 18.8% respondents who were in the age group of 35

to 45 years of age. There was almost equal split of male (53%) respondents and female (47%). Out of the 432 respondents, there were 62.3% students followed by 23.8% working professionals in the private sector and 13.9% were businessmen. In terms of monthly income, 48.14% earned between Rs.15000 and Rs.30,000 followed by 33.79% earned between Rs.30,000 and Rs.60,000, around 3% earned above Rs. 60,000, remaining were less than 15,000.

## STATISTICAL INTERPRETATIONS

### KMO AND Bartlett's Test for Sampling Adequacy

KMO measure of sampling adequacy was found to be 0.616 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was found to be 0.000. This makes the sample of this study adequate for factor analysis.

### Principal Axis Factoring

The 11 scale statements relating to negative past experience, simple brand hate, negative brand image and poor corporate social responsibility image were analysed using Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax Rotation.

**Table 1: Summary and Labelling of factors**

Factor Labels	Item Scale Constructs	Cronbach Alpha reliability	Factor Loadings
Simple Brand Hate (SBH)	I have violent thoughts about that particular brand	0.643	0.605
	That particular brand is awful	0.625	0.758
	The products of that particular brand do not fit my personality	0.623	0.748

	In my opinion, that particular brand acts irresponsible	0.660	0.667
	The brand doesn't match my values and beliefs	0.636	0.642
Negative Past Experience (NPE)	The performance of products of that particular brand is poor	0.631	0.639
	That particular brand does not offers high-quality products	0.690	0.883
Negative Brand Image (NBI)	I don't like this brand because I think I would be dissatisfied by this brand	0.630	0.417
	In my opinion, that particular brand acts unethical	0.692	0.884
Poor Corporate Social Responsibility (PCSR)	That particular brand does not behave responsibly regarding the environment	0.638	0.688
	That particular brand does not develops innovative products and services	0.656	0.717

Respondents' agreeing with factor 1 can be termed as "SHB". Consumers might hate brands due to multiple reasons like unpleasant personal experience or access of information showcasing the brand in poor light. This factor is of extreme significance since it deals a lot with strong negative emotions which can lead to extreme behavioural outcomes like voicing negative feelings and emotions, boycotting a brand or its particular products

Respondents' agreeing with factor 2 can be termed as "NPE". There might be many reasons behind the consumer's purchasing, but the most basic expectation is satisfactory product and service performance and unfortunately if the brand doesn't match to the expectations then negative feelings are more likely to develop in consumer's mind.

Respondents' agreeing with factor 3 can be termed as "NBI". Consumers tend to compare themselves with the brand-user image of a brand. If the brand does not match their values and beliefs then they perceive it negatively. Negative brand image causes consumers to show their hatred towards brands and subsequently discontinue buying it in future.

Respondents' agreeing with factor 4 can be termed as "PCSR". When consumers believe that a brand's management policies has a negative effect on society, it can lead to brand avoidance or rejection and sometimes to Brand hate.

## REGRESSION ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One of the important assessments was to find out whether any association existed between demographics and their intent to never purchase the brand they hate which turned out to be strong in terms of age, gender, occupation and income per month as the calculated value came out to be 0.003, 0.023, 0.016 and 0.016 respectively. R value and the R-Square value came out to be 0.713 and 0.509 respectively. The difference between both the values also came out to be 0.501. ANOVA value came out to be 0.01, An F-value of 67.28 gave a good indicator.

Another important assessment was to find out whether any association existed between demographics and financial sacrifice towards the brand they hate which turned out to be strong in terms of age and gender as the calculated values came out to be 0.00 and 0.024, and weak for occupation and income per month as the calculated value came out to be 0.152 and 0.607. The R value and the R-Square value came out to be 0.840 and 0.705 respectively. The difference between both the values also came out to be 0.607. ANOVA value came out to be 0.00, An F-value of 13.975 gave a good indicator.

### Visible brand hate across various categories

Respondents%	Product Categories
36.11	FMCG, Food & Beverages
30.1	Clothing, Footwear, Accessories
15.51	Telecom
9.26	Automobile
6.94	Health/Wellness
2.08	Aviation

The reasons indicated have been qualified as

**SBH:** Low in quantity, got spoiled soon, reliability issues, low speed, network and connectivity issues, less battery life, less shelf life

**NPE:** Stale in taste, not fresh, not giving desired results, not long lasting, uncomfortable to use, not up to expectation, not having good features as claimed, not comfortable, poor material quality

**NBI:** High prices, not mentioning the ingredients it contains, not pure or organic as it claimed, less variety, outdated design, offers were unsatisfactory to name a few

**PCSR:** Full of chemicals, harms skin due to high chemical content

## CONCLUSION

A successful brand makes a consumer think of the brand as more human communicating meaning, value and trust. Building on research articles, one to one interviews with some respondents, browsing social hate websites, as well as conducting indepth quantitative research, the above study was conceptualized.

Through a series of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, four components were created – **SBH, NPE, NBI and PCSR**. When these brands falter in terms of performance, imagery, ethics or ideology, they automatically fall in the unsatisfied category. Emotions are interlinked with the trajectory from brand dissatisfaction to brand dislike and brand hate with consumer demographics.

The relationship between brand and possible negative behavioural outcomes were also understood. On testing the hypothesis whether the consumers would be willing to go back and become consumers of the brand that they hate, the research found that none of the respondents across all demographics were willing to go back and become consumers of the brand they hated. On the second hypothesis that was tested whether the consumers had ever made made a financial sacrifice for the brand that they dislike. People across age and gender agreed that they had made a financial sacrifice towards the brand they disliked but there was no association between financial sacrifice and occupation as well as income.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

Brand managers are constantly striving to strategise on increasing the customer base

and create loyal customers. But, in today's context, it is more important to not ignore the unsatisfied customer since this is the first step towards dislike leading towards hate. Studies should be conducted to understand the nature of these complaints. Moreover, a special department should be created to browse the internet and conduct research on an ongoing basis to dynamically understand the mood of the consumer towards its brand. To conclude, from a managerial perspective taking care of one's unhappy customer and understanding their reasons for unhappiness or hate indicates that the customer can be made to come on a neutral ground and will relook at the brand with an open mind.

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