

## Consumers Brand Hate and Anti-Brand Actions

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### *Abstract*

*Besides consumer positive emotion and feeling to a brand, negative consumer emotion like brand hate is also a common phenomenon. This study aims to find out the impact of negative past experiences on consumer brand hate and its outcome. A structured questionnaire has been used to collect data from 157 respondents who are the users of different brands of mobile phone. The Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) has been used to analyze the data. The findings of the study suggest that negative past experience has significant influence on consumer brand hate which has positive influence on negative word of mouth and exit. The study should have included other constructs that causes consumer brand hate with large sample size. The study provides guidelines for marketers as they can understand how brand hate is impacted and its consequences.*

**Keywords:** Brand Hate, Negative Word of Mouth, Exit, Negative Past Experience

**Jel Classification:** M31

### 1. Introduction

Fournier (1998) founded the concept of consumer brand relationship in her seminal study and its implication has been proved both in theoretically and practically. From managerial point of view, outcomes of consumer brand relationship are positive word of mouth (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015) brand loyalty (Fetscherin, Boulanger, Gonçalves Filho, & Quiroga Souki, 2014; Loureiro, Ruediger, & Demetris, 2012) and brand forgiveness (Cheng, White, & Chaplin, 2012). These studies showed that building strong consumer brand relationship is significant in branding practices. Whereas from theoretical perspective the new research stream has emerged to develop and established the concept of consumer brand relationship by (Ahuvia, 2005; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Ghani & Tuhin, 2018; Park, Eisingerich, & Park, 2013; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Strong, loving, committed and trusted long relationships with brands are the outcome of strong consumer brand relationships. Instead of positive brand relationship, consumers may have hatred for some brands (Khan & Lee, 2014). However, brand hate research has not been given due importance in academic research (Romani, Grappi, & Dalli, 2012), Therefore, Fetscherin and Heinrich (2015) emphasized to focus on the negative aspect of brand relationship.

The brand hate becomes a common phenomenon now a day. Like passionate, loving and committed relationship, consumer also form hating or hostile relationship with brands as consumers have negative experience or negative emotions to brands (Romani et al., 2012). From three points of view marketing researchers have agreed on investigating the strong negative feelings of consumers to brands (Zarantonello,

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Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016). First, more research are necessary on negative consumer brand relationship as more studies are needed in this area (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). Second, consumers take anti-brand actions forming hate group against the brand they hate (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Third, marketing literature shows how hate feelings are developed in consumers due to service failure (Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2010). These feelings cause negative consequences for both companies and brands as consumers take anti-brand actions for their bad feelings.

From managerial perspective, outcomes of brand hate are negative for the brand. Consumers having hatred for a brand involve in anti-brand actions both actively and passively (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Consumers show their anger and actively withdraw themselves from using the brand. Further, consumers also show their shame and disappointment. These negative retaliations of consumers result loss of consumers and negative consumer brand equity which ultimately negatively affect companies market share and profitability. From this ground, the present research intends to identify the role of consumers negative past experience on the brand hate and its consequence as exit behavior and spreading negative word of mouth. A large amount of studies have been conducted on consumer brand relationship; however, limited amount of research focuses on consumer brand hate and its consequences focusing on consumer anti-brand actions. The present study aims to identify whether brand hate arises from consumers negative past experiences and its consequences in terms of brand exit or negative word of mouth.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

Relationship norms guide the relationship between consumer and brand (Aggarwal, 2004). Consumer brand relationship is guided by two types of norms e.g. communal relationship and exchange relationship norms (Ghani & Tuhin, 2018; Ghani & Tuhin, 2016). The loss of relationship between consumers and brands are due to the reasons of violation of these norms (Ghani & Tuhin, 2016). The relationship between the consumer and the brand deteriorates or comes to an end if a brand fails to maintain communal of exchange relationship norms. Moreover, brand Attachment-Aversion model of Park et al., 2013 confirmed that when bad things happen with brands or negative experiences with brand causes consumers feel negatively. This negative feeling cause consumer to hate a brand.

Psychologists have identified hate as an emotion (Zarantonello et al., 2016) which include “rage, disgust, envy, exasperation” and others (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'connor, 1987). Though hate includes different types of emotions, it is aroused from violation of individual and communal rights, threats to people, liberty and well-being (Sternberg, 2003). Fitness and Fletcher (1993) attributed moral violation, when subject is unsupported, badly treated or humiliated, as a cause of hate. Further, Aumer-Ryan and Hatfield (2007) stated unappealing personality sparks hate behavior. Other reasons include object of gossips, feeling hurt, being disrespected, betrayed, abused or physically attacked, perceived inequality (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

People adopt different strategy to deal the hatred in interpersonal relationship (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Hateful behavior of people includes harassing, impugning or humiliating; attacking, beating or injuring (Opatow & McClelland, 2007). Besides these other hatred behaviors are acted coldly with partners (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993), suppression of emotion (Shaver et al., 1987), Walked out or left (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993), communicating with or confronting the target (Aumer-Ryan & Hatfield, 2007). Therefore, people take actions against the person they hate either spreading negative words or exit from the relationship of that person. Similarly, consumers who hate a brand spread negative word of mouth or exit from the relationship with the brand.

### **2.1 Negative Past Experience and Brand Hate**

Anti-choice situation is one of the reasons of consumer not purchasing a product (Hogg, 1998) which inspires consumers for experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance is resulted from negative consumption experience of consumers which is a product-related factor occurred from negative past experiences. Confirmation of expected performance is the fundamental reason of consumer brand purchase though other reasons are also associated brand purchase (Lee, Conroy, & Motion, 2009). Confirmation of expectation usually generates satisfaction and disconfirmation results dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Negative brand experience causes consumers dissatisfaction that causes of brand hate (Bryson, Atwal, & Hultén, 2013; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Negative past experience, therefore, leads to brand hate and researcher states the following hypothesis

***H<sub>1</sub>: Negative past experience positively influences consumer brand hate.***

### **2.2 Brand Hate and Negative Word of Mouth**

The extent consumers spread information or speak poorly about brands is considered as negative word of mouth (Bonifield & Cole, 2007). Consumers are more likely share their negative experience than their positive experience (Finkenauer, Kerkhof, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2007). Besides privately spreading negative word of mouth to alert their friends and relatives (Nyer & Gopinath, 2005), consumers publicly complains in social media and blogs regarding their negative experiences and feelings (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 1996). Brand hate inspires consumer retaliating against brand by spreading negative word of mouth. Therefore, the following hypothesis states

***H<sub>2</sub>: Brand hate positively influence consumers negative word of mouth.***

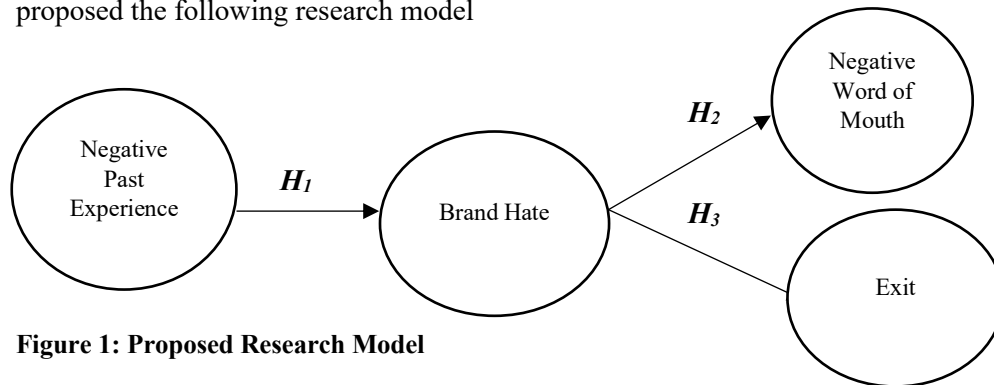
### **2.3 Brand Hate and Consumer Exit**

It is evident in psychological research that different behavioral responses arouse from different negative emotions (Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994). Consumers brand exit is one of the reactions of service failure from consumers (Hirschman, 1970). Exit is the ending of the relationship or stop buying the products of the company (Hirschman, 1970). Consumers either voice or exit from the relationship with the

specific brand when they are dissatisfied (Delzen, 2014). Some consumers actively express their concern to the company that they are going to exit the relationship (Delzen, 2014). Therefore, following hypothesis is stated

***H<sub>3</sub>: Brand hate positively influence consumers exit.***

Negative past experience about brand is one of the root causes of consumers negative brand emotions or feelings. This negative emotion leads to consumers' brand hate. Stronger brand hate emotion of consumers results in active and passive anti-brand actions such as negative word of mouth or exit. From this ground the researcher proposed the following research model



**Figure 1: Proposed Research Model**

### **3. Research Method**

#### ***3.1 Measurement***

This research adapted items from different authors to measure the constructs of the research model. The researcher measured brand hate adapting the items from (Hegner, Fetscherin, & van Delzen, 2017) such as I'm disgusted by brand X, I don't tolerate brand X, the world would be a better place without brand X, I'm totally angry about brand X, brand X is awful, I hate brand X. These items were measured with 5-point Likert scale. Negative past experience was measured using 5-point Likert scale adapting the items of (Hegner et al., 2017). The items were "the performance of products of brand X is poor, the brand products are inconvenient, my hate for this brand is linked to the bad performance of this product, I'm dissatisfied by brand X". Similarly, exit was measured by two items from Delzen (2014) such as I don't purchase products of brand X anymore derived from definition, I stopped using products of X. Lastly, negative word of mouth was measured adapting the items from the study of (Grégoire, Laufer, & Tripp, 2010) such as I spread negative word-of-mouth about the brand, I denigrated the brand to my friends, When my friends were looking for a similar brand, I told them not to the brand. All these items were measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

#### ***3.2 Participants and Procedure***

The target population of this study was the consumers of different mobile phones such as Samsung, Huawei, Apple, Xiomi, Symphony, Walton, Oppo and others.

The number of mobile phone users are growing very rapidly. There is a growing trend of middle, upper -middle and high-income class to who are using mobile phone. Consumers are using mobile phone from different brands attached with different features and benefits. The data were collected from four shopping centers such as Dhaka New Market, Basundhara City Shopping Complex, Eastern Plaza and Jamuna Future Park. The shopping centers were selected for data collection since different group of people came to these shopping centers. Therefore, representative numbers of respondent from different segment would be included in the sample. The researcher approached a total of 203 respondents randomly of which 157 respondents participated in the survey. The researcher distributed a structured questionnaire to collect response from the consumers where respondents were free to choose their options without any bias. Lastly, after data screening and missing value treatment, the valid response rate was 77.33% which was enough because according to (Sekaran, 2009) response rate of 30% is appropriate for any study.

### ***3.3 Sample Profile***

Majority of the respondents participated in this survey were male. Almost 51 percent (80) of the respondents were male whereas total number of females was 77. The highest number of respondents (57) was in the age group of 39-48 years old followed by 42 respondents from 29-38 years old. Respondents in between 18-28 and 49 and above were 35 and 23 respectively. Most of the respondents (75) had completed master's degree followed by 45 respondents who had completed graduation as the highest academic qualification. Respondents were diverse in different income groups such as below 50000, 50000-100000 and 100000 and above were 37, 85 and 35 respectively.

## **4. Data Analysis and Results**

The researcher used structural equation modeling partial least square (PLS) technique using Smart PLS version 3.2.7. The structural equation model based on PLS is assessed under two steps as (i) assessment of measurement model and (ii) assessment of structural or path model (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The following section discussed the different criteria of measurement and structural model.

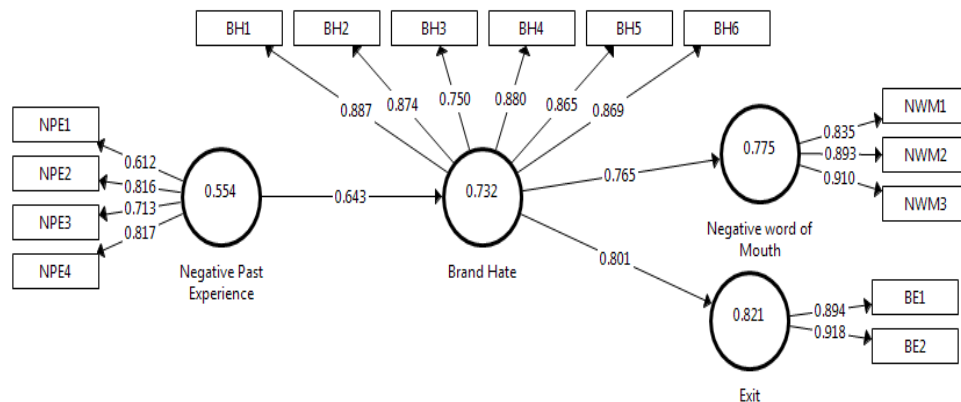
### ***4.1 Measurement Model***

The research model of this study (Figure-1) includes the constructs of negative past experience, brand hate, negative word of mouth and exit. All of these constructs were conceptualized as low-order construct. Table 1 represents the results the measurement model. The items of the construct are loaded with the values which are above the required threshold level 0.4 as suggested by

**Table 1: Measurement Model Results**

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Exit	BE1	0.894	0.791	0.902
	BE2	0.918		
Brand Hate	BH1	0.887	0.942	0.732
	BH2	0.874		
	BH3	0.750		
	BH4	0.880		
	BH5	0.865		
	BH6	0.869		
Negative Past Experience	NPE1	0.612	0.831	0.554
	NPE2	0.816		
	NPE3	0.713		
	NPE4	0.817		
Negative Word of Mouth	NWM1	0.835	0.912	0.775
	NWM2	0.893		
	NWM3	0.910		

Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017). For reliability of Structural Equation Modeling composite reliability (CR) criteria was used (Hair Jr et al., 2017). The reliability of the constructs was also achieved since the CR values were above 0.7 (brand hate = 0.942, negative past experience = 0.831, exit = 0.791, negative word of mouth = 0.912) which were above the cut-off level of reliability (Hair Jr et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009). For convergence validity of the measurement model, average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated which required the

**Figure 2: Measurement Model**

cut-off value equal or above 0.5 (Henseler et al., 2009). The AVE values are 0.902 for exit, 0.732 for brand hate, 0.554 for negative past experience and 0.775 for

negative word of mouth which indicates all the values fulfill the requirement of convergent validity. Lastly, for discriminant validity, researchers suggest following the (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) criteria and cross loadings (Hair Jr et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009). According to Table-2, diagonal values (square root of AVE) are higher than off-diagonals (correlations) values which meant that the discriminant validity of the model is achieved.

**Table 2: Fornell and Larker Discriminant Validity**

	<b>Brand Hate</b>	<b>Exit</b>	<b>Negative Past Experience</b>	<b>Negative word of Mouth</b>
<b>Brand Hate</b>	<b>0.856</b>			
<b>Exit</b>	0.801	<b>0.906</b>		
<b>Negative Past Experience</b>	0.643	0.635	<b>0.744</b>	
<b>Negative word of Mouth</b>	0.765	0.773	0.700	<b>0.880</b>

**4.2 Structural Model**

R<sup>2</sup> value, which means the variance explained by the exogenous constructs, of the structural model is 41.30%. Similarly, brand hate explains 64.10 percent and 58.5 percent of variations of consumer exit and negative word of mouth respectively. This indicates that a significant amount of variation of brand hate is explained by consumers negative brand experiences whereas brand hate explain a significant portion of consumer brand exit and negative word of mouth also. To find the significance of individual path e.g. hypothesized relationship t-statistics and p-values were calculated using bootstrapping technique with 500 re-sampling.

**Table 3: Result of Path Model**

	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>T Statistics</b>	<b>P Values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Brand Hate -&gt; Exit</b>	0.801	0.039	20.611	0.000	Supported
<b>Brand Hate -&gt; Negative word of Mouth</b>	0.765	0.043	17.818	0.000	Supported
<b>Negative Past Experience -&gt; Brand Hate</b>	0.643	0.053	12.159	0.000	Supported

Table-3, shows the structural model analysis. It is seen that the effect of negative past experience has positive and significant relationship with brand hate since  $\beta=0.643$  and  $p < 0.01$ . This indicates that H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. Similar results are also evident for the other path relationships i.e. brand hate to negative word of mouth and brand hate to exit. This indicates that both the hypothesis<sub>2</sub> and hypothesis<sub>3</sub> are supported in this study since  $\beta=0.765$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for H<sub>2</sub> and  $\beta=0.801$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for H<sub>3</sub>. Another measure of structural model assessment is to determine relative impact of exogenous variable on endogenous variable. Cohen (1988) suggested to calculate the effect size ( $f^2$ ) of the exogenous variables. The effect size of the exogenous constructs i.e. negative past experience is 0.704 which is considered as large effect size according to Cohen’s (1998) criteria.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The present study explores the influence of negative brand experience on brand hate and its consequences. The study reveals that consumers negative past experience has significant influence on consumer brand hate which is consistent with the findings of the study of (Hegner et al., 2017). Hegner et al. (2017) proved the effect of negative past experience from developed country perspective whereas the present study validates the same findings from a developing country perspective. Further, this study confirms the positive effect of brand hate on negative word of mouth. Consumers who have hate towards a brand spread negative word of mouth. Consumers spread their negative emotions and feelings to other consumers. The similar findings come out in the study of (Delzen, 2014). Consumers take passive revenge by spreading negative word of mouth to other consumers and their peers. Moreover, besides their passive action consumers also take active revenge if they have brand hate. Consumers exit from brand use if they have brand hate since brand hate has direct influence on consumers exit which is consistent with the study of Delzen (2014). This indicates that greater the consumer brand hates more the consumers interested to stop and switch to other brands. Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with the study conducted in other contexts that has greater implications from both theoretical and managerial point of view.

## **6. Theoretical Implications**

The present study brings significant contribution from theoretical considerations as most of the other studies (e.g. Ahuvia, 2005; Batra et al., 2012; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Ghani & Tuhin, 2018; Thomson et al., 2005; Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010) dealing with consumers positive emotions and feelings and their consequences towards brands. However, studies related to consumers negative emotions and feelings are scarce. From this aspect, this study has theoretical impact as it attempts to identify the factor influencing consumer brand hate and its consequences. The study identified negative past experience as an important determinant of consumer brand hate. Further, the study also identified two major outcome of consumers brand hate. The study confirms that negative word of mouth and consumer exit are the two important consequences of consumer brand hate. Consumer negative word of mouth is considered as passive action of consumers brand hate whereas consumer exit is considered as active action of consumer brand hate. These theoretical implications also invite future researchers to overcome the limitations of this study. The future researchers can extend the research model exploring the other sources such as ideological incompatibility, identity incongruence, image failure of brand hate. Moreover, future researchers can consider large number of sample size and cross-country perspective to identify the consistence of the research results.

## **7. Managerial Implications**

Brand managers and practitioners should be more careful in product development, delivery and services. They should maintain every touch point very carefully so that



it minimizes the chance of negative experience of consumers. Moreover, they should focus on value delivery process to generate happy and memorable experience for consumers. The study has identified that negative past experience cause consumer brand hate which propels consumers to take active and passive actions against the brand. Therefore, in order to reduce consumers brand switching and to stop spreading negative word of mouth marketers should adopt strategy that not only reduces consumers negative experiences about product and services but also enhance consumers happy and memorable experiences. Marketers should turn brand hate into brand love that pursue consumers positive word of mouth and stay loyal instead of negative word of mouth and exit from the brand.

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