


Chapter 5


Negative Customer Engagement and Brand Hate in Users of Extreme Snow–Sports Brands

Alvaro Iranzo Barreira

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7015-4556>

University of Valencia, Spain

Inés Küster

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8688-9175>

University of Valencia, Spain

Carla Ruiz-Mafé

University of Valencia, Spain

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to understand the relationship between the concept of negative customer engagement and Brand Hate and is one of the first to analyse this relationship. In addition, it examines whether the negative emotions of frustration, stress, fear, boredom, and sadness mediate this relationship. This chapter contributes to the study of negative brand-consumer relationships, responding to the research need to contribute more knowledge to the negative valence of customer engagement and brand hate. This study uses structural equation modelling to analyse a unique context, 400 ski and snowboard athletes. The results show how negative customer engagement significantly influences brand hate, mediated by the emotions of frustration, stress and sadness, as opposed to what previous literature suggests.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the negative relationship between how negative customer engagement influences five specific negative emotions (frustration, fear, sadness, boredom, and stress) and how these are related to activating brand hate in extreme snow sports (skiing/snowboarding) users (see Appendix A for further explanation of these key terms).

Customer engagement has received significant interest in the literature in recent years (Do *et al.*, 2020; Naumann *et al.*, 2019; Yadav *et al.*, 2023) due to its positive implications in building brand-consumer relationships (Hollebeek, 2011; Khan *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, it is considered a significant brand relationship variable (Kumar and Nayak, 2019; Fetscherin *et al.*, 2021) since it involves different commitments from the consumer, understood as time, energy, and money (Kumar and Nayak, 2019) that culminate in significant benefits for companies (Do *et al.*, 2020).

Engagement can be represented with positive and negative valence (Naumann *et al.*, 2020; Do *et al.*, 2020; Higgins and Scholer, 2009). Although it is essential to understand its negative side, it must be sufficiently analysed in the scientific literature (Yadav *et al.*, 2023; Do *et al.*, 2020; Naumann *et al.*, 2020). Negative customer engagement has an impact on people that is more determinant than positive engagement (Sinclair *et al.*, 2015; Do *et al.*, 2020), as consumers pay more attention to negative brand-consumer interactions, directly influencing their purchase decision (Yadav *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, negative engagement can be triggered by unfavourable thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards a brand (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Naumann *et al.*, 2017), which can cause consumers to distance themselves from the brand (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2021) and develop negative emotions due to a progressive increase in aversions caused by different disappointments perceived by the individual (Casidy and Shin, 2015). In this chapter, we analyse the influence of negative customer engagement on extreme snow sports and snow sports users. This motivation stems from the tremendous economic and social implications of the extreme sports industry in recent years (Brymer *et al.*, 2020; Raggiotto *et al.*, 2020). Also, due to the limited research conducted about anti-brand behaviors in consumers within a sports context (Aziz and Rahman, 2022; Walter *et al.*, 2023), despite the latent demand to understand these behaviors in contexts still scarcely analyzed (Rahimah *et al.*, 2023; Walter *et al.*, 2023; Aziz and Rahman, 2022; Zhang and Laroche, 2020).

Extreme sports have been defined as recreational physical activities that involve a physical and mental challenge, where errors or carelessness have a high probability of causing serious accidents, even death (Brymer and Schweitzer, 2013; Raggiotto *et al.*, 2019). These activities set their participants at a high level of challenge, during which they can push the envelope of their skills (Hetland *et al.*, 2018). Extreme sports

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