

# Chapter 2

## Navigating Brand Hate Research: Deciphering Enablers and Emanating Potential Implications

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In today's world, consumers possess a unique power, i.e., the power to praise, to critique, or even to reject a brand. At the zenith of challenges stands an issue known as " Brand Hate" which is a negative set of perceptions consumers develop towards a brand or product etc. Unlike simple dissatisfaction, brand hate stems from frustration, ethical objections and betrayal, with reactions from boycotting to even running anti- brand campaigns online. Social media amplified these feelings of frustration and can spread to more people, greatly affecting the reputation of the brand. The roots of brand hate vary, for some, it begins with a disappointing product experience; while for others, it is the result of unethical steps taken*

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*by the company. Whether it's an issue with the quality or a failure of the brand to meet the expectations of the consumers, regardless of the case the consequences are severe. Our study aims to explore the complexity in these variables leading to brand addiction and provide dependence and driving power of these factors and provide recommendations for the same.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Brands have a unique ability to awaken a wide range of emotions in consumers, ranging from admiration & loyalty to frustration, disappointment, and even anger. The relationships consumers build with brands are not purely transactional; they are deeply emotional and psychological, often reflecting personal values, identity, and social belonging. While a substantial body of research has explored the positive dimensions of this bond like brand love, attachment, and loyalty; the darker side of this relationship has not received comparable attention. Among the various negative emotional responses, brand hate stands out due to its intensity and consequences. Unlike mere dissatisfaction or disappointment, brand hate is a far stronger and emotionally charged reaction that can shape consumer behaviour in profound and lasting ways.

Brand hate often finds its roots from repeated or significant negative experiences with a brand. These may include concerns with regards to the product quality, customer service, advertisements etc. Anger, betrayal, disgust, or frustration, are not just deeply felt but also motivate action. Studies suggest that such feelings can drive individuals to actively harm the brand, whether by spreading negative word-of-mouth, boycotting its products, discouraging others from purchasing, or engaging in public criticism and ridicule (Zarantonello et al., 2016). These behaviours are not passive expressions of discontent but rather active forms of resistance, signalling a rupture in the brand-consumer relationship.

More recently, scholars and marketers alike have begun to recognize that these negative emotions play a critical role in shaping consumer-brand dynamics (Curina et al., 2020). In fact, negative brand relationships can be just as powerful if not more than their positive counterparts. They influence consumer decisions, shift trends, and can even damage a brand's image.

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