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BRAND HATE

Exploring and understanding the concept

Master's thesis

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Preface

This thesis is the final product of my Master Program Marketing from the division of Business Administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen. The title of this study is 'Brand hate: Exploring and understanding the concept'. From January 2015 to September 2016 I explored literature, collected data, analyzed data and put effort in the elaboration of the content.

The study is meant for scholars and managers who are interested in the concept of brand hate and the associated reasons for the development of this emotion.

When looking back at the process of the study, I realize that the whole journey was a learning experience for me both personally and professionally. Conducting the research taught me to deal with unexpected outcomes by adopting a flexible attitude. Next to that, it improved my qualitative research skills as an objective interviewer and data analyst.

This preface provides me the opportunity to show my appreciation for my supervisor Csilla Horváth who has been very supportive during the study. I appreciate the time and effort she invested and I want to show my gratitude for the feedback she provided me which enabled me to improve the content. Besides my supervisor, I also would like to highlight my appreciation for the time my second examiner Vera Blazevic made available for me. In addition, I want to thank all the respondents who participated in my graduation study. Without them I could not have conducted this research.

I hope you enjoy reading this study.

Sebastiaan Preijers

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Abstract

This study examined the concept of brand hate. The provided insights add value to the underexposed area of negative emotions towards brands and especially contributes to the lack of knowledge about the concept of brand hate. This research also will provide organizations with an understanding of brand hate in order to prevent harmful consequences. Because of the exploratory nature of this research a qualitative method was chosen that used in-depth interviews to collect the appropriate data. This gathered data was analyzed according to the grounded theory approach and relevant quotes were used to illustrate the findings. Within the concept different components were distinguished and discussed. The emotion of hate itself was addressed together with other negative emotions that were encountered during the interviews. Next, the most important antecedents of brand hate were covered along with the necessary conditions for the development of brand hate. Subsequently, the influences of brand hate on a person were elaborated, which at the same time provided understanding of the consequences for brands.

The negative emotions discussed in this research varied from low-intensity to high-intensity with brand hate as the most extreme emotion. These emotions found their origin in certain antecedents. Respondents in this study were primarily affected by negative brand experiences, negative stereotypes, negative brand manifestations or indoctrination. They argued that when the personal impact of those antecedents reached a certain level, or when norms and values were violated, brand hate could be developed directly and also indirectly. The latter means that the antecedents first cause negative emotions besides hate, but eventually develop into brand hate. When brand hate is present emotions are instantly aroused when encountering the brand. As a result, the brand will be avoided since respondents stated that they do not want to have anything to do with it anymore. Also, they will spread negative word-of-mouth with the purpose of deliberately harming the brand. This is because Brand-haters support brand termination. However, in the present study it was indicated that this not necessarily means that they take actively part in the sabotage of the brand, but it is imaginable that some Brand-haters might will. Therefore, imagine the damage this can cause for a brand.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1 Introduction subject	6
1.2 Problem statement	7
1.3 Relevance.....	7
2. Literature review	9
2.1 Emotions and brands	9
2.2 Negative emotions.....	10
2.3 The concept of (brand) hate.....	11
2.3.1 Hate in psychological literature.....	12
2.3.2 Hate in consumer research.....	14
2.4 Potential antecedents of brand hate.....	15
3. Methodology.....	18
3.1 Research strategy.....	18
3.2 Sample description	18
3.4 Data collection.....	22
3.5 Data analysis.....	22
3.6 Research ethics.....	23
4. Results	25
4.1 Different negative emotions.....	26
4.1.1 Hate.....	26
4.1.2 Anger	27
4.1.3 Aversion	27
4.1.4 Irritation.....	28
4.1.5 Disappointment	28
4.2 Causes of arising and development negative emotions.....	28
4.2.1 Negative brand experience	28
4.2.2 Negative stereotype	30
4.2.3 Negative brand manifestations.....	31
4.2.4 Indoctrination.....	32
4.3 Conditions for brand hate development.....	33
4.3.1 Personal Impact.....	34
4.3.2 Violation of norms and values.....	35
4.4 The influence of negative emotions on a person.....	36
4.4.1 Attitudinal changes towards the brand	36

4.4.2 Behavioral changes.....	37
4.4.3 The influence of brand hate on a person	39
4.5 Brand hate	40
5. Discussion and concept development	43
5.1 Different negative emotions.....	43
5.1.1 Low-intensity emotions	43
5.1.2 High-intensity emotions.....	44
5.2 Development of negative emotions and brand hate.....	44
5.2.1 Antecedents on three levels.....	44
5.2.2 Key antecedents	44
5.3 Conditions for brand hate development.....	45
5.3.1 Personal impact	45
5.3.2. Violation of norms and values.....	46
5.3.3 Hate development differs per person	46
5.4 Influence of brand hate on a person.....	47
5.4.1 Attitudinal and behavioural changes.....	47
5.4.3 Brand termination	48
5.5 Theory of (brand) hate versus interview results	48
5.5.1 Five components.....	48
5.5.2 Four principles.....	49
5.6 The concept of brand hate	50
6. Managerial implications	52
7. Limitations, future research and conclusions	55
7.1 Research limitations	55
7.2 Future research	55
7.3 Conclusion.....	57
References.....	58
Appendices	63

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction subject

When I travel by train delays occur more often than not which is very disturbing. The Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS) is accountable for these delays and every time I experience this uncomfortable waste of time I more and more dislike them, especially when this causes me to be late for something important. So my negative emotions of dislike are growing and have led to some negative expressions on social media in the past. Now, every time I travel by train I get a negative feeling about the NS. I wonder if I hate them.

Consumers encounter numerous brands on a daily basis, because brands are everywhere. However, apart from the intended arousal of positive emotions, the exposure to brands can also evoke negative emotions of consumers (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). A negative affective reaction is based on evaluations of unappealingness, which depends on personal attitudes and tastes (Ortony, Clore & Collins as cited in Romani et al., 2009). When consumers experience negative emotions towards a brand it can be very harmful for organisations. Research has shown that negative emotions influences consumer actions, leading to various types of possible negative behavioural responses towards the brand. These responses differ since negative emotions of consumers have different levels of intensity. They can withhold simple feelings of dislike but when becoming worse it can develop onto the extreme and global, negative emotion of hate. In other words, 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). Thus, one could only imagine the impact and consequences for a company when consumers have hateful feelings towards a brand.

Hate is assumedly present when talking about the emotions of the persons who developed websites such as *ihateryanair.org*, *hatebook.com* and *starbucked.com*. These anti-brand websites are platforms on the internet that, by means of creating a negative online identity, focus negative attention on a specific targeted brand (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Senior executives perceive these sites as the biggest digital risk of the present (Kucuk, 2008). Another harmful initiative for brands are hate

lists on which the most hated brands are named and ranked. Every year hate lists are published, for example the top 10 of 24/7 Wall st. which is well-known and republished by many large news sites and portals (<http://247wallst.com/>). General Motors, Sony and McDonald's, all companies with millions of stakeholders, are at the top of the list. These anti-brand sites and hate lists are examples of expressions of hate. However, are these people really experiencing feelings of hate and how can we tell? Are they dealing with those extreme emotions as specified in the continuum of negative feelings mentioned above? Equivalently significant is to discuss the important process of the development of negative feelings into hate. So, identifying the trigger of the development from a negative emotion like simple dislike into the extreme emotion of hate. Consequently, some principle questions arise: what is brand hate really, truly and genuinely? What drives it and how does it evolves? This exploratory research aims to uncover the concept of hate towards a brand.

1.2 Problem statement

The aim of current research is to gain more insight in the development of the process of brand hate by distinguishing its characteristics, conditions and antecedents. To investigate this phenomenon the following research question is formulated:

What is the extreme emotion of brand hate and how does it arise?

1.3 Relevance

This explorative study will contribute to both science and managerial practice. Previous research state that brand love is an important marketing topic (Batra et al., 2012), assumedly the same applies for the other extreme emotion brand hate. Therefore it is important to understand what causes brand hate and how it is developed. The body of literature regarding the negative perspective on emotions towards a brand is emerging, nevertheless the concept of brand hate has not yet been properly addressed in current scientific literature (Romani et al., 2009). This study will add value to the academic field by considering how extreme negative emotions towards a brand influences consumers' relationships towards a brand. Next to this, by means of creating a conceptual framework this research will contribute to the lack of knowledge that exist about the concept of brand hate.

From a practical point-of-view this study will help to give organizations, managers and marketers in particular, insight in the concept of brand hate and what its causes are.

These insights allows them to anticipate on consumers who develop negative emotions and attitudes towards the brand. This is important because according to Sheeran (2002) attitudes are linked to behavioral intentions, and ultimately to actual behavior. Therefore, the outcomes of brand hate may eventually lead to harmful behavior to the brand. Hence, it is important to know which factors can lead to brand hate in order to limit the harmful consequences. Brands do not want to drive customers away (Romani et al., 2012) or even worse, turn them against themselves. Thus, the signs of brand hate should be identified and treated in a proper manner to avoid these serious consequences.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the managers' understanding of brand hate and provide them guidance in its prevention and thereby the development of a framework of the concept brand hate is also an theoretical addition to the existing literature.

2. Literature review

The present study will contribute to the academic literature by providing theoretical implications regarding the development of the unexplored concept of brand hate. Thereby suggesting that a gap in the literature of brand management will be filled. Although research covered to a great extent the analysis of positive affect, the negative side of emotions can be considered as the 'dark side' since the concept of negative emotions is not addressed with the same effort (Dalli, Romani & Gistri, 2006). This chapter will extensively elaborate on four main areas. Before deepening into the complex matter of brand hate it is important to provide some understanding of the context. Therefore, the study will first address emotions and brands. Subsequently, proceeding with the focus on negative emotions. Followed by the extensive elaboration of brand hate where attention is paid to the psychological literature (interpersonal hate) and one of the few studies that recognizes the term brand hate: Bryson, et al. (2013). Finally, some possible antecedents of brand hate will be identified for an evident comprehension. The overlapping constructs will be highlighted and used in this study. These concepts are used to create a theoretical framework which enables this study to fulfil the proposed contribution of filling the theoretical gap in the academic field.

2.1 Emotions and brands

Emotions play an important role throughout marketing, consider for instance advertisements or other marketing related initiatives of organizations. The exposure to brands evoke emotional reactions from consumers (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Therefore, due to the increasing presence of brands, consumers get more and more affected and develop emotions towards these brands. Consequently, this stresses the importance for the comprehension of emotions in consumer research, as consumer actions, with in particular purchasing behaviour, are subjected to emotional responses (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999; Gelbrich, 2009). According to Batra et al., (2012) the concept of emotions is fuzzy and complex. We experience emotions frequently, but it is difficult to get a grasp on what they exactly entail. However, in order to understand the different emotions a brand can arouse and to identify brand hate it is important to establish what they are. Also in the literature there is little consistency with regards to the terminology (Bagozzi et al., 1999). The definition of emotions described by Oatley and Jenkins (1992) integrates multiple studies and forms an adequate reflection. According to them an emotion is a:

Mental state (Ortony et al., 1988) or a process (Frijda, 1986); it is usually elicited by an external event. By analogy with motor movements, emotions are phasic: They have a defined onset, perhaps rising to one or more peaks of intensity, and a decline (Frijda, 1991). At any moment an emotion has an intensity that can be measured behaviourally (e.g. from facial expressions), physiologically (e.g. from autonomic variables such as heart rate or skin conductance), or by self-report (Plutchik & Kellerman, 1989). (p. 59-60)

To be more specific about the external event that could provoke emotions, which Oatley and Jenkins (1992) mention, Romani et al. (2009) provides a deeper understanding of this concept. They argue that emotions can be said to have a specific referent. This implies the evaluative judgement and interpretation of something being of relevance to someone. So, an emotion arises in response to a “personally experienced incident or episode, an action performed or result produced by oneself, or changes in an object person or thought with personal meaning” (p. 495). Another applicable addition is the division in categories presented by Lazarus (1991), who divides emotions into four distinct groups. Firstly, emotions resulting from harms, losses and threats (e.g. anger, fear and shame). Secondly, emotions resulting from benefits (e.g. joy, pride and love). The third category is borderline cases (e.g. hope, relief and compassion). And the last one consist of non-emotions. This category should not be regarded as emotions and fall in different subcategories (e.g. complex states, confusion and excitement without content). These four categories of emotions are in line with the literature on brand related emotions studied by Laros and Steenkamp (2005). The first two categories of Lazarus (1991) correspond with the two general dimensions of emotions towards a brand, negative and positive affect, which Laros and Steenkamp (2005) indicated to be the most popular conceptualization in consumer research. Brand hate fits in the first category of Lazarus (1991) which consist of the emotions resulting from harms, losses and threats, thus a negative affect. In conclusion, in a marketing context brands that cause harm, losses or threats to customers consequently evoke negative emotions.

2.2 Negative emotions

The negative emotions evoked by brands has received little attention in the literature, not to mention brand hate. However, the body of research about negative emotions seems to grow, which is helpful as profound resource for exploring and understanding

brand hate. The emerging of marketing related literature about negative emotions affirms the importance of investigating this underexposed topic. Recent literature acknowledges that negative emotions do play an important role in relationships between brands and consumers, since the nature of the emotion experienced has a highly determinant effect on the subsequent actions of a consumer (Romani et al., 2012). Romani et al. (2009) distinguishes two fundamental groups of negative emotions customers experience when confronted with brands. These main negative emotions towards a brand are dislike and anger. Emotions of dislike are dependent on personal attitude and taste. As mentioned earlier, a characteristic of negative emotions is that it has different levels of intensity. A continuum that covers feelings from simple dislike to the extreme negative emotion of hate. Within this range the study of Romani et al. (2009) also identified the feelings of aversion, distaste, disgust and revulsion. Therefore, an important implication for present research is that consumers' negative emotions towards a brand can develop into brand hate along to the level of intensity.

In order to understand the concept of brand dislike, Dalli et al. (2006) present a framework identifying brand dislike factors on three different levels. The first level is the product brand level that relates to consumers disliking brands because of dissatisfaction about some product or service characteristics. Secondly, concerning the user brand level, consumer may associate the disliked brand with a negative stereotype. And at the third and final level, the corporate brand level, consumers dislike brands because of their unfair behaviors and abuses, regardless the product characteristics.

For anger, the other main negative emotion besides dislike, consumers express the negative feelings of cross, irritated, spiteful and indignant towards a brand (Romani et al., 2009). These feelings along with the other negative emotions will be kept in mind during the interviews.

2.3 The concept of (brand) hate

Arriving at the most intense and extreme negative emotion: hate. The research on brand hate is indeed quite modest and besides the article of Bryson et al. (2013) the only hate related literature can be found in the psychology. The psychological literature addresses mainly the concept of interpersonal hate, however this cannot be directly applied to brand hate. When the concept of brand hate is only based on the

conceptualizations of interpersonal hate there will be a lack of deeper understanding concerning the consumer brand context. A deeper understanding of brand hate is required because it has to be built up from the ground in order to determine how consumers genuinely experience the hate towards a brand. The main reason for this is because emotions, such as love and hate, are fuzzy and complex concepts (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). It is important to uncover the implicit definition, so it will be clear what is meant when consumers say they hate a brand. Thus, this is essential for the study into the development of the process in a consumer brand context.

Nevertheless, the findings in the psychological literature regarding interpersonal hate are very important to constitute a first overview where brand hate can be based upon. In this way, the fundamental principles become apparent, such as the core characteristics, the development of hate and how expressions of hate can be observed. These principles will serve as grounding where after they can be related to a consumer brand context. So, in order to attain a foundation for brand hate the psychological literature will be used as base. Next to that, to make it applicable for brand hate, it will be aggregated with the first findings of brand hate in consumer research.

2.3.1 Hate in psychological literature

In the psychological literature the origin and nature of hate has a rich history of research (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2008). However, the opinions and explanations differ substantially (Rempel & Burris, 2005). The phenomenological method used by Hadreas (2007) will be an adequate perspective to begin with, since this method of inquiry provides the background for understanding the foundations, in the sense of their implicit logical forms. Patton (2002) adds that the phenomenological method also contributes to a deeper understanding about the genuine experience of hate by means of gaining insights into underlying emotions, cognitions and psychological responses. An important finding of Hadreas (2007) using this method is the identification of two principle conditions for hate. He recognizes the 'principle of harm or ill-will' and the 'principle of blame' and argues that those principles prevail with all types of hate. This will be elaborated further later on.

There is no consensus regarding an universal definition of hate. However, there are lot of important theories contributing to the construct of hate. First of all, hate is often

referred to as an emotion (Rempel & Burris, 2005; Wijngarten, 2006). The conforming definition for this assumption of hatred is derived from the 'Dictionary of Psychology' written by Reber (1985):

A deep, enduring, intense emotion expressing animosity, anger, and hostility toward a person, group, or object. Hatred is usually assumed to be characterized by (a) the desire to harm or cause pain to the object of the emotion and (b) feelings of pleasure from the object's misfortunes. (p. 330)

The first characterizations (a) corresponds with the 'principle of harm or ill-will' of Hadreas (2007) and can therefore be considered as important feature to take into account. Both the 'principle of blame' as well as the second characterization of Reber (1985) can be considered as meaningful indicators in determining hate.

However, conceptualizing hate solely as an emotion will be too simple, because it will neglect variations in manifestations of hate. And some of those different manifestations may not be the result of an emotion but of other factors (Wolf, 2013). The intensification theory of hating developed by Opatow and McClelland (2007) supports and justifies this assumption. They define hate as "an affective response intermingling with biases, beliefs, and external events to produce hating and hateful behavior" (p. 81). This indicates that hate is not only an emotion, but also a dynamic process resulting of the interaction of five factors: antecedents, emotions, cognitions, morals and behaviour. The interaction of these components leads to the development and intensification of hate and ensures it will be systematic. Antecedents can be seen as the motives for hating, consider the events in lives that shapes one's view. The components emotions and cognitions form the affective element and the thinking processes in hate. Morals are the principles that govern behaviour. And behaviour is the expression of hate, for example (non-) verbal indicators of contempt (Opatow & McClelland, 2007).

Next to Opatow and McClelland, many authors suggest that hate also has a cognitive component. They theorize that cognition is a necessary factor for the development of hate (Beck, 1999, 2002; Beck & Pretzer, 2005; Berkowitz, 2005; Gaylin, 2003; Staub 2005; Vitz & Mango, 1997; Weingarten, 2006 as cited in Wolf, 2013). The foundation for the manifestations of hate is created through the interplay of emotion, cognition and behaviour (Beck, 1999, 2002; Beck & Pretzer, 2005; Opatow & McClelland, 2007; Staub, 2005 as cited in Wolf, 2013). For example, when hostile feelings are triggered,

these will take over one's thinking which supplant empathy and morality. This consists of a primal way of thinking which leads to automatic and unconscious reactions as a result of the need to survive triggered by a sense of threat. This experience will be based on, due to unconscious influence, assumptions and beliefs from past experiences (Beck, 1999; Beck & Pretzer, 2005 as cited in Wolf, 2013). Staub (2005, as cited in Wolf, 2013) adds that the cognitive components of hate includes the "negative view of some other and the perception of threat from that other" (p. 52)

Next to this, there are other opinions and views about hate. Hate is also referred to as a motivation (Rempel & Burris, 2005) and some consider it a long term attitude (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000). The implications from a motivational perspective of hate involves destroying or diminishing the well-being of the hated object as a goal, in which aggression is the behaviour and hate the motive (Rempel & Burris, 2005). And from an attitudinal perspective hate is generally not triggered by personal offence, but requires a negative evaluation of the object as possessing inherently dangerous traits because it is guilty of merely instrumental negative actions (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000).

Hate is often related and compared to anger. Where both are considered negative emotional attitudes, hate refers to a more global attitude towards another who possesses fundamentally negative traits. In contrast with anger which refers to a more specific emotion towards another who inflicted unjustified harm (Ben-Ze'ev, 2008). It is important to recognize the difference, in order to avoid confusion and to underscore the seriousness of hate. Hate requires an object and is far more difficult to resolve than anger (Blum, 1997). Hate is also more persistent and sustained over time (Ernst, 2004; Gaylin, 2003; Galdston, 1987 as cited in Wolf, 2013).

2.3.2 Hate in consumer research

However, in consumer research the hate between people and brands is central and not the hate between people or groups as above described. At present, the connection between the concepts of brand hate and interpersonal hate is not hardly made so far. As earlier elaborated on the connection between extreme emotions for brands and interpersonal emotions is made for the concept of brand love. Although love and hate are not each other's opposites, there are conceptual parallels between the two (Rempel & Burris, 2005). Batra et al. (2012) argue that brand love goes beyond attachment. It is therefore more extreme than just liking a brand. The same can be true

for brand hate, as it is more extreme than just disliking a brand. This is in line with Bryson et al. (2013) because they argue that brand hate can be seen as “the extreme negative affective component of attitude towards a brand” (p. 395). The literature regarding negative emotions towards brands is emerging. The recent work of Dalli et al. (2006), Romani et al. (2009) and Romani et al. (2012) in the past decade indicates this increasing interest in the subject. And with the recent work of Bryson et al. (2013) the most extreme form is detected and recognized as brand hate. This shows that the topic of brand hate is ready for further investigation. Bryson et al. (2013) defines brand hate simply as “an intense negative emotional affect towards the brand” (p. 4).

All psychological literature discussed above will be helpful in understanding, explaining and determining brand hate. To notice some similarities between the concepts, both speak of an intense emotional component. For understanding the development of brand hate the five components of Opatow and McClelland (2007) have to be kept in mind. The interaction between antecedents, emotions, cognitions, morals and behaviour also applies in a consumer brand relationship, which can be elaborated as follows. Experiences or meaningful events a brand causes may create a foundation for hate to develop, whether or not directly leading to hateful behaviour. A brand can provoke “deep inward feelings” (emotions) and “labels, categories, stereotypes, and social representations” (cognitions) (Opatow and McClelland, 2007, p. 82), which will support the appearance of hate. This moral component leads to the hateful behaviour.

For determining brand hate both the principles identified by Reber (1985) and Hadreas (2007) are relevant in combination with the contributions of Bryson et al. (2013). To sum them up:

- (1) The principle of harm or ill-will’;
- (2) The principle of blame;
- (3) Feelings of pleasure from the objects’ misfortune;
- (4) “The purposeful and deliberate intention to avoid or reject a brand or even to act out behaviours to demonstrate this rejection” (Bryson et al. 2013, p.395).

2.4 Potential antecedents of brand hate

In order to understand the consumers’ hatred towards a brand, next to the definition and concept itself, it is also important to identify the causes. How is it possible to come to this extreme form of negative emotion? One can think about several factors that can

underlie the development of brand hate by consumers. They may avoid brands for moral reasons (Lee et al., 2009), others may have negative experiences in the past (Yoon, 2013; Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008) or are influenced by negative publicity or information about the brand (Monga & John, 2008; De Paola & Scoppa, 2013). It is important to find what drives brand hate.

The identification of brand hate antecedents is important for companies and therefore a relevant matter for consumer research. A first insight is the theory of Rempel and Burris (2005) who suggest that emotional experiences may lead to forms of hate. So other emotions, such as anger and contempt, function as eliciting experiences which eventually may map onto hate. But these emotional experiences are caused by specific inducements, so what are the antecedents in the generation of hate towards a brand which should be reckoned with? In this part findings in the academic field are linked with the feelings of hate as described in the first parts of this chapter, because it is expected that these potential implications influences the development of brand hate.

Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI). Where corporate social responsibility (CSR) is known for creating stakeholder support (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004) on the contrary there is corporate social irresponsibility (CSI). Corporate irresponsible behaviour is explained by Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2013) as both ethical and social transgressions. This concerns corporate wrong doings which harms other people, such as workers or consumers, or communities. With respect to individuals this is done by, for instance, violating their freedom or human dignity and regarding communities it means violating norms, respect and loyalty. Corporate irresponsibility instigates negative consumer reactions, which can be extremely harmful for companies and difficult to recover from (Grappi et al., 2013). CSI causes negative moral emotional responses, which contains anger, contempt and disgust, also when the virtues of justice, beneficence, equality, and communal cooperation are violated and may result in negative word-of-mouth and protest towards the company (Grappi et al., 2013). Next to this, Sweetin, Knowles, Summey and McQueen (2013) found empirical evidence that consumers who encounter corporate irresponsible behaviour are more willing to punish the brand. Therefore, there is a subsequent necessity to prevent corporate irresponsibility. Besides obviously avoiding the commitment of harmful acts, companies should prevent any type of consumers' perception of irresponsible behaviour in order to fence off any negative moral emotions. These negative moral

emotions can include brand hate or lead to it. As described in the concept, brand hate involves emotions as anger and contempt and also behaviour that demonstrates rejection of the brand. This is thus expressed in the consumers' response towards corporate irresponsibility. Trump (2013) acknowledges the arguments that when ethics are violated the consumers will be more affected.

Bad personal experiences. When consuming a brands' product or service consumers can become dissatisfied. Their negative affective state of evaluation has an impact on behaviour. When the intensity of the negative affective state increases, customers are more likely to engage in effortful consequences (Kalamas, Laroche & Makdessian, 2008). Dissatisfied consumers will switch, complain and spread negative word-of-mouth (Sanchez-Garcia & Curras-Perez, 2011). Subsequently, negative emotions may develop and when dissatisfaction takes extreme forms it may escalate into brand hate.

Negative publicity. The dissemination of potential damaging information is a reason for change in consumers' attitudes towards a brand (Monga & John, 2008; Menon, Jewel & Unnava, 1999). But how harmful is negative publicity? The negative impact is expressed in consumers' perceptions, personal evaluation, beliefs and affect. In fact, evidence is found that negative information influence consumers' attitude and also suggests that it results in a more extreme and stronger level of affect (Sherrel, Reidenbach, Moore, Wagle & Spratlin, 1985).

Negative word-of-mouth. Negative word-of-mouth is spreading fast and can be very harmful for a brand. Unfortunately for brands, bad experiences are disseminated much faster than good ones (Richins, 1983). For instance, the anti-brand websites which are spaces on the internet that by means of creating a negative online identity focuses negative attention on a specific targeted brand (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). As mentioned earlier, these sites are perceived as the biggest digital risk of the present by senior executives (Kucuk, 2008). This can be seen as an extreme form resulting from negative emotions, which influence the affective evaluations of recipients (Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol, 2012).

These proposed factors could possibly function as antecedents for the concept of brand hate. The study will reveal if these potential antecedents apply for the sample and whether there are additional factors to take into account. They will be attentively considered during the interviews.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research strategy

In this study the aim is to provide a profound exploration of the concept of brand hate and its development. Considering the exploratory nature of this research, the study uses in-depth interviews in order to disclose thoughts and experiences of consumers who hate a brand. In this way it is possible to learn, analyse and interpret the phenomenon from a subjects' perspective with the purpose of describing it and where possible explain it (Boeije, 2008). This research makes use of knowledge that is constructed by human beings as they make sense of their environment both physically and mentally. The truth is therefore believed to be socially constructed and has different possibilities according to the interpretative principles (Anderson, 2013). The antecedents of brand hate are based on individuals' perceptions, there is no one objective truth. Perceptions are affected by experiences and the meanings people attach to them according to the social constructivists world-view. Hence, the goal is not to generalize but to seek and provide a deeper understanding, since the present study wants to explore the understanding of brand hate. The interpretative research tradition is thus well-suited for present study.

The investigation of this issue requires in-depth information about a limited number of individuals who experienced the phenomenon, whether consciously or not. A qualitative research design is therefore most suited. This will display a 'rich picture' enabling the development of extensive views and meanings of respondents which provide better insights in the exploration of the concept and antecedents of brand hate (Anderson, 2013). To realize this, a closer level of contact is needed in order to obtain information of good quality. Due to the explorative nature of this the insights are expected to be new (Anderson, 2013).

3.2 Sample description

In order to conduct a suitable sample for this study the potential respondents were subjected to certain selection requirements. First of all, they were asked at forehand if they consider themselves to possess feelings of hate towards a particular brand. Next to that, they were asked about their willingness to talk about their feelings of hatred as a deeper insight in the concept of brand hate could only be established when the sample provides knowledge about this emotion. The potential respondents who met

both requirements were selected for this study. Potential participants were found and approached with the use of three different methods. First, a message was posted on different online platforms. Facebook and Twitter were used in order to reach a large audience and besides the social media two known Dutch customer forums (Consumentenbond community and Radar) and some anti-brand sites were addressed. On those platforms the study's quest for people with brand hate was explained. Second, friends and relatives were asked if they had developed feelings of hate towards a brand. Third, respondents acquired through previous approaches were asked whether they knew someone who also had hate emotions for a brand. There was chosen to conduct the sample with the help of different methods due to the difficult accessibility of subjects whom actually hate brands.

Notwithstanding the effort of the researcher, there were some difficulties during the sample selection. First of all, a lot of the approached potential respondents did not meet both selection criteria. On the one hand, some of the approached were not willing to talk about their brand hate feelings, whereas a lot of others did not describe and consider their negative emotions towards brands to be hate. Due to these barriers in combination with the limited time to conduct this research there was deliberately chosen to adjust the selection criteria of possessing genuine brand hate to possessing strong negative emotions towards a brand. The persons who indicated to possess the strongest negative emotions were seen as useful respondents in order to answer the main question of this research. In other words potential respondents with brand hate or an emotion that comes close to hate, and with a willingness to talk about this concept were selected to be in the sample of this study. This adjustment provided this research with an additional insight, as it made it possible to compare respondents with brand hate emotions with respondents who described their emotions to be extremely negative instead of hate. This comparison will be made by the researcher during the data analysis phase. In addition, the respondents themselves could also indicate their perception of the difference between their level of negative emotions and hate.

Another barrier faced during the sample selection was the lack of willingness to talk about the extreme emotion brand hate of people whom were approached on the internet. In all probability caused by the explorative nature of the study, the sensitivity of the subject and the lack of face to face contact. To clarify, posting the quest on consumer forums and anti-brand sites were shown to be examples of unsuccessful

attempts made in this study to obtain respondents. Contact was made with potential respondents several times, however, they were not willing to share their perspective during an interview for this study.

Despite these barriers faced during the sample selection, the researcher ensured that the sample included in this study was broadly representative to the population. Therefore, the respondents who participated in the interviews had to be equally divided in certain divers categories of demographic characteristics in order to explore all possible views and perceptions that are relevant for this study. In addition, it was important to strive for data saturation, which occurs when any new respondent cease to add relevant new insights or information (Anderson, 2013). Data saturation is empowered by selecting the appropriate participants with regards to the variety of the characteristics which are presented next. First of all, both men and women are included. Gender diversification can be helpful in producing different information, since men and woman are expected to bring other views to the table (Zhang, Feick & Mittal, 2014). Next to that, attention was paid to age, which has an influence on the customer-brand relationship (Park, Eisingerich & Park, 2013). Older people may have other opinions and perceptions than younger people. In this research a deviation was made between respondents younger than 35 years old and respondents above 35 years old. In order to establish data saturation the suitable respondents considering the characteristics gender and age were selected. This is empowered by distinguishing four groups with each a minimal amount of three respondents as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Number of respondents per group

Respondents	Men	Women	Total
<35	4	3	7
>35	3	3	6
Total	7	6	13

In total, thirteen respondents were questioned, with an additional respondent in the male <35 category. The researcher also believes that educational level plays a role and made sure higher and lower educated respondents were included. The distribution of the mentioned characteristics per respondent is shown in table 3:

Table 3. Characteristics respondents

Respondents	Gender	Age	Education	Brands
1	M	25	WO	Lidl & Jumbo
2	M	23	WO	Primark & Aldi
3	M	24	HBO	Feyenoord & Bavaria
4	M	23	MBO	Apple & Albert Heijn
5	M	81	MULO	Specsavers
6	F	26	WO	Desigual
7	F	50	HBO	Zalando & Shultebrau
8	F	55	MBO	UPC & ABN AMRO
9	F	22	HBO	Crocs & Nickelson
10	F	24	WO	Nestle & Arke/TUI & Domino's

11	F	53	WO	Levi's & Uphone
12	M	57	MBO	SKILL & Canon
13	M	65	MBO	Allianz & Inshared

Note. M = Male; F = Female

3.4 Data collection

The face to face interviews were held in Dutch and they were all recorded on tape, transcribed and enclosed in the Appendices. These in-depth interviews are semi-structured. The researcher prepared some relevant questions about the theme as guidance, but was free to modify the lines of enquiry and to ask follow up questions for some deeper understanding. By means of this approach respondents were allowed to explain and elaborate their answers. In this way data of 'rich' quality is gathered, since they have the opportunity to provide information about their experiences, feelings and motives (Anderson, 2013). It is very important that respondents get the chance to elaborate and explain their experiences, feelings and motives extensively, because this is the key information for a profound exploration of the concept and its antecedents. The researcher can stimulate this by asking further, which depends on what suits the situation and the respondent best. An understanding, non-judgemental and empathic attitude of the researcher was essential.

The interview guide, provided in Appendix A, withholds the most central questions about negative emotions. These questions are more general and does not direct people towards particular answers and perceptions. This enabled respondents to provide answers which the researcher has not considered yet, for example new antecedents.

3.5 Data analysis

Since this research is exploratory the analysis of the data will happen in an inductive fashion. The inductive approach is especially appropriate for research on a topic that has not been researched extensively. Since the topic of brand hate is not investigated thoroughly induction is suitable. Through a process of data gathering, starting at the

level of practice, the inductive researcher develops some general propositions in order to 'build theory' (Anderson, 2013). Also the context of the investigated issue will be taken into account and interpreted regarding derived generalizations of the provided information.

For the analysis of the collected qualitative data the grounded theory will be used. By means of identifying different themes theory will be build. However, to come to these themes first the technique of coding is at the very core (Anderson, 2013). With coding the researcher distinguishes themes of categories in the research data and names these with a code (Boeije, 2008). The software Atlas-ti will be a sufficient tool for coding the collected data. Strauss and Corbin (cited in Boeije, 2008) distinguish three types of coding. The first phase is open coding which they define as "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (p. 85). This means all the gathered data is very carefully read and fragmented. When all relevant fragments are labelled and compared the first phase is over. The next phase is axial coding, with the aim to decide which elements are important and which not (Boeije, 2008). The researcher looks for potential connections or relationships (Anderson, 2013). Axial coding reduces the amount of data and codes and relates them in a hierarchal manner using a 'coding tree' for an organized overview (Boeije, 2008). The third and last phase is called selective coding. In this phase the researcher develops structure in the coding by selecting the core categories and relating them to each other. Finally, the categories will be compared with the existing literature and conclusions can be drawn (Boeije, 2008).

3.6 Research ethics

It was very important that during the entire process of this research the general principles of acceptable behaviour and practice was taken into account. One of the key principles of research ethics is that the integrity of the participants should be protected (Anderson, 2013). When looking closer, the implications of ethics can be found in three different stages of the research process: Research design and planning, during the data-gathering process and after the data-gathering (Saunders et al; Oliver, as cited in Anderson, 2013). In the design and planning process it was important that the researcher communicated the scope and intentions of the project to potential participants to prevent a lack of consent (Anderson, 2013). Transparency and honesty were central. When the researcher found a suitable participant, who agreed with taking

part in the research, an appointment was made for conducting an interview. The researcher accommodated the comfort of the participant at all times. During the data-gathering phase the basic ethical principles were applicable. So when conducting the interviews, for example, the purpose of the project was clarified and confidentiality and anonymity ensured. Also the right of withdrawing was reminded and the permission for recordings was asked. In the phase after the data-gathering the anonymity of the participant is protected when necessary. This means the identity of this person can only be assessed by the researcher himself. Furthermore, in this phase it is important to report fairly and accurately on the information provided (Anderson, 2013). The ethical responsibility will be treated thoughtfully.

4. Results

The perception of emotions is indeed a fuzzy and complex area like Bartra et al. (2012) argued. It is not easy to get a grasp on the exact feelings of a person, especially because it appeared to be difficult for respondents to indicate and describe their own emotions. In fact, during the interviews it became clear that respondents had doubts about their feelings of hate towards the brand when thoroughly contemplating and discussing actual brand hate. That is remarkable as many respondents answered with a 'yes' when they were asked at forehand whether they possess hate towards a brand. However, when asking respondents to explicitly contemplate, compare and express their feelings towards brands they were better capable to provide a substantiated description of their emotions.

During the interviews it became clear that genuine feelings of hatred towards brands were not largely present amongst the respondents. Every respondent expressed to possess a strong negative emotion towards one or more brands, however, only two respondents explicitly designated this emotion to be hatred.

<Would you say you hate the Albert Heijn?> Yes. [...] I think when you hate a brand you do not want to have anything to do with it. You want to stay far away from it. This applies to me. (R. 4, m, 23)¹

<Would you call it hate, when the intensity was that high?> There certainly was a moment, yes. However, I am capable to relativize it now. (R. 8, f, 55)

The other eleven indicated that they experienced several negative emotions with different levels of intensity but none of them would indicate those emotions to be as strong as hate.

Pff, hate is a very strong word. No. I think.. hate is really.. when it every day bothers you.. I do not have that. (R. 3, m, 24)

Well, I do think it is difficult, I do not think it is really hate, because I.. Yeah, it (here: the brand) has done nothing to me so to say. I have a bit of a feeling that if you hate something, then it has to be, yes, that is such a deep emotion, it should be grounded. Or at least have an apparent reason. (R. 6, f, 26)

¹ (Number of respondent, gender, age)

Although, these eleven respondents stated that they did not consider their feelings to be genuine hate towards a specific brand, they were able to describe how, in their own perception, the feeling of brand hate could develop, what it implies and what triggers the development from a strong negative emotion into hate. To come up with their perception of brand hate they often compared the concept of brand hate with their own level of negative emotions towards the brand in order to indicate the difference.

With that in mind, it is important to consider the knowledge obtained through 'respondent 4' and 'respondent 8' who indicated to hate a brand (hereafter called 'Brand-haters') as distinct from the knowledge obtained from the other eleven respondents who possess strong negative emotions (hereafter called 'group with strong negative emotions'). This is because both groups have a different experience of brand hate. The analysis is strengthened by the use of this sample due to the combination of respondents who actually hate a brand with the valuable contributions of the eleven respondents who have very strong negative emotions towards a brand. It will be interesting to analyse the differences and similarities in the insights both groups provide. Therefore, this separation will be used throughout the discussion of the results.

4.1 Different negative emotions

When in this research the feelings of the respondents towards their specific brands are compared different types of negative emotions can be distinguished. Besides hate, which is the main focus of this study, a lot of other emotions towards brand were experienced and elaborated upon by the respondents during the interviews. The most frequently encountered emotions are discussed in this paragraph and these emotions are therefore assumed to be the most significant negative emotions towards brands.

4.1.1 Hate

The central and most intense negative emotion discussed during the interviews is obviously hate. As earlier mentioned, only two respondents really felt this emotion whereas the other eleven respondents compared it with their strong emotions and discussed their views. Since hate is the main focus of this study it will be discussed thoroughly later on in a separate paragraph. For now it is interesting to quote a couple of general statements about this emotion that display hate characteristics.

Yes I think hate is very.. it is at the top if you place it into gradations. Then hate is at the top. Yes it is the maximum. (R.12, m, 57)

Hate is when it boils from the inside when you see or do something (R. 1, m, 25).

To hate is one of the most strongest emotions you can feel (R. 7, f, 50)

Hate is really something, much more deeper. Hate is something, destructive thinking about something or someone, that is hatred (R. 5, m, 81).

4.1.2 Anger

In this study anger is found to be an important strong negative emotion since it was commonly (5)² expressed during the interviews. The following quotes display anger towards brands.

Because I just think it is not right how things are handled and I don't think you should treat people like that. Yes, and I think that is very very bad, and at that moment I thought it was strange, but afterwards I became very angry and that is why I think, okay I have no further expectations of the brand, because apparently they cannot do it (R. 10, f, 24).

Eehm, yes anger, it is just that you are really angry if they respond like this. That they work this way, the banks.. They only think about their selves, about the profit (R. 13, m, 65).

4.1.3 Aversion

Next, the interviews indicated that the respondents (4) also possess another strong negative emotion. Aversion contains a lower intensity level than anger but stronger negative feelings in comparison to irritation and disappointment which will be discussed below.

Yes that is the case, I will not buy there anymore. In that sense it changed me, because I think, well, that was negative advertisement for this brand. They made a lot of commercials and they are cheaper, if you hear their stories, they are

² The number of respondents that mentioned the particular subject

much cheaper than another. Well, they may be, however I developed an aversion towards them (R. 5, m, 81).

4.1.4 Irritation

The most frequently encountered emotion (9) in this research is irritation. The main reasons mentioned in triggering irritation were annoying advertisements or bad and distasteful products. The following quotes display these examples:

I do not like the clothes, and I do not know, it just triggers, I think it is just an annoying brand or something. It is not really, there is no real direct cause, but it is just my opinion. (R. 6, f, 22)

This is mainly due to the fact that they broadcast very annoying advertisement video's, at least I think they are enormously annoying. It immediately gives me the creeps. I do not feel taken seriously as a customer (R. 11, f, 53).

4.1.5 Disappointment

Along with irritation the emotion of disappointment was also often (5) brought up during the interviews. Disappointment is presented in the next quote:

In particular disappointment I think. Most of all because, what I said before, I put in a lot of effort and I found it very important and also because I thought this is it, almost the ultimate thing. I mean we are talking about, going to high school, so that kind of things are very important in that period. And then it really falls short to expectations, above all it is disappointment I think (R. 11, f, 53).

4.2 Causes of arising and development negative emotions

The respondents in this study were asked to elaborate on causes in the arising and the development of their negative emotions. The answers provided indicate four overarching causes, namely negative brand experience, negative stereotype, negative brand manifestations and indoctrination.

4.2.1 Negative brand experience

The most frequently (8) expressed inducement in developing negative emotions towards a brand was a negative brand experience. A negative brand experience occurs when a customer perceives the experience during an encounter with a particular brand as very negative. Broken products, bad customer service and various incidents were examples brought up by the respondents. Regarding these provided

insights, this study distinguishes two types of negative brand experiences that trigger the development of negative emotions.

Product/service experience. When a product or a service (depending on the kind of company) falls short to expectations it can lead to irritation or disappointment.

And yes if you, for example, when you place a plug, plugs for tightening screws, and you have three screws plugged in and after that the plug is already broken because the quality is low. That arouses very negative emotions you know.. (R. 12, m, 57)

However, negative product/service experiences can also cause more severe consequences and a higher intensity level of negative emotions. This can be the case as it comes to more important products that have more impact.

Well, because at some point in time you notice that you think that, how do you say.., get a result in a certain period of time and when that result is not realized and therefore you will be left with a debt in the case of a mortgage and in the case of a savings product you think you saved a nice amount of money for when you retire and it turns out you saved nearly nothing in all those years. (..) That has developed. Moreover, because you hear negative things about this kind of stuff and beside that eh a big media circus emerged around it. And eventually the brand remains to be rigid so to say (R. 13, m, 65).

Customer service and response of the brand. The second type of a negative brand experience can occur when a brand delivers bad customer service which makes the customer feel mistreated. Next to that, in situations where there is something wrong with the product or service, whether or not due by the brand itself, the reaction of the brand towards the customers seems to be important according to some respondents. They stated that when a brand reacts insufficiently or in an inappropriate manner negative emotions will develop.

Well, I have, yes it is a bit strange a guess, because I have not, I was not a regular customer or something.. I think I did order something once. But I have one time eehm.. well the story is a little strange, but there was an accident with a Domino's courier, whereby my bicycle got damaged. I called the manager after the incident and he had a ridiculous attitude towards me. Very demeaning and

eehm.. how do you call it? Well he just gave me very bad feeling if I can say that and he said yes I will get back to you, however he never contacted me.. and well I just found it absurd, that is not customer friendly. And I am also.. he cannot know if I am a regular customer or not or something, although I am not, he cannot know that through the phone, but really I think you do not treat people like that (R. 10, f, 24).

Among the respondents who suggests negative brand experiences are causes for people to develop negative emotions is also one of the Brand-haters (R. 8). The negative brand experience she had with UPC was the direct cause of the development of brand hate. Her negative brand experience consisted of both a negative product experience as well as receiving bad customer service.

4.2.2 Negative stereotype

Negative stereotyping occurs when a brand arouses a particular association which results in negative emotions. Brand association is therefore the key concept in this kind of development of negative emotion. The respondents in this study mainly referred to the behavior of certain people to which the disliked brand is associated with. They named brands, for instance Nickelson and Desigual, that attract certain kinds of consumers. Referring to people they do not want to be associated with because they are considered to be rude or dull. So, the respondents argued that the connection between the brand and the negative stereotype results in a negative brand image and also leads to negative emotions towards the brand. The quotes below are examples of how negative stereotypes arouse negative emotions:

Uh yes, there are uh people you know that.. inappropriate behavior on the street, in the city name it, who wear Nickelson such 'glitteroutfit' with a fur collar. Yes. And that kind of behavior that yes that and also in groups amongst each other all of them wearing the same.<Due to the groups wearing that the feelings emerged?> Yes you see the behaviour of those people and that behaviour is very irritating and then you also see they all wearing it. (..) In the past, when I encountered Nickelson I thought it was quite nice, but now I think that is uh now I am not wearing that anymore (R. 9, f, 22).

The negative feelings are aroused by the people who only want to get drunk in a cheap way. Because of that association I developed an aversion towards the brand (R. 7, f, 50: about Shültebrau, cheap beer).

In this study the negative emotions aroused by a negative stereotype were not of a very intense level, it caused primarily irritation. These results indicate that solely a negative stereotype does not lead to brand hate. This is supported by the findings of this study as the Brand-haters were both not affected by a negative stereotype.

4.2.3 Negative brand manifestations

In this study negative brand manifestations are also encountered as an antecedent of negative emotions and can be described as wrong and unfair behavior of a brand, regardless of the characteristics of its products or services. During the interviews three types of negative brand manifestations are distinguished: self-enrichment, abuse of power and incompetence.

Self-enrichment. The interviews showed unjust selfish behavior of brands by means of self-enrichment causes customers to develop negative emotions.

Why do they need such big nice offices, and are they reorganizing more often, so more and more people are getting fired? A lot of small offices disappear, to stay with the banks for now, eeh but they do not do anything to compensate the people who they let's say treated wrongly. Or deluded.. however you will call it. Self-enrichment is the first what comes in mind. Yes they are only thinking about themselves (R. 13, m, 65).

Abuse of power. Abuse of power is maybe an even more striking negative manifestations according to the statements of some respondents. The notion that a brand intentionally wrongs or mistreats customers plays an important role in that matter.

Not with KPN.. however you are dependent on them, that is the case with all providers I guess. There they are a bit careless. They do not care if you have to take a day off because of them and have to sit and wait. Because they have the power. But that is very irritating, you do not have any influence (R. 12, m, 57).

Yes.. but also because you are so dependent, you cannot just say I go to another brand, because you have to do a lot of things.. put in a lot of effort or

find something new. Yes, and therefore I think it will be the same. That they have such a position of power I think (R. 8, f, 55).

Incompetence. The last negative brand manifestation is when brands demonstrate incompetence. This seems especially a cause for the development of negative emotions when the matter on hand is important to the customer.

Eehm.. How would I describe that? The stupidity of the people who work there. So, that they really think that the person that calls knows absolutely nothing.. (R. 8, f, 55).

Negative brand manifestations played a role in the development of brand hate for one of the Brand-haters. Respondent 8 indicated that the incapable employees of UPC increased her negative feelings for the company she eventually started to hate.

4.2.4 Indoctrination

Another antecedent pointed out during the interviews is indoctrination. Since multiple respondents (3) appeared to develop negative emotions because of the influence of their employer on their way of thinking, it has been found to be a relevant cause. The following quote is very useful in explaining what is meant by developing negative emotion due to indoctrination.

A brand I do not like... yes this is because of my many years of indoctrination by Albert Heijn. Because of that my opinion regarding other supermarkets became a bit less positive. The Lidl. Yes, you are working in a store, so you are constantly involved with the brand Albert Heijn. And you hear about the competition, and you stand for the brand Albert Heijn, so you think the Albert Heijn, because you are constantly concerned with them, you believe they are better I think. And other brands of supermarkets, yes just push them away, because yes it is the rival (R. 1, m, 25).

So, indoctrination creates and provides a profound preference for a particular brand due to the continues exposure and intercourse to and with the brand. But it does not stop there, because of the threat of competition an employee can also develop negative emotions towards those competing companies. Therefore, it goes beyond regular influence of a third party, since the employee may develop a hostile attitude towards another brand. This suggests that the threat of competition plays an important

role in the development of negative emotions by indoctrination. This process can be illustrated and explained by the following quote.

No, not in the beginning. In the beginning I worked just for earning money. But from some point in time you start to work for the Jumbo. Yes the competition, in the beginning you do not see that, what the competition between them withholds, however when you get further in the company of the Jumbo the more you see the amount of competition it involves. De Albert Heijn. Eeh yes.. sometimes uuh., Jumbo uses a lot of lowest price guarantees, the Albert Heijn is more expensive, they have a lot of deals, when we occasionally offer deals then Albert Heijn will put just an even better deal against ours and that is very annoying because they just pull the customers away from us. That is a danger (R. 4, m, 23).

The interviews showed that in the environment of a supermarket surely stimulates indoctrination, since the example of the supermarket came back several times (3). Multiple respondents working in different (competing) supermarkets did express their negative feelings originated from indoctrination by a supermarket. However, assumedly indoctrination leading to negative emotions can appear in other branches or situations as well.

Important to note is that negative emotions can develop into brand hate due to indoctrination. This is shown by one of the Brand-haters (R. 4) who did experience this. The further he got involved in the company (Jumbo) the stronger his emotions towards the competition (in this case, Albert Heijn) became, resulting in brand hate.

4.3 Conditions for brand hate development

In the previous paragraph the causes of the development of negative emotions were discussed. Subsequently, the next stage is to identify the necessary conditions in the hate development process. To be more explicit, this paragraph is going to elaborate on the specific determinants that are necessary for the causes to trigger brand hate and the development of negative emotions into brand hate. Both Brand-hater insights as the insights of the group with strong negative emotions are adequate sources in providing explanations. Also the latter group provides valuable contributions since they can indicate what is needed to push their strong negative emotions just over the edge for turning into brand hate.

4.3.1 Personal Impact

The interviews indicated that an important condition in the development of brand hate is the personal impact that a brand has on a person. Many respondents (11) stressed the necessity of personal harm in order for brand hate to develop and exist. The interviews provided many examples, below the most significant ones are displayed.

Yes, when it will have an influence on me. As, for example, Bavaria or something poisons me in some way. Yes I do not know. That it really harms you and when you get affected in your daily life (R. 3, m, 24).

<What is needed for you to hate a brand?> Eh, yes. Well, as they go along and continue with making stupid mistakes, or eh mistakes that financially matter to me you know. (R. 8, f, 55)

Then it should attack me I think. Do something to me. Like well, that it can cost me my job. But let's say I do not know, it will cost me a friend or... than hate can arise (R. 4, m, 23).

If injustice is done to you by something. I think there should happen something really big before you can hate it (R. 1, m, 25)

According to this research there are two factors involved in determining the personal impact in developing brand hate.

Level of impact. First, the level of impact of the incident plays of course an important role.

I think that the brand one way or another also destroyed you or really hurt you on a personal level, but not as in the example I just gave, but really a step too far (R. 10, f, 24).

Multiple negative brand experiences. Another result that came up multiple times (5) during the interviews was that brand hate will be stimulated when negative events that influence the consumer personally occur more than once. So, respondents who are confronted with multiple negative brand actions that have a personal impact seem more likely to hate a brand.

Yes and maybe.. yes actually a series of bad experiences. It begins, for example, as a particular product, by defects in a product, but also the way in

which it is dealt with further. With complains and such.. maybe if people again take the same product and it goes wrong again. I think it is often an accumulation of.. multiple moments so to speak that results in a person hating a brand (R. 11, f, 53).

The important finding of personal impact as a determinant is also acknowledged by the two Brand-haters. Respondent 8 argued that because of the personal harm that was done, in her case financially, her emotion developed into brand hate. For respondent 4 the personal impact concerned the threat of losing his job and therefore a threat to his personal well-being. So, these examples indicate that personal impact can occur in various forms.

4.3.2 Violation of norms and values

The second important condition in developing brand hate is the violation of norms and values according to the group with strong negative emotions. They argued that people will be more affected when social and ethical boundaries are crossed. When brands perform harmful actions beyond the limits, it instigates negative consumer reactions and may even develop hate.

Yes, but well it is personal, it is eeeeh criminal, that I want to emphasize again. [...] Exactly norms and values are very much violated. And millions of people are duped. (R. 13, m, 65)

Yes. In me yes yes for it could be possible for people I think but not for me. I can I cannot think yes, or they must norms and values uh completely put aside and do what they yes and also completely anti society and such so to speak. Then I could maybe have hate, like you know the the skinheads etcetera you know and that kind of things and then brands that associate with them, Lonsdale and that kind of things then I could imagine you can develop hatred. However this is a limited group for now (R. 9, f, 22).

The topic of corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) discussed in the literature review as a potential antecedent is linked to the violation of norms and values. Therefore, it seems appropriate to indicate that the violation of norms and values is indeed an important determinant in developing brand hate since the same outcomes are derived from the interviews.

4.4 The influence of negative emotions on a person

People who developed negative emotions towards a brand indicated that these emotions influenced them in different ways. According to the respondents, the two main areas on which these emotions had an impact were someone's attitude and behavior.

4.4.1 Attitudinal changes towards the brand

First, the influence of negative emotions on someone's attitude needs to be addressed. Respondents indicated several types of attitudinal changes towards the brand because of their negative emotions.

Instant arousal negative emotion. Most of the respondents (9) indicated that their negative emotion towards the brand gets immediately aroused when encountering it. Brand expressions in any form lead to an instant recall whereby the underlying emotions come to the surface. For Brand-haters the first reaction when encountering the brand seems to be a bit more intense than for the group with strong negative emotions as shown in the example below.

<What is the first thing that comes in mind?> It was at a very high level, that I indeed when I just saw the brand I already, well not get palpitations, but I became very angry (R. 8, f, 55: Brand-hater).

A bit disgust I think, I call it that way. And irritation. It is.. yeah that is it primarily (R. 11, f, 53: group with strong negative emotions).

No trust. A regularly (3) mentioned consequence on respondents' attitude is that they do not trust the brand anymore. The confidence in the intentions and capabilities of the particular brand is completely lost. Additionally, they explain to perceive it a risk to deal with the brand again.

But you know where they after. You always keep that in mind. There will always be suspicion towards the brand (R. 13, m, 65).

Indifference. Another attitudinal change detected among the respondents (4) is a negative manner of indifference. They could not care less what the brand does and what happens to the brand. From their point of view the brand does not exist anymore, they will not deal with them. In this case indifference does not mean that they have no opinion about the brand, but it means they will turn the cold shoulder and no longer

waste any time to it. This attitude can be related to the behavioral change brand avoidance, which will be discussed below. Due to the attitude of indifference the brand will not receive attention anymore and is therefore avoided.

4.4.2 Behavioral changes

Second, when focusing on the behavior it became clear that with the development of negative emotions towards a brand the consumer consciously chooses how to react to the brand.

Complain to the brand. Some (3) feel the urge to actively search contact with the particular brand to communicate their dissatisfaction. This can be done by complaining to the customer service about all the failures and shortcomings of the experienced product or service as shown in the quotes below.

Yes also over the phone, not yelling, but I said that this way is not, the way they treated me, I think it was ridiculous. That I would file a complaint, which I did. By email (R. 8, f, 55).

To the brand itself yes! Letters, joining a foundation,, eeh in this case with the investment mortgage I have called a lot about this kind of business (R. 13, m 65).

Negative (electronic) word-of-mouth. Another active behavioral consequence was the use of negative word-of-mouth (10). Most of those 10 respondents did explicitly expressed that they want to harm the brand by spreading their own bad experiences with the brand to their inner circle.

Yes I surely told some people about it. And ehm here also negative yes.. negative messages disseminated about Arke and told them it was very wrong. And I also gave feedback to the company. And subsequently, made pretty much fun of their compensation to the people close to me. Yes I did not mention it on social media, or something like that, or via the internet or anything. But face-to-face I did proclaim it (R. 10, f, 24).

An interesting finding was that none of the respondents disseminated their negative opinion about the brand online to harm the reputation of their disliked brand. Even, both Brand-haters did not do this. Some of the respondents indicated that they did not

want to take active stand online themselves, however when they would encounter something of the brand on the internet they could imagine to react in a negative manner. What is also voiced by the respondents is that they do not care much for online opinions. So, creating content online is not very important to them.

However, there were several respondents (3) in the group with strong negative emotions that assumed they could imagine to deploy an instrument as EWOM when they consider themselves to be in situations in which they feel genuine brand hate.

Well I think that if you really hate a brand you will use indeed social media, eh, you tell all people around you how bad the brand is, you are going to spread it very broadly. The fact that you just had this negative experience and that the brand is just very bad in your perception (R. 11, f, 53).

Brand avoidance. Next to these offensive behavioral reactions, all respondents indicated in one way or another to avoid the brand in order to deal with their negative brand emotions. They indicated that they consciously avoid these specific brands in their daily lives. The brand avoidance was expressed in literally and figuratively walking away when being confronted with a brand, for instance a television commercial or suggestion of a friend. In most cases in which negative emotions exist towards a brand, the respondent was not willing to continue any future purchases of the brand.

Well, back in the day I had that, I was in Italy, and there was a shop and yes I was looking for a pair of football shoes or something and then I went inside and I saw a shirt of Feyenoord hanging, I directly turned around and headed straight outside (R. 3, m, 24).

Oh well, in that respect it does have influence in my life, because in any case I will not buy it anymore (R. 10, f, 24).

Noteworthy to mention, someone's reaction seems to be linked to the level of dependency between the person and the brand. When a consumer needs the brand then there is a high level of dependency, in which they are forced to deal with the brand, as for example a bank that takes care of your insurances or mortgage. Consumers with a high level of dependency to the brand seem to react in a different manner than in low dependency relationships. Often it is not a possibility, or at least

very complicated, to dissociate from those brands because consumers are bounded due to a contract or lack of providers. Therefore, they need to find a way to deal with these brands which influences their behaviour and attitude towards the brands. When facing these brands the respondents indicated that they try to put their emotions aside in order to be able to deal with the brand because they have to.

Yes it is possible. And you can, look, and if you did not need them.. you always need money, you always need a bank account, all of that is obliged, your salary has to be deposited somewhere. So you cannot get rid of it. And therefore you cannot do much about it. You solely can make yourself angry and you can express your behavior towards the brand every time. Even when you have a regular conversation with them, it is just a pragmatic conversation, so not really friendly (R. 13, m, 65).

Dependency was also a problem for one of the Brand-haters. Respondent 8 even argued that when her insurance contract will expire that there is a great chance that she will leave the bank she hate.

4.4.3 The influence of brand hate on a person

The previous paragraph discussed the influences on attitude and behavior which applied for the whole range of negative emotions. In this research it is important to distinguish the difference between hate and other negative emotions. When explicitly focusing on the influence of brand hate regarding attitude and behavior some of the above discussed are indicated to also be true for the consequences of brand hate. To exemplify, the interviews showed that in case of genuine brand hate the most noteworthy attitudinal change for the Brand-haters was expressed by respondent 8 who indicated that her trust in the brand has disappeared completely. She also filed many complaints against the brand and expressed their negative opinion to her nearby environment, which does not differ from the attitude and behaviour of respondents with a lower level of negative emotions.

Brand termination. Interesting is that one attitudinal change was indicated to only occur in situations of brand hate which is the willingness of brand termination. Also some respondents (3) in this research who did not explicitly ascribe their negative emotion to be hate, stated that when a person does hate a brand he or she would strongly

support the disappearing of the brand. This does not necessarily imply that they would take active part in this, but they sincerely wish and approve it to happen.

Yes it means that the brand, if it is up to me, may disappear. That it just may go away in one way or another, that I will not be confronted with it again so to speak (R. 3, m, 24).

That you get personally very affected by it. So, for example, name it, an airline company who causes a crash because they flew with an airplane which they know was broken. Well yes, for instance something like that then I can imagine that when you lose someone because of that, well yes then you want to do everything in your powers to destroy that brand completely (R. 10, f, 24).

When taking a closer look to the influence on the Brand-haters two important behavioural changes stand out. First, respondent 4 argued that he will never enter a store of the Albert Heijn and even instructs people close to him not to go. Second, respondent 8 pronounced to terminate her contract with the ABN AMRO if this was a possibility.

4.5 Brand hate

As mentioned before, only two of the thirteen respondents did indicate that their negative feelings towards the brand contain genuine hatred. However, they all indicated to possess strong negative emotions. They were able to determine the difference between their own level of negative emotion and hate, and what is needed for their emotions to develop into hate. First, the characteristics of hate will be discussed and secondly their application to brands will be addressed. To illustrate how the respondents perceive hate some important quotes are outlined.

Let me think.. I think if you.. when I hate something then I should have so much negative feelings towards something or someone in which I cannot see it changing ever again... I have a bit of a feeling that if you hate something, t hen yeah that is such a deep emotion that it should be well-founded (R. 6, f, 26).

I think that hate is, that you do not want anything to do with it anymore, that you want to stay far away from it (R.4, m, 23).

Hate is really something, for me, what really can makes you angry. And uh, where you on a regular basis, maybe even in daily life, are confronted with and that it has such an influence on your life that it causes problems (R. 3, m, 24).

Yes hate I think is very.. it is on nearly on top if you put it in gradations. Then hate is on top. It is the maximum. People can easy say.. but is directed personally.. I hate you, but then in my opinion you do not really know what you are talking about (R. 12, m, 57).

It gives me an unpleasant feeling, it bothers me so to speak. That is why things that I appreciate less are not directly hate, because that, yes I can worry about it for some time, however after that I can put it aside. Things I really hate are the things that really disappoint me, that arouse a genuine negative emotion that will linger longer, over a longer period (R. 2, m, 23).

To summarize, hate can be seen as an extreme emotion which goes deep inside the person. It is not for a short period nor easy to change. The emotion of hate is the most intense negative emotion one can feel, with a destructive and enduring nature.

Most respondents share the opinion that it depends on someone's personality if hate can be developed. They argued that not everybody is hateful and some are more easily triggered than others. The group with strong negative emotions also indicated that they could imagine that other people are capable of developing hate and some even could imagine developing hate themselves.

I do think that there are people, who have a more outspoken opinion, say more easily that they hate a product of I hate that (R. 12, m, 57)!

Yes ehm.. I think that some people for that matter have a shorter fuse and for example by means of a disappointment, he, the fact that something does not work or so. And the reaction of the company, the brand, the way which they deal with it, with complains and such, if that also is very bad, then I could imagine that people really are going to hate a brand (R 11, f, 53).

Arriving at the main area of this study. The interviews suggest that people can develop brand hate, since two of the respondents in this research has shown they did. Some of the respondents argue that it is possible they could develop brand hate, but then

something really bad should happen with a significant personal impact. Here is how two respondents described brand hate:

I find that also difficult. I think at the moment that you really.. that negative feelings come up as soon as you are confronted in any possible way with the brand and then I mean you get really upset by it or really angry, arouses really negative emotions, at that point you can speak of hate towards a brand. So really even if you only see it on a sign and that you already almost freak out. If that is the case I think you really hate a brand. I think this will not be a really big group of people who have that. But that is.. if I consider myself (R. 11, f, 53).

Well hate, brand hate would be for me, is for me uh the feeling or the emotion you possess regarding a brand if a brand did harm you causing so much fire inside you, to just want to destroy the brand. That is how I would describe it (R. 10, f, 24).

Others think that is not in their nature to develop hate and argue that not everybody is hateful. Finally, there were respondents who indicated that it is not possible to hate a brand, but only the people leading the brand. They argue that a brand cannot make decisions for itself, it is always controlled by the people behind it. Therefore, the hate will always be focused on the people who manage the brand.

Hate is is is often, to be resolute, is often directed to people, not to organizations, yeah.. at least.. no I think that it is directed towards people. And there you want to get rid of. You want nothing to do with them anymore. You also do not want to encounter them.

But I find it difficult towards organizations something hate.. you would rather express the hate towards the people who represent them, by means of self-enrichment and name it, than towards organizations.

Because a brand itself cannot be blamed, a brand is led by people and towards those persons you can a sort of, yes name it eeeh, yes hate I think is still a big word, but you can act out and get aggressive towards them.

A brand does not cause something. It is also not the car that causes a crash, it is the person who is in the car who drives the car (R. 13, m, 65).

5. Discussion and concept development

The interviews provided five overarching themes where the main findings concerning brand hate were derived. Resulting in a general understanding and overview which supports the construction of a brand hate concept. For each theme the contribution to brand hate will be elaborated on in relation to the theory described in chapter 2.

5.1 Different negative emotions

Hate is an emotion that is rarely encountered, this is both experienced when searching for suitable respondents as during the interviews. Therefore, it is not odd that Romani et al. (2009) did not mention hate as a main negative emotion along with dislike and anger. During the interviews it became clear that most respondents possessed negative emotions towards multiple brands, as most mentioned two brands. Consequently, different types of negative emotions were expressed and discussed with in the end hate. A striking characteristic that distinguishes these different emotions appears to be the level of intensity. The intensity of negative emotions regarding these indicated brands was shown to be varying. Often the respondents mentioned one main brand for which they had developed a high level of negative feelings, whereas the emotions of the other mentioned brands, in the majority of the cases, were less intense. The range of negative emotions towards brands as discussed earlier in the literature review provides a supportive context. Accordingly, an important characteristic of negative emotions is that it has different levels of intensity varying from simple dislike to hate. As shown in the results the present study highlights five main negative emotions that a person can develop towards a brand. Appointing them to the range of negative emotions disappointment and irritation appear to be at the low-intensity end whereas aversion, anger and hate are emotions that scale on the high-intensity end.

5.1.1 Low-intensity emotions

Consumers in the research of Romani et al. (2009) expressed irritation as a negative feeling towards a brand. The present research emphasizes their findings as irritation was the most commonly indicated low-intensity emotion during the interviews. The respondents mentioned annoying advertisements and bad or distasteful products as main reasons for triggering irritation. This corresponds with Romani et al. (2009) since they argue that low-intensity emotions like brand dislike are subjected to personal attitude and taste. Besides irritation, the failure of a brand to meet customers' expectations can also lead to disappointment. There is not much to find in the literature

about brand disappointment, however it appears to be a negative emotion that is commonly aroused which can be harmful for a brand.

5.1.2 High-intensity emotions

Aversion is also covered by Romani et al. (2009) in the continuum of negative emotions and it is appointed in this study as a serious negative emotion. Aversion contains stronger negative feelings in comparison to irritation and disappointment and is therefore also more intense. A step further in the continuum of negative emotions anger is found. The literature research has shown that anger refers to a specific emotion towards another when unjustified harm occurred (Ben-Ze'ev, 2008). Anger is a strong emotion, however there is something beyond anger. Hate is often compared with and related to anger. Ben-Ze'ev (2008) argues that hate in comparison to anger is a more global attitude towards another who possesses fundamentally negative traits. Hate can be found at the top in the range of negative emotions as the most extreme negative emotion. The respondents indicated that there is nothing more intense than hate. So, brand hate is the ultimate phase where a negative emotion towards a brand can develop into.

5.2 Development of negative emotions and brand hate

Negative emotions are caused by certain antecedents and have the potential to develop and lead to brand hate.

5.2.1 Antecedents on three levels

The framework of Dalli et al. (2006), as explained in the literature review, is to a great extent applicable to the interview results. Their framework distinguishes causes of negative emotions on three different levels, namely 'product brand level', 'user brand level' and 'company brand level'. All three levels are reflected in the interviews. First, negative brand experiences and negative brand responses are causes in developing negative emotion on the product brand level. Second, when determining the main source of negative emotions on an user brand level a brand can suffer from a negative stereotype. Third, when considering the corporate brand level negative brand manifestations are key in the development of negative emotions.

5.2.2 Key antecedents

Comparing the antecedents indicated during the interviews with the antecedents addressed in the literature review this study appoints the two most important ones.

Negative brand experiences. Negative emotions are often developed due to negative experiences with the brand. This is encountered by many of the respondents and is also in line with the theory which implicates that dissatisfied consumers are negatively affected and more likely to engage in negative behaviour. In the literature review negative word-of-mouth is also mentioned as a source of negative emotions. However, it is not confirmed in the interviews to be a cause of the development of negative emotions. So, assumedly people need to experience negativity by themselves instead of hearing it from other people especially in the case of brand hate.

Negative brand manifestations. The other important antecedent in the development of negative emotions is negative brand manifestations. This wrong and unfair behaviour of brands corresponds with corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) which is outlined in the literature. Here, it is explained as corporate wrong doings which harm people due to violation of certain virtues (e.g. justice, equality) causing the arousing of negative emotional responses. This is in line with the outcomes of the interviews as wrong doings and the violation of norms and values were encountered frequently. So, negative brand manifestations including CSI were mentioned multiple times mentioned during the interviews as instigator of negative emotions and even brand hate.

5.3 Conditions for brand hate development

In this section the conditions that are truly necessary for the development of brand hate are thoroughly elaborated and compared to the literature. The results show that there are two main conditions when dealing with brand hate. If one of these conditions are of a significant level the chances of brand hate development increase. However, in the sample the group with strong negative emotions suggests that the developments of hate is different for every person and is dependent on one's personality. Next to that, they argued that not everybody is capable to develop the emotion of hate.

5.3.1 Personal impact

The personal impact a brand has on a consumer in a particular conflict is very important in brand hate development. This can be assumed since eleven respondents indicated that this plays an important role. The feelings of the two Brand-haters are in a major way affected by the personal impact that the particular brands have. And also nine respondents in the group with strong negative emotions stressed that personal impact is the trigger that could turn their own emotions into brand hate. The overall sentiment in the interviews about personal impact developing brand hate is that when a brand

inflicts harm to a person it can provoke extreme emotions. The most important examples of personal harm respondents mentioned during the interviews were financial harm, emotional harm and harm done to family members. In the literature the role of personal impact is mainly discussed by means of consumer dissatisfaction. However, this concerns the development of negative emotions in general. Therefore, the assumption of the effect of personal impact in the development of brand hate can be seen as a valuable contribution.

5.3.2. Violation of norms and values

The second important condition in developing brand hate is a brand crossing particular ethical boundaries. According to the group with strong negative emotions the violation of norms and values by a brand can be a trigger that pushes emotions to the extreme since it is a step too far and beyond the limits. Respondents expressed that they could imagine to hate a brand that deliberately carry out social and ethical condemnable actions such as the example in the interviews of financially duping millions of people. Grappi et al. (2013) agree with this with what they call corporate social irresponsibility. The concept they describe in their article is very similar to the statements some respondents made during the interviews. When virtues like justice and equality are violated it can cause emotional responses (Grappi et al., 2013). In the literature review this is further supported by the moral component that is discussed. Morals is one of the five components of hate according to Opatow and McClelland (2007) which lead to hateful behaviour.

5.3.3 Hate development differs per person

Besides the importance of the two conditions mentioned above, an important argument suggested by the group with strong negative emotions is that not everybody is hateful. They argue that people are different and to some the emotion will develop faster and to others maybe not at all. Like that, there were respondents who claimed they could not develop hate since they do not have it in them. Another statement made in the group with strong negative emotions was that a brand cannot be hated, only people. This is illustrated by respondent 13 who seemed to possess extreme negative emotions, similar to the descriptions of the Brand-haters, only he argued that this could not be hate because hate cannot be directed towards brands.

When considering the group of Brand-haters, the findings of this study also supports the argument that the development of hate differs per person. One of them developed

hate towards a brand caused by indoctrination of a supermarket. However, if every person would develop hate in the same way assumedly every supermarket employee should hate the rival. However, in reality this is not the case.

5.4 Influence of brand hate on a person

Since the main goal of this research is exploring the concept of brand hate this section will not further elaborate on the influence of negative emotions, but focus specifically on the influence of brand hate on a person. However, the consequences as shown in the results are both applicable for negative emotions in general as for brand hate. The influences encountered as displayed in the results are outcomes of both strong negative emotions as brand hate. The consequence solely resulting from brand hate indicated during the interviews is brand termination. The discussion below will be purely based on the interviews considering there is no corresponding literature available and will add a further discussion and elaboration of the most important influences and consequences of brand hate.

5.4.1 Attitudinal and behavioural changes

There are three striking changes in someone's attitude and behaviour a brand can cause.

Instant arousal negative emotion. First of all, many respondents indicated that the negative emotion, possibly brand hate, immediately come up when the brand is encountered. So, they instantly recall the emotions associated with the particular brand when they encounter it. This means that the brand has made an impression and the emotion is deeply printed inside the person. The negative association will assumedly last a long time and that is very dangerous for a brand.

Negative word-of-mouth. That people who hate a brand would spread their negative opinion to others in their environment is not really surprising. This assumption is confirmed during the interviews in which many respondents stated that they definitely express their negative feelings to others. This is often done to damage the brand and the respondents will do this face to face rather than online.

Brand avoidance. A very notable finding is that all respondents in this study indicated to, in one way or another, passively or actively, avoid the brand. Often by means of not purchasing the brand anymore, but also for instance literally walking away when the

brand is present. This means respondents do not want to deal with the brand anymore, only in situations where they can ventilate their negative feelings as for example damaging the brand.

Complaining to the brand, trust issues and an indifferent attitude were also mentioned as consequences, however less important in the development of brand hate.

5.4.3 Brand termination

According to the sample, one consequence typically caused by brand hate is the willingness of brand termination. Respondents in the group with strong negative emotions argued that it is plausible to assume that when they hate a brand they would support the perishing of the brand. They would gladly see the brand go down, by all means. This is in line with the attitude of the Brand-haters. They both wanted the hated brand to disappear or at least to terminate all contact with it. One of the Brand-haters (R. 4) would be very happy to see his hated rival brand disappear. And after all the struggles the other Brand-hater (R. 8) has gone through with the brand she hates, it would be fine for her to get rid of the brand. Interesting to note, none of the respondents said to take actively part in the process of destroying the brand, but they would sincerely approve it to happen.

5.5 Theory of (brand) hate versus interview results

In chapter two psychological literature and consumer brand research were discussed in order to explore the concept of brand hate. The analysis of the literature review showed that the five components of Opatow and McClelland (2007) and the four principles derived from the work of Reber (1985), Hadreas (2007) and Bryson et al. (2013) are the most evident concepts of the existing literature about (brand) hate. Therefore, a comparison is made between these concepts and the findings of the recent study.

5.5.1 Five components

Opatow and McClelland (2007) state that hate develops due to the interaction of five components, namely: antecedents, emotions, cognitions, morals and behaviour. The process in which the components interact with each other result in hate and are all expressed in the interviews.

Antecedents. The dynamic process of brand hate starts with a (direct or indirect) cause which may create a foundation for brand hate and shape the view of a person. These motives for hating are addressed and discussed during the interviews and therefore antecedents are assumed to be a component of hate.

Emotion. This affective component of brand hate consists of the feelings deep insight a person that the brand provokes. According to the respondents the emotion of hate is the highest and most extreme.

Cognition. Besides emotion the other affective component in brand hate is cognition. These mental structures provide for example, labels, stereotypes and the social representations which support the process of hate development. This came also back in the interviews. Where the instant arousal of the negative emotions towards the hated brand is an example of cognition. Hostile feelings were triggered instantly.

Morals. Morals are the principles that govern behaviour, as was stated in the literature review. So, when the boundaries of personal impact and the violation of norms and values are crossed it will lead to brand hate and hateful behaviour.

Behaviour. This component describes the expressions of hate. For example, negative word-of-mouth and brand avoidance according to the results.

5.5.2 Four principles

By combining the principles of Reber (1985), Hadreas (2007) and contributions of Bryson et al. (2013) four principles are established for determining brand hate:

- (1) The principle of harm or 'ill-will';
- (2) The principle of blame;
- (3) Feelings of pleasure from the objects' misfortune;
- (4) "The purposeful and deliberate intention to avoid or reject a brand or even to act out behaviours to demonstrate this rejection" (Bryson et al. 2013, p.395).

The principle of harm or 'ill-will'. This principle is confirmed in the present study since it is plausible to assume that it is very similar to the willingness of brand termination indicated as typical brand hate outcome.

The principle of blame. This principle is applicable to the group of Brand-haters. The hated brands were both blamed for the development of these hate feelings. To be more

specific, one for being responsible of a negative brand experience and the other is blamed for being a threat to his job-security.

Feelings of pleasure from the objects' misfortune. During the interviews this principle is not properly confirmed. To be concrete, respondents did not explicitly express that they would feel actual feelings of pleasure when the hated brand has problems. However, it might be possible that some of the respondents feel this way.

"The purposeful and deliberate intention to avoid or reject a brand or even to act out behaviours to demonstrate this rejection" (Bryson et al. 2013, p.395). This principle is certainly encountered during the interviews. Brand avoidance and negative word-of-mouth are examples where this principle is clearly apparent.

Both concepts did adequately come back during the interviews. All the components and almost every principle were confirmed. In the present study the conditions that are necessary for the development of brand hate are very important findings, however these are not specifically present in the two concepts. Therefore, it is relevant to note that the significance of personal impact and violations of norms and values are interesting contributions.

5.6 The concept of brand hate

Based on the findings of the research a conceptual framework is created. This conceptual framework consists of the formulation of the concept of brand hate with in addition a visualization by means of a conceptual model.

Brand hate is the ultimate negative emotion with the highest level of intensity. It has a destructive nature and is not for a short period nor easy to change. Brand hate can have different causes, like negative brand experiences, negative stereotypes, negative brand manifestations and indoctrination. These antecedents start the development of negative emotions, whether or not this will result in brand hate is determined by two conditions. First, to what extent the norms and values are violated and second by the personal impact the brand has on a consumer. It has been shown that every individual has its own way of developing emotions. What one experiences to be a reasonable inducement for the development brand hate, does not necessarily mean that this is the same for another. Thus, there can be said that the development of brand hate differs per person. When a person does hate a particular brand it will have certain influence

on them. They may be subjected to both attitudinal and behavioural changes. Brand-haters will instantly recall their negative feelings for the brand when encountering it. They also want to avoid the brand as much as possible and engage in negative word-of-mouth. Lastly, they wish for the brand’s termination as they want to see the brand destroyed, so they will no longer be affected anymore.

Figure 1. Conceptual model brand hate

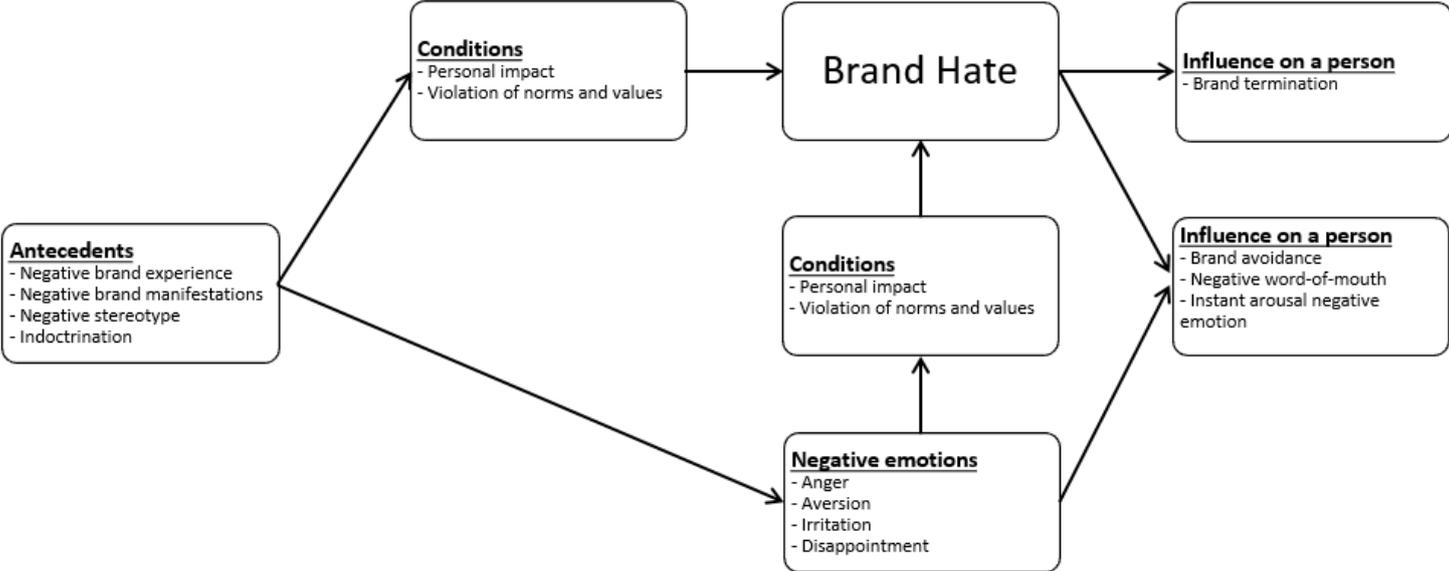


Figure 1 is a visual presentation of the concept of brand hate. This conceptual model contributes to a better understanding of the findings in this study. First, it shows the direct relation in which antecedents cause brand hate if the necessary conditions are present. Second, the indirect relation is shown in which antecedents at first cause negative emotions besides hate, but eventually develop into brand hate when the conditions are met and therefore emotions become extreme. However, it is important to keep in mind that the process of brand hate development differs per person.

6. Managerial implications

Since this research has an explorative nature, a note of caution regarding the generalization of the findings is required. Nevertheless, the findings seem to have some important implications for brands and their managers. First, the most logical implication is for managers to recognize and acknowledge brand hate as the danger it withholds. Companies should be aware that Brand-haters could spread negative word-of-mouth, avoid the brand and even want the brand to be terminated. This research did not indicate active participation of Brand-haters in brand termination, however this is also not ruled out. Especially when looking at recent findings of an interesting article about consumer brand sabotage (CBS). According to Kähr, Nyffenegger, Krohmer and Hoyer (2016) there is a new superbreed of unsatisfied customers who exercise hostile behaviour to damage the brand. It is likely to believe that Brand-haters could become brand saboteurs. Therefore, it will be very interesting to connect the concept of brand hate with the concept of CBS as the future research section below will suggest. An important implication is that (potential) Brand-haters could possibly hurt the brand. So, managers should be aware what the concept of brand hate entails and how it develops. This means they should detect possible brand hate rather sooner than later. No company wants Brand-haters and certainly not brand saboteurs as these people are assumed to damage the brand. Detecting Brand-haters might be complex due to the various touch-points a brand has with consumers nowadays and the expanded interactions between consumer and brand, but also among consumers. From one-to-one and one-to-many interactions to many-to-many interaction (Hoffman and Novak, 2015) can make it more difficult for a brand to oversee where brand hate arises and not to mention the rareness of the phenomenon as earlier elaborated. However, this research also indicated that brand hate is very intense and extreme, which will make it easier for managers and other employees to identify Brand-haters, since they will stand out compared to other consumers. Thus, by the first signs of brand hate there should ring some alarm bells to which a company need to interfere and provide care. It is assumable that these first signs are personally interpretable. However, when consumers complain or react in a negative fashion the brand's representative should be able to determine whether or not strong negative emotions are present and if there is a need for interference. When this is the case the brand should investigate the cause of these emotions and find solutions to change it if possible.

Second, this research points out certain areas in which a brand should take more caution to avoid the antagonizing of consumers. So, it has been found that negative brand manifestations and negative stereotypes are points of concern. But the most encountered cause of negative emotions are negative brand experiences. In general organizations should aim to satisfy consumers in order to increase profits. Therefore, it is not remarkable that this research emphasizes the importance for brands preventing customers of having negative brand experiences. Unfortunately, when brands have a large number of consumers this cannot be avoided at all times. However, in case of a negative brand experience, a brand should at least provide consumers with appropriate customer service and treat them right. Right can be interpreted as actions that are conform the generally accepted standards, norms and values. Therefore, organisations would be wise to take this into account when composing their policies. It would be wise for organizations to pay special attention to the guidelines of consumer contact when designing their employee' protocol for customer service. Especially since touch-points with consumers have changed in both nature and number (Edelman, 2010) which makes customer contact more complex. This requires empathy and problem solving ability of organizations in order to ensure negative brand experiences are limited.

Third, since the necessary conditions personal impact and the violation of norms and values play a crucial role in the development of brand hate, it is important to determine in what way this can be used by companies and its managers. As mentioned above, consumers nowadays are even more in touch with the brand and with other consumers, which makes the issue on hand increasingly important and relevant. The changing environment of consumer contact causes several consequences for companies regarding brand hate. More touch-points means higher complexity and therefore higher chances to disappoint consumers which could result in negative brand experiences. However, on the other hand, more touch-points also provide better and more opportunities to detect signals of potential brand hate which enables organizations to, when they act properly, prevent further escalation of the development of brand hate. Next to the increasing amount of touch-points, consumer contact also changes by the developments in online communication and social media. This enables consumers to reach a larger audience and increase the consumer to consumer contact. More consumer to consumer contact means higher chances of the instigation

and spreading of brand hate. On the other hand, it also means that organizations will be better capable of monitoring potential Brand-haters, since they have access to a larger source of information. Thus, companies should pay close attention to the interaction with and between consumers. This is important because in that way a company can encounter negative customer signals and determine in what level a consumer is impacted personally. If this is in such a way that it shows signs of (potential) extreme emotions it is essential for a company to act on that. It would be wise to approach that consumer and try find a proper solution for both parties, paying special attention to the norms and values of the consumer and the level of personal impact the negative experience had on the individual

Besides the monitoring of personal impact another important issue is that norms and values should not be violated. Therefore, it is crucial that companies are always careful and ethical responsible in their actions and expressions. In some occasions it can be hard to take into account the main values of every stakeholder, however that is also why it is important to monitor consumer to consumer contact, like social media, and to pay close attention to touch-points with consumers. In this fashion, companies can keep an eye on trends and reactions from consumers, who may be potential Brand-haters, which enables organizations to determine what consumers need some extra attention in order to prevent further development of brand hate.

7. Limitations, future research and conclusions

7.1 Research limitations

Attention should be paid to the limitations of this research which are primarily caused by the limited resources and the research design. The explorative nature of this research has its consequences on the generalisation of the findings. To clarify, due to the type of research the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Additionally, before the findings can be generalized to the population the results should be empirically validated by means of quantitative research. Because of this limitation the conclusions were formulated in a careful manner. Nevertheless, this research forms a valuable basis for further investigation of the subject, as it provided new insights and made some important implications.

Furthermore, regarding the sample used in this research only two respondents stated to genuinely hate a brand, whereas the other eleven 'only' expressed to have strong negative emotions towards a brand. This can be considered to be a limitation because supposedly more respondents with genuine brand hate might have provided additional insights that this study has not taken into account yet. However, despite of the multiple efforts made by the researcher to find people with genuine feelings of hate, there was no possibility of interviewing more people with genuine brand hate due to access difficulties. Although, not all the respondents indicated to possess genuine brand hate feelings, this research is considered to be of value as it also provided insights in the difference between Brand-haters and group with strong negative emotions and it showed what is needed for the latter group to develop brand hate.

Lastly, due to the limited amount of time available for this study there was no possibility to measure longitudinal effects. So, the emotion a respondent possessed at the time when the interview took place could not be compared with the emotion the respondent possessed after a certain period of time.

The limitations of this research offer, among other things, possible opportunities for future research which will be discussed in the next part.

7.2 Future research

Important to mention is that, despite of the present research, the dark area of negative emotions is still in need of more attention. The findings of this explorative research provide many possibilities that are open for further investigation. First, the results showed that the development of hate differs per person. This raises the question which

individuals are more likely to develop brand hate. When looking at the educational level of the respondents both Brand-haters have a low educational level. Does the educational level of an individual influence the development of brand hate? When conducting future studies it will become clear what causes the development of brand hate to differ per person and which individuals are more easily triggered in developing brand hate.

As mentioned in the managerial implications a person who hates a brand can be very dangerous to a company. Besides, brand saboteurs are certainly very dangerous for a company. Consumer brand sabotage is described as "a form of hostile aggression: harming the brand as dominant motive" (Kähr et al., 2016). Therefore, it is plausible to assume that brand sabotage is exercised in situations of brand hate. For that reason, a very interesting follow-up study would be to relate the concept of brand hate to the concept of consumer brand sabotage.

Furthermore, this research distinguished five different negative emotions and also several different influences negative emotions could have on a person. An interesting quest could be to determine which influences are associated with which particular negative emotion. This will lead to the enhancement of the knowledge of negative emotions and will be a convenient point of attention for a manager to take into account. When managers gain more insights about the influences of brand hate on a person they could learn how to deal and work with these consequences and take into account when considering the risk of performing a certain brand action.

As described in the limitations section there was no possibility for the measurement of longitudinal effects in this research. This would be a valuable addition to the present research because then the process of the development and the potentially changing level of the emotion can be measured more adequately. For instance, by repeating the interview sessions after, for example, a year with the same respondents. The same questions can be asked in order to indicate possible changes in the emotion of the respondent. These sessions can be repeated several times in order to accurately observe differences and developments. In this fashion, it could be possible to conduct research concerning the potential changing nature of brand hate and the possibility and manners to counteract the emotion of brand hate.

The present research provides the first insights in the unexplored area of brand hate, by means of exploiting the views of two brand haters and eleven respondents with strong negative emotions. Therefore, another suggestion for further examination is to

conduct the exact same research as the present one but with a higher number of respondents with genuine brand hate. It would be relevant to explore if the concept of brand hate and its development are presented in this study in a comprehensive manner or if there is a need for additional insights.

7.3 Conclusion

This research has provided an understanding of the concept of brand hate and answered the research question: *what is the extreme emotion of brand hate and how does it arise?* The results show that brand hate is the most intense and extreme negative emotion one can experience. The development of brand hate differs per person and not every person is capable of hating a brand. Some say this is not even possible, because hate can only be directed towards people. However, the two Brand-haters in the sample of this research show that it is possible to develop hate towards a brand. The hated brands affected their lives in such a way that hateful feelings arose. Brand hate seems to emerge primarily due to negative brand experiences in combination with a high intensity of personal impact or when norms and values are violated. In the end this can lead to very serious consequences for the brand. Luckily for them, brand hate seems to be a rare phenomenon.

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Appendices

Enclosed in separate book.