

MASTER THESIS

**YOUR MOST UNHAPPY CONSUMERS ARE YOUR
GREATEST SOURCE OF LEARNING: THE EFFECTS OF
AVOIDANCE TYPE, COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS, AND
CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS ON BRAND HATE**

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of avoidance type, company characteristics, and consumer characteristics on brand hate. Brand hate can be seen as the extreme negative affective component of attitude towards a brand. Outcomes of these attitudes can be brand avoidance or rejection, or even behavior as boycotting, or sabotage of company property.

In order to test the factors influencing brand hate, a 3 (experiential avoidance vs. identity avoidance vs. moral avoidance) x 2 (corporate social performance high vs. corporate social performance low) x 2 (corporate ability low vs. corporate ability high) between-subjects factorial design was executed in this study. Using an online questionnaire, a total of 382 respondents took part in this study. A fictional brand 'Calmida' was used to prevent effects due to brand preference or antipathy.

The results show that moral avoidance is the strongest motivator for brand hate, and that companies with a strong corporate social performance develop less brand hate within their consumers, compared to companies with a weak corporate social performance. Companies behind brand should always be aware that their brand's management policies does not have a negative effect on society. In addition, it is important for companies to behave responsible, responsiveness and have clear policies and actions, while it leads to more loyal and satisfied consumers.

The author suggest further research to fully understand the topic of brand hate. It is recommended to examine brand hate in other countries, to identify potential cultural differences.

Introduction

In 2008 a regular flight passenger started the website 'I Hate Ryanair' on *ihateryanair.org*. The clearly not satisfied 'consumer' of Ryanair started his first post with the title 'I really do hate Ryanair'. In this blog item he or she explained how the hatred towards Ryanair started. It begun when Ryanair did not meet his or her expectations. Literally, the consumer wrote: 'Many people have been badly treated by Ryanair'. Another consumer replied with 'I travel quite a bit with business and for pleasure and have developed an absolute hatred for this airline'. In august 2013 one of the most serious and respected newspapers of the United Kingdom "The Guardian" devoted an article to Ryanair (Williams, 2013). In their article The Guardian referred to *ihateryanair.org* with 'Their passengers hate them'.

People purchase products, goods, and services every day. With over ten million brands worldwide, consumers have too many choices and decisions to make. To simplify this decision making process, consumers often prefer some brands over others. Brands give consumers meaning to their lives (Fournier, 1998) and therefore marketers are interested in the purchase behavior of consumers. According to De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) there are many definitions of the brand, however scholars do not agree on a single theory of the brand. Therefore, De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) propose their definition of the brand as a multi-dimensional marketing tool that communicates a constellation of values.

In the past, researchers have broadly investigated brand love, a phenomenon where consumers develop a relationship with a brand and are loyal to this particular brand (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand hate is not the opposite of brand love, as argued by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) suggest that the lower bound for brand love is

not its logical opposite (brand hate), but the absence of an emotional response, like satisfaction, to the particular brand. Previous research by Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) shows that consumers purchase products for the positive benefits they represent. Consumers also seek their identity in the brands they use and attempt to find a way to express themselves (Fournier, 1998; Lee, Motion, et al., 2009). Despite increased interest in the relationship between consumers and brands, it can be argued that brand hate has been rather neglected in the marketing literature (Bosse, 2014; Bryson, Atwal, & Dreissig, 2010; Delzen, 2014; Lee, Motion, et al., 2009; Salvatori, 2007). In contrast, researchers have examined brand avoidance and anti-consumption for the past few years (Banister & Hogg, 2001; Lee, Motion, et al., 2009). In the words of Oliva, Oliver, and MacMillan (1992) brand avoidance is the anti-thesis of brand loyalty. Knowing what consumers do not want to purchase is just as important as knowing what consumers do want (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Reasons for not purchasing a particular brand are non-choice and anti-choice (Banister & Hogg, 2001). Non-choice can play a role when a brand is too expensive, is materially and geographically unavailable. Consumers make an anti-choice when they explicitly choose not to purchase products from a brand. Oliva et al. (1992) explained that consumer satisfaction leads to brand loyalty, while dissatisfaction leads to brand avoidance.

Why is it that people avoid some brands, even when their financial circumstances allow them to purchase products of that brand? Consumer research has often focused on the positive attitudes towards brands, while negative evaluations of product brands were neglected (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Salvatori, 2007). It is however important to understand why consumers dislike brands, or even develop hate towards brands. Primarily, while bad information about brands will be processed more thoroughly by consumers than good information (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). The

rapidly growing literature on brand avoidance indicates that academics are getting interested in consumers' brand avoidance.

Consumers can develop hatred against a brand due to various reasons. In this study avoidance types as experiential, identity and moral avoidance are important. Disappointed consumers who have bad experiences with a brand is linked to experiential avoidance. Identity avoidance occurs when consumers avoid brands they do not want to be associated with. When companies act irresponsible it can cause moral doubt within its consumers, and it will lead to brand avoidance (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009).

Company characteristics as corporate social performance and corporate ability can also play an important role in developing consumers' hatred against brands. Companies who engage in CSP initiatives have more loyal and satisfied consumers, and a better overall image (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). Companies with a high CA are known for their ability of producing quality products and deliver good services to their consumers (Riezebos, 2002).

Consumer characteristics can also play a major role in developing brand hate. Egoistic consumers aim for maximizing their individual outcomes and therefore they demand high quality products. Altruistic consumers have concern for the welfare of others, and biospheric consumers want to protect the environment (De Groot & Steg, 2007), which lead to believe these two groups of consumers care about CSP.

This study attempts to understand the topic of brand hate by conducting an experimental research measuring the influence of avoidance type, company characteristics, and consumer characteristics on brand hate.

To what extent do avoidance type, company characteristics and consumer characteristics have an influence on brand hate?

Literature Review

Brand hate

Whereas brand love focuses on the relationship between consumers and brands, brand hate derives of negative emotional affect towards the brand (Bryson et al., 2010). Brand hate and *brand avoidance* have both been tied to the intention of deliberately avoiding or rejecting a brand, however only brand hate has been linked to show behaviors like voicing negative feelings, boycotting, or sabotaging company property. Furthermore, Bryson, Atwal, and Hulten (2013) describe brand hate as the extreme negative affective component of attitude towards a brand. Attitude has been linked to behavioral intention and actual behavior (Sheeran, 2002). Salvatori (2007) reveals several motivators for brand hate. It is possible to hate a brand because the brand represents a different lifestyle or ideology. It is also likely that someone does not like a group of people associated with a brand. Also, poor quality products can develop hate towards a brand.

Brand avoidance

Brand avoidance is a particular form of anti-consumption and it can occur when consumers reject certain brands because it could add undesired meaning to their life (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). Lee, Motion, et al. (2009) demonstrated in their study why consumers may avoid some brands, even when they could afford them. When using a product or service, consumers make a distinction between expectations and the performance of the product or service (Halstead, 1989). Literature described three types of brand avoidance: experiential, identity and moral brand avoidance (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009). Experiential avoidance plays a role when consumer expectations were failed to meet. Identity avoidance occurs when brands are symbolically incompatible with the identity of the consumer. When consumers morally avoid a brand it is because consumers think that a brand's management policies has a negative effect on society.

Negative emotions have a connection with avoidance and sorrow. Therefore, consumers will avoid certain brands because they do not stem with their social values (Salvatori, 2007). Furthermore, consumers want to avoid unpleasantness in their life, so they reject certain brands (Banister & Hogg, 2004).

Experiential avoidance. Negative experiences with a certain product can be a basis for brand hate (Salvatori, 2007). In addition, Lee, Motion, et al. (2009) found that negative brand experience develops dissatisfaction, what turns into brand avoidance. In short, when consumer expectations were failed to meet it leads to brand avoidance. Brand avoidance can occur due to product failure, level of service provided, poor performance, and unpleasant store environment.

Identity avoidance. When people avoid brands that do not match their identity, or when a brand is closely linked to certain groups, identity avoidance can occur (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009). People do not want to belong to a particular group when that group is associated with a specific brand. Furthermore, some consumers want to be seen as individual, so they avoid mainstream brands. Identity avoidance is linked to the undesired-self and misidentification. Consumers will engage in brand avoidance because they do not want to be seen with a brand what they believe has negative brand meanings or values (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009).

Moral avoidance. Avoiding a brand due to ideological reasons, for example political reasons or exploitation, is motivated by moral avoidance (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009). A specific type of moral avoidance is the country of origin effects. Country of origin effects covers the circumstances in which products are produced, the environment where the company produces, and how the company treats its employees. The most important elements of moral avoidance are resisting dominating forces, a social focus beyond the individual, and believing that it is morally accepted to avoid some brands (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009).

Comparison of the avoidance types. Dissatisfied consumers due to product failure or negative experience with a brand can develop hatred against that brand. Research showed that experiential avoidance is the strongest motivator for brand hate, while identity avoidance was found to be the weakest motivator for brand hate (Bosse, 2014; Bryson et al., 2010; Delzen, 2014; Salvatori, 2007). Research is not clear about moral avoidance and its outcomes, while several studies have investigated moral avoidance and found different outcomes. Bryson et al. (2013) found no evidence that moral avoidance can lead to brand hate, while other studies did find evidence that moral avoidance can indeed lead to brand hate (Bosse, 2014; Delzen, 2014).

H1: Experiential Avoidance is the strongest motivator for Brand Hate, followed by Moral Avoidance, then followed by Identity Avoidance.

Company Characteristics

Nowadays, companies are more demanded to act in a socially responsible way (Bockman, Razzouk, & Sirotnik, 2009). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has attracted more interest from consumers these days (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Maignan, 2001), mainly because consumers avoid companies that act irresponsible (Snider, Hill, & Martin, 2003). In addition, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) described in their study that negative CSR information is more influential than positive information. However, Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) point out that CSR only plays a minor role in purchase decisions these days. According to Woolverton and Dimitri (2010) companies must make decisions that are in interest for the whole society, with the environment as a very important factor. Basically, the idea behind CSR is that companies are responsible for more than simply making a profit (Godfrey & Hatch, 2007).

Corporate Social Performance

Research is not clear about a single definition of corporate social performance (De Bakker, Groenewegen, & Den Hond, 2005). For instance, Frederick (1994) states that a firm's actions can be seen as CSR, and CSP relates to the outcomes of these actions. Other scholars believe that CSP is a concept that contains responsibilities, responsiveness, and policies and action (Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Wood, 1991). When a company has a high perceived social performance, consumers are more loyal and satisfied, and the company will have a better image (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). Consumers evaluate companies with a good CSP more positive than companies who have a low perceived CSP, and consumers will evaluate products of that company more positive (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Furthermore, bad CSR initiatives, and thus bad CSP, can decrease consumer purchase intention of certain products (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). However, recent research learned that consumers base their decision making on very little knowledge about a company's CSP. Outcomes of studies by Bosse (2014) and Smith, Read, and Lopez-Rodriguez (2010) showed that consumers do not hate brands for their social performance, and therefore no evidence of a direct influence of CSP on brand hate was found. Research by Delmas and Cuerel Burbano (2011) showed however that one's consumers learn about a company's negative CSP, they rapidly avoid that brand.

H2: High Corporate Social Performance leads to less Brand Hate compared to low Corporate Social Performance.

Consumers appreciate companies that give back to society, and therefore CSP actions are very important for companies behind a brand (Nan & Heo, 2007). However, when consumer expectations are not met, consumers doubt the CSP of the company (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Also, when the CSP actions of a company is questionable, it will not match the identity of the consumer (Marin & Ruiz, 2007). Furthermore, when consumers learn about negative CSP of a

company, for example when the company engages in ‘green washing’, consumers will have moral doubts (Delmas & Cuerel Burbano, 2011). Previous research by Bosse (2014) showed that consumers who are aware of CSP actions of a company have more trust in the authenticity of these actions and in the company. When consumers are able to identify with a brand, they can also identify themselves with the CSP actions. Companies that participate in CSP actions can however evoke negative feelings within consumers, while consumers with bad experiences feel that the company is covering for something. If a company engages in CSP actions, it means that they act responsible, responsiveness, and respect their policies and actions. Consumers value companies who behave accordingly and know what is morally right.

H3: The influence of a strong CSP leads to less Brand Hate in the Moral Avoidance Condition compared to the Identity Avoidance Condition and the Experiential Avoidance Condition.

Corporate Ability

The ability of a company is closely linked to the company’s expertise in producing and delivering its products (Zhou, Poon, & Huang, 2012). Lin, Chen, Chiu, and Lee (2011) came up with a similar definition of corporate ability (CA) as they stated that CA refers to the professional capability in producing and delivering its outputs. Outputs are for example quality services or products. In the Netherlands many quality marks in all sorts of branches exist. Companies have to produce quality products to preserve their quality label, and consumers will know which companies have expertise. Furthermore, companies realize they have certain obligations to their consumers, like production expertise, consumer-orientation, corporate innovation, employees’ expertise, product quality, and aftersales service. Consumers do not appreciate product failures or products that are of low quality. In short, CA is the company’s ability to produce quality outputs (Berens, Riel, & Bruggen, 2005; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

Several studies (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) have shown that when consumers have different associations with a company, it will lead to different product evaluations. Especially associations with a company's CA influences consumer product evaluation. For companies it is important to have a high perceived CA, while Berens et al. (2005) reveal a relationship between the CA of a company and the opinions of their consumers.

H4: High Corporate Ability leads to less Brand Hate compared to low Corporate Ability.

Consumers may avoid low quality products when they are produced under questionable circumstances. In addition, brands that produce in a bad environment can develop moral doubts within its consumers (Lee, Fernandez, & Hyman, 2009). Since 1988, the Netherlands adapted a fair trade mark named 'Max Havelaar' which provides fair prices for coffee growers, so they are able to produce quality products. Purchasing low quality products can also lead to undesirability, which is not positive for one's personal self. Furthermore, consumers avoid brands when they have experienced that a company is unable to produce quality products. Previous research by Bosse (2014) showed that corporate ability has the strongest influence on brand hate in the experiential condition, second comes identity avoidance, and no influence from corporate ability on brand hate in the moral avoidance condition was found. Furthermore, Bosse (2014) stated that if consumers have had negative experiences with a brand it is more likely that they hate that brand. Also, consumers do not want to identify themselves with low quality products. Last, Bosse (2014) found no relation between corporate ability and moral avoidance on brand hate.

H5: The influence of a strong CA leads to less Brand Hate in the Experiential Avoidance Condition compared to the Identity Avoidance Condition and the Moral Avoidance Condition.

Consumer Characteristics

A value is a goal varying in importance, which can be seen as a guiding principle in a person's life (Schwartz, 1994). Values are also beliefs upon which people act by preference (De Groot & Steg, 2008), and in marketing brand preference is very important. Values make an efficient instrument for describing and explaining similarities and the difference between groups and persons (Rokeach, 1973). Values are important because they may affect various beliefs and behaviors (Rohan, 2000) and possibly consumer evaluations of brands.

De Groot and Steg (2007) argued three different value orientations that are able to explain environmental beliefs and behavior. These three values are egoistic (maximizing individual outcomes), altruistic (concern for the welfare of others) and biospheric (emphasizing the environment and the biosphere) value orientations. Examples of egoistic values are social power, wealth, authority, influential, and ambitiousness. Further, altruistic values examples are equality, a world of peace, social justice, and helpful. Biospheric values are about preventing pollution, respecting the earth, unity with nature, and protecting the environment.

Consumers with high egoistic values are more focused on maximizing their individual outcomes (De Groot & Steg, 2007). These types of consumers demand high quality products, and they do not make their purchase decisions based on the CSP of a company as they only know little information about the company's CSP (Smith et al., 2010). High altruistic consumers have concern for the welfare of others (De Groot & Steg, 2007) and therefore they care about how employees are treated within the company. Consumers with high biospheric values emphasize

the environment, and they take high care in the circumstances in which the products are made (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

H6a: The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high egoistic values compared to consumers with low egoistic values.

H6b: The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is higher for consumers with high altruistic values compared to consumers with low altruistic values.

H6c: The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is stronger for consumers with high biospheric values compared to consumers with low biospheric values.

Consumers who care about their own outcomes and demand high quality products will be more positive towards companies with a high perceived CA. Consumers that care about the welfare of others care less about the ability of a company to produce high quality products, and the CA of a company will not have a big influence on their brand hate. The same holds true for consumers with high biospheric values, who concern about the environment. These consumers demand that the company treats their employees well and care less about the ability of the company.

H7a: The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with low egoistic values compared to consumers with high egoistic values.

H7b: The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high altruistic values compared to consumers with low altruistic values.

H7c: The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high biospheric values compared to consumers with low biospheric values.

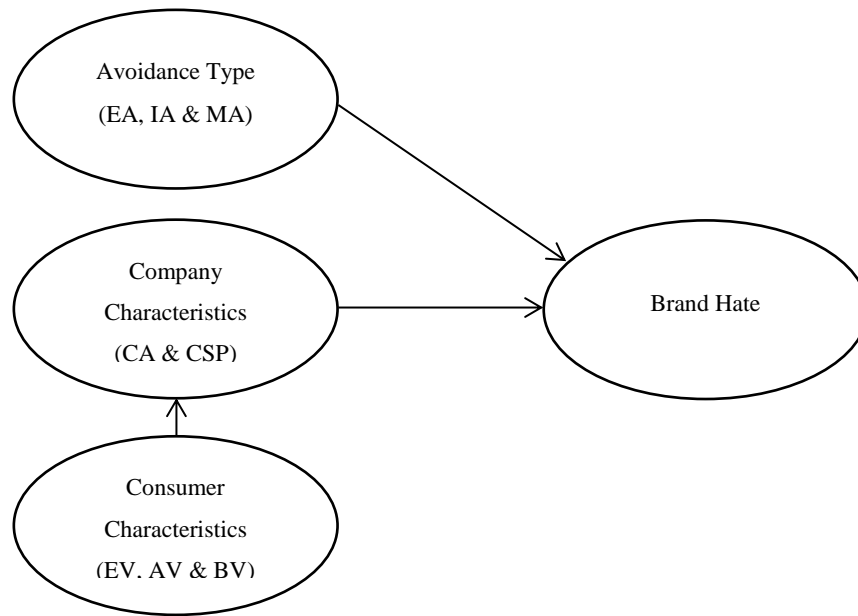


Figure 1. Research model.

The aim of this study is to investigate brand hate, and examining to what extent experiential avoidance, identity avoidance, moral avoidance, corporate social performance and corporate ability have an influence on brand hate (see Figure 1).

Method

Research design and Scenario development

A 3 (experiential avoidance vs. identity avoidance vs. moral avoidance) x 2 (corporate social performance high vs. corporate social performance low) x 2 (corporate ability low vs. corporate ability high) between-subjects factorial design was executed in this study. A fictitious brand (Calmidia) was used in order to eliminate effects of prior experience with the organization. All twelve conditions used the same framed-paged design and were created to look like a real business website (see Figure 2).

Each scenario contained two barometers that ranked ten big international phone manufacturers on their corporate social performance and their corporate ability. Participants were informed that the new barometers for 2014 were presented and that Calmidia ranked high or low on corporate social performance and high or low on corporate ability.

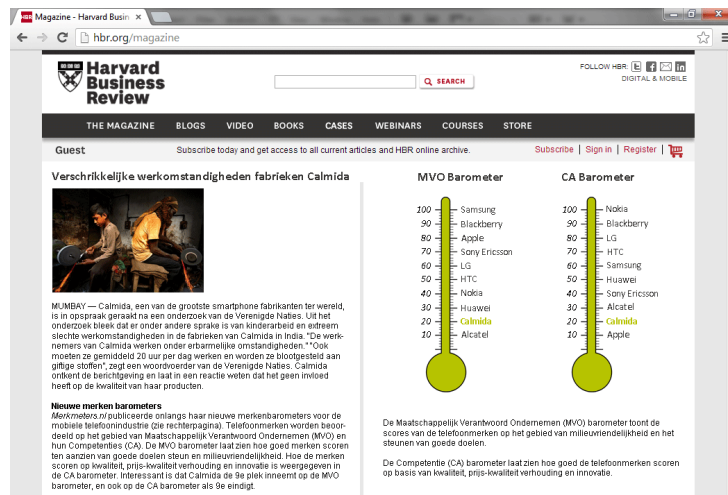


Figure 2. Example of stimulus material

The avoidance factors were manipulated in three different scenarios. Each scenario was represented with a news article about a smartphone from the Calmidia brand.

Experiential avoidance scenario. Participants had to read a news article in which one of the newest smartphones of Calmida exploded inside a female students' jeans pocket. The student was very upset and said that she would never purchase anything from Calmida anymore. After hearing the news, Calmida decided to take the smartphone off the market, while loads of users had complained about defects.

Identity avoidance scenario. In the news article where the identity avoidance factor was manipulated, TV-stars Barbie and Michael were the main characters. The reality duo were asked to design their smartphone in cooperation with Calmida. A famous designer responded that she believed it was not going to be a successful smartphone.

Moral avoidance scenario. The news article highlights the bad work environment of employees working in Calmida factories in India. Calmida gets accused of child labor and dangerous unhealthy workplaces. In response Calmida denies the accusations, and points out that the report does not affect the quality of the production.

After reading one of the twelve scenarios the participants were directed to an online questionnaire that collected their responses to items measuring the dependent variable and their demographic information.

Measures

After being exposed to an experimental condition, participants indicated their responses to items measuring the dependent and independent variables of the study (brand hate, avoidance type, corporate ability, corporate social performance, and value orientation). Items were measured on a five-point and seven-point Likert scale with 'totally agree' and 'totally disagree' on both ends.

Twelve items, developed by Zeki and Romaya (2008) and Salvatori (2007), were used to measure 'brand hate' ($\alpha = .95$), such as 'I don't want anything to do with brand X' and 'I cannot control my hatred for brand X'. In recent research, several students from the University of Twente have merged the items from Salvatori (2007) and Zeki and Romaya (2008) into one scale, which they adapted as the brand hate scale (Bosse, 2014; Delzen, 2014).

Four items from Lee, Fernandez, et al. (2009) and Salvatori (2007) were used to measure 'experiential avoidance' ($\alpha = .86$). For example, 'The performance of products of brand X is poor', and 'My hate for this brand is linked to the bad performance this product has'. Identity avoidance ($\alpha = .95$) was measured with 5 items by Lee, Fernandez, et al. (2009) such as 'I don't want to be seen with brand X' and 'This brand does not represent what I am'. Items (4) for moral avoidance ($\alpha = .96$) include 'In my opinion, brand X acts irresponsible' and 'The brand doesn't match my values and beliefs'.

Two items from Berens et al. (2005) were used to measure corporate social performance ($\alpha = .93$). These items include 'Brand X supports good causes' and 'Brand X behaves responsibly regarding the environment'. Corporate ability ($\alpha = .92$) was measured with 3 items such as 'Brand X offers high-quality products' and 'Brand X offers products with a good price-quality ratio'.

Thirteen items, developed by (De Groot & Steg, 2007) were used to measure 'value orientation' ($\alpha = .87$). Value orientation consist of egoistic, altruistic and biospheric value items. Egoistic values include 'social power' and 'wealth', altruistic values include 'equality' and 'helpful'. Biospheric values were measured with 4 items such as 'preventing pollution' and 'protecting the environment'. These items were measured on a 9-point Likert scale. The 9-point scale ranged from -1 (opposed to my values), 0 (not important) to 7 (extremely important).

Participants also had to choose 4 items out of the 13 value orientation items which were the most important for them.

Pretest

A pilot study was conducted to test the experiment's scenarios. Twenty-seven respondents between the age of 27 and 64 ($M = 45.57$; $SD = 17.29$) were asked to participate and agree on statements based on three different scenarios: experiential, identity and moral avoidance.

Participants showed higher levels of EA in the EA condition ($M = 3.56$; $SD = 0.78$) compared to the IA condition ($M = 2.75$; $SD = 1.05$) and the MA condition ($M = 3.31$; $SD = 0.77$). In the IA condition respondents showed more IA ($M = 4.09$; $SD = 0.63$) compared to EA ($M = 3.09$; $SD = 0.72$) and MA ($M = 3.96$; $SD = 0.61$). Last, in the MA condition respondents showed more MA ($M = 4.56$; $SD = 0.53$) compared to EA ($M = 3.25$; $SD = 0.89$) and IA ($M = 2.97$; $SD = 0.55$).

The pilot study also revealed that the low CA condition was perceived as lower ($M = 2.57$; $SD = 0.64$) compared to the high CA condition ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 0.61$). Also, in the CSP condition the high condition was perceived as high ($M = 3.50$; $SD = 0.74$) compared to the low condition ($M = 2.52$; $SD = 0.85$).

Respondents for the Main Study

A total of 543 participants started the questionnaire. After analyzing the data there were 161 participants removed from the study, while they did not completely fill out the questionnaire. In total, 382 persons participated in the experiment. The sample consists of 177 women and 205 men from age 18 to 95 ($M = 33.88$; $SD = 13.74$). Each participant was in one of the twelve conditions: 124 participants were in the EA condition, 125 participants were in the IA condition, and 133 participants were in the MA condition. Participants were randomly assigned to the twelve conditions.

Results

Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was conducted to see whether the three avoidance conditions are perceived as they were intended to be perceived. The construct Experiential Avoidance was measured with 4 items. The condition EA ($M = 3.06$; $SD = 0.78$) scored significantly higher on this condition compared with the IA condition ($M = 2.87$; $SD = 0.69$) and the MA condition ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 0.80$) ($F(2, 380) = 6.06$, $p = .003$). The construct Identity Avoidance was measured with 5 items. The condition IA ($M = 3.73$; $SD = 0.74$) scored significantly higher on this condition compared with the EA condition ($M = 2.97$; $SD = 0.66$) and the MA condition ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 0.80$) ($F(2, 380) = 34.39$, $p = 0.000$). Last, the construct Moral Avoidance was measured with 4 items. The condition MA ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 0.86$) scored significantly higher on this condition compared with the EA condition ($M = 2.89$; $SD = 0.81$) and the IA condition ($M = 2.92$; $SD = 0.83$) ($F(2, 380) = 55.28$, $p = 0.000$).

In order to be able to determine whether the low and high CSP conditions are perceived as high and low, a manipulation check was performed. CSP was measured with 2 items. Respondents in the high CSP condition ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 0.90$) scored significantly higher on CSP compared to the low condition ($M = 2.35$; $SD = 0.85$); $t(380) = -9.99$, $p < .05$.

CA was measured with 3 items. In order to determine whether respondents perceived the high CA condition as higher compared to the low condition, a manipulation check was performed. Respondents in the low CA condition scored lower ($M = 2.45$; $SD = 0.79$) compared to respondents in the high condition ($M = 3.26$; $SD = 0.79$); $t(380) = -10.05$, $p < .05$.

Impact of the incident on the brand

After reading the news article participants had to answer questions to what extent they believed the incident in the article had an impact on the brand. A one way ANOVA showed that participants believed the biggest impact of the incident on the brand was in the EA condition ($M = 3.87$; $SD = 0.87$), closely followed by the MA condition ($M = 3.77$; $SD = 0.88$). Participants expected the lowest impact of the incident on the brand in the IA condition ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 0.79$) ($F(2, 379) = 35.31$, $p = 0.00$).

Attitude towards the article

Participants were also asked for their attitude towards the article, and had to agree to what extent they believed the article they have read was trustworthy, reliable, and credible. Together the three factors form the credibility of the article. A one way ANOVA was performed to test the credibility and it showed that respondents believed that the MA article was most credible ($M = 3.37$; $SD = 0.71$), followed by the EA article ($M = 3.07$; $SD = 0.71$), and after that followed by the IA article ($M = 2.66$; $SD = 0.76$) ($F(2, 379) = 30.98$, $p = 0.00$). Interestingly, respondents showed a higher level of credibility when the company had a low CSP ($M = 3.09$; $SD = 0.79$), compared to the company in the high CSP ($M = 2.99$; $SD = 0.76$); $t(380) = 1.09$, $p = 0.279$. The same holds true for the company with a low CA, where respondents showed a higher level of credibility ($M = 3.05$; $SD = 0.77$), compared to the high CA ($M = 3.03$; $SD = 0.79$); $t(380) = 0.31$, $p = 0.757$, where respondents showed lower scores on CA. Although the differences are small, it was not expected.

Correlation between variables

Table 1 is an overview of the relations between the variables and interactions in this study. A Pearson's correlation has been performed to measure the strength and direction of association that exists between the variables used in the experiment.

Table 1. Correlation between variables.

	BH	EA	IA	MA	CSP	CA
BH	1					
EA	.386**	1				
IA	.227**	.309**	1			
MA	.383**	.141**	.216**	1		
CSP	-.250**	-.096	-.224**	-.500**	1	
CA	-.128*	-.563**	-.183**	-.112*	.187**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that of the three avoidance types, EA has the ‘less weakest’ correlation with BH ($r = 0.386$, $n = 382$, $p = 0.000$). While Pearson’s r is positive, it means that when levels of experiential avoidance increase, levels of brand hate increase.

Main Effects

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to test the study’s hypotheses. Results show that main effects for avoidance type (EA, IA and MA) on brand hate ($F(2, 370) = 15.30$, $p = .000$), and corporate social performance on brand hate ($F(1, 370) = 4.59$, $p = .033$) were found. No main effect for corporate ability on brand hate was found ($F(1, 370) = 1.23$, $p = .269$).

Table 2. Overview of the means and standard deviations of the avoidance types on brand hate.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables		
	Experiential Avoidance (N=124)	Identity Avoidance (N=125)	Moral Avoidance (N=133)
Brand Hate	M = 2.16 SD = 0.76	M = 2.23 SD = 0.76	M = 2.67 SD = 0.82

Note. SD=Standard Deviation. *n*=number of participants.

Hypothesis 1 is not supported as moral avoidance has the strongest correlation of the three avoidance types with brand hate.

Table 3. Overview of the means and standard deviations of corporate social performance and corporate ability on brand hate.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables			
	Corporate Social Performance		Corporate Ability	
	Low (N=196)	High (N=186)	Low (N=194)	High (N=188)
Brand Hate	M = 2.45 SD = 0.84	M = 2.27 SD = 0.78	M = 2.41 SD = 0.83	M = 2.31 SD = 0.80

Note. SD=Standard Deviation. *n*=number of participants.

Table 3 shows that companies with a low CSP are more likely to develop BH (supporting Hypothesis 2). Results indicate that companies with a low perceived CA are also more likely to develop BH, however results were not significant (rejecting Hypothesis 4).

Post hoc analyses were conducted given the statistically significant omnibus ANOVA F test. Specifically, Bonferroni tests were conducted on all possible

pairwise constructs. The following pairs of groups were found to be significantly different ($p < .05$): EA and MA, and MA and IA.

Interaction Effects between Avoidance Type, CSP and CA

ANOVA results reveal that the interaction effect between avoidance type and corporate social performance ($F(2, 370) = 0.44$, $p = .645$), and between avoidance type and corporate ability ($F(2, 370) = 1.76$, $p = .175$), and corporate social performance and corporate ability ($F(1, 370) = .27$, $p = .601$) is not significant. The same holds true for the three-way interaction between avoidance type, corporate social performance and corporate ability ($F(2, 370) = .99$, $p = .371$). Results of the ANOVA tests are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA results for the interaction between avoidance type, corporate social performance, and corporate ability.

Dependent Variable	Avoidance Type x Corporate Social Performance	Avoidance Type x Corporate Ability	Corporate Social Performance x Corporate Ability	Avoidance Type x Corporate Social Performance x Corporate Ability
Brand Hate	$F = .439$ $p = .645$	$F = 1.754$ $p = .175$	$F = .274$ $p = .601$	$F = .994$ $p = .371$

Note. F =F-value. p =P-value

Results indicate that companies with a strong CSP will develop the least Brand Hate within consumers in the EA condition ($M = 2.07$; $SD = 0.73$), followed by the IA condition ($M = 2.20$; $SD = 0.76$), and the MA condition ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 0.79$). However, results were not significant and therefore Hypothesis 3 is not supported. It also seems that companies with a strong CA will develop the least Brand Hate within their consumers in the EA condition ($M = 2.02$; $SD = 0.75$), followed by IA condition ($M = 2.23$; $SD = 0.71$), followed by the MA condition

($M = 2.69$; $SD = 0.81$). Results do point in the hypothesized direction, however the results were not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is also not supported.

Moderating Effects of Consumer Characteristics

ANOVA results reveal no moderating effects of the personal value orientations (egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric) on the relationship between the company characteristics (corporate social performance and corporate ability) and brand hate.

Also, no effects were found between egoistic values and corporate social performance ($F(1, 355) = .70$, $p = .402$), biospheric values and corporate social performance ($F(1, 355) = 1.69$, $p = .195$), and altruistic and corporate social performance ($F(1, 355) = .26$, $p = .608$).

Furthermore, there were also no effects found between egoistic values and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = .80$, $p = .371$), altruistic values and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = .002$, $p = .97$), and biospheric values and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = .00$, $p = .954$).

Last, no effects were found between egoistic values, corporate social performance and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = .16$, $p = .692$), altruistic values, corporate social performance and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = 0.07$, $p = .785$), and biospheric values and corporate social performance and corporate ability ($F(1, 355) = 1.70$, $p = .193$).

It seems that the influence of a company with a weak CSP on brand hate is stronger for consumers with high egoistic values ($M = 2.46$; $SD = 0.84$), compared to consumers with low egoistic values ($M = 2.43$; $SD = 0.84$). However, no significant results were found and therefore Hypothesis 6a was rejected. Furthermore, the influence of a weak CSP on brand hate is lower for

consumers with low altruistic values ($M = 2.58$; $SD = 1.02$), compared to consumers who are high altruistic ($M = 2.44$; $SD = 0.83$). This result was also not significant. Hence, Hypothesis 6b is not supported. Results also pointed into the direction that for consumers with low biospheric values a weak CSP has more influence on brand hate ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 0.87$) compared to high biospheric consumers ($M = 2.37$; $SD = 0.80$). Results however were not significant and therefore Hypothesis 6c is rejected.

The influence of companies with a strong CA on brand hate seemed lower for consumers with low egoistic consumers ($M = 2.22$; $SD = 0.79$) compared to high egoistic consumers ($M = 2.37$; $SD = 0.81$). Results did point into the hypothesized direction, however results were not significant. Hence, Hypothesis 7a is not supported. Also, the influence of a company with a strong CA seemed lower for consumers with high altruistic values ($M = 2.28$; $SD = 0.79$) compared to low altruistic consumers ($M = 2.64$; $SD = 0.98$). Hypothesis 7b is not supported, while results were not significant. Furthermore, the influence of a company with a strong CA seemed lower for consumers with high biospheric values ($M = 2.15$; $SD = 0.72$) compared to low biospheric consumers ($M = 2.47$; $SD = 0.85$). While results were not significant it lead to the rejection of Hypothesis 7c.

Table 5. Overview Hypothesis and results

Hypothesis	Result
<i>H1</i> : Experiential Avoidance is the strongest motivator for Brand Hate, followed by Moral Avoidance, then followed by Identity Avoidance.	Not Supported
<i>H2</i> : High Corporate Social Performance leads to less Brand Hate compared to low Corporate Social Performance.	Supported
<i>H3</i> : The influence of a strong CSP leads to less Brand Hate in the Moral Avoidance Condition compared to the Identity Avoidance Condition and the Experiential Avoidance Condition.	Not Supported
<i>H4</i> : High Corporate Ability leads to less Brand Hate compared to low Corporate Ability.	Not Supported
<i>H5</i> : The influence of a strong CA leads to less Brand Hate in the Experiential Avoidance Condition compared to the Identity Avoidance Condition and the Moral Avoidance Condition.	Not Supported
<i>H6a</i> : The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high egoistic values compared to consumers with low egoistic values.	Not Supported
<i>H6b</i> : The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is higher for consumers with high altruistic values compared to consumers with low altruistic values.	Not Supported
<i>H6c</i> : The influence of a weak CSP on Brand Hate is stronger for consumers with high biospheric values compared to consumers with low biospheric values.	Not Supported
<i>H7a</i> : The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with low egoistic values compared to consumers with high egoistic values.	Not Supported
<i>H7b</i> : The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high altruistic values compared to consumers with low altruistic values.	Not Supported
<i>H7c</i> : The influence of a strong CA on Brand Hate is lower for consumers with high biospheric values compared to consumers with low biospheric values.	Not Supported

Discussion

Strongest motivator for Brand Hate

Experiential avoidance was expected to be the strongest motivator for brand hate, however results show that *moral avoidance* is the strongest motivator for brand hate. This is not in line with previous research, where experiential avoidance was found to be the strongest motivator for brand hate (Bosse, 2014; Bryson et al., 2010; Delzen, 2014; Salvatori, 2007). A possible explanation for the different results can be found in the use of existing brands. While this study used a fictional brand to prevent itself from brand preference, studies by Bosse (2014) and Delzen (2014) used existing brands. Remarkable, recent research by Bryson et al. (2013) showed no evidence that moral avoidance can lead to brand hate.

Influence of Corporate Social Performance on Brand Hate

A company with a high perceived CSP is likely to be less hated by their consumers, as we argued in Hypothesis 2. Results indeed showed that companies with a high CSP were less hated by their consumers compared to companies with a low perceived CSP. This result is in line with previous research by Luo and Bhattacharya (2006) who explained that a strong CSP leads to more loyal and satisfied consumers. A strong CSP will also increase a company's image.

Furthermore, it was predicted that companies with a good CSP will develop less brand hate in the moral avoidance condition, compared to the identity and the experiential avoidance condition. Results show otherwise, while the least brand hate was found in the experiential avoidance condition. It is possible that consumers were skeptical after reading the 'moral scenario', wherein the brand was accused of mistreating their employees. Respondents may have neglected the barometers, while they believed the *news article* presented in the moral scenario was more credible.

Influence of Corporate Ability on Brand Hate

A high perceived CA refers to the capability of a company to professionally produce and deliver its outputs (Lin et al., 2011). Results from this study did not show that consumers show less brand hate when a company has the ability to produce quality products, compared to companies who have a low perceived CA.

No significant differences were found between the avoidance types on brand hate when the company had a high CA. In this case, the high CA protected the brand from brand hate although the brand was affected by product failure, identity mismatch, or moral doubts. This means that consumers believed the barometers where the company brand scored high on CA. Interestingly, other researchers found that consumers avoid brands when they have experienced that the brand is unable to produce high quality products (Lee, Motion, et al., 2009).

Moderating influence of Consumer Characteristics on Brand Hate

No different results were found of the influence of a weak CSP on brand hate for consumers with *high egoistic values*, compared to *low egoistic consumers*. This means that consumers who aim for maximizing their individual outcomes do not develop less brand hate when a company has a weak CSP. Previous research by Smith et al. (2010) stated otherwise, while they argue that these type of consumers do not base their purchase decision based on the CSP of a company, while they demand high quality products. It is possible that participants had trouble imagining Calmida as a real brand and no information on their CSP actions are known, thus the respondent scored average.

A weak CSP has not more influence on brand hate when consumers are *low or high altruistic*, meaning that the influence of a weak CSP did not have more influence on consumers who do not have high concern for the welfare of others (De Groot & Steg, 2007). Interestingly, it was expected that consumers who for example care about world peace and helping others would be more influenced by

a weak CSP on brand hate. It seems that the news articles in the scenarios were more credible than the barometers, and it is possible that respondents ignored the CSP scores.

Third, the influence of a weak CSP on brand hate was hypothesized stronger for consumers with *high biospheric values*, compared to consumers with *low biospheric values*. However, results showed no difference in the influence of a weak CSP on brand hate for low or high biospheric consumers. High biospheric consumers are known for their unity with nature, and respect for the earth. Therefore, it is a strange result, while CSP is about providing good circumstances in which a company produces. It is possible that respondents believed the moral avoidance scenario was more credible. Respondents most likely ignored the barometers, while the news article was more trustworthy to them. In addition, the fact that bad information about brands will be processed more thoroughly by consumers than good information, made the respondents skeptical.

The influence of a strong CA on brand hate is no different for consumers with *low egoistic values* compared to consumers with *high egoistic values*. It means that consumers who only care about maximizing their individual outputs do not develop less brand hate when the company has a strong CA, compared to low egoistic consumers. While CA refers to the ability of a company to produce high quality products, it was expected that consumers who demand a company to produce high quality products would develop more brand hate when the CA of a company is low. While the CA of the company is strong, as respondents could tell from the barometers, it is possible that participants forgave the brand for a one-time failure, the identity mismatch or the moral accusations.

It was expected that a strong CA had less influence on brand hate for consumers who have *high altruistic values*, however no differences between low and high altruistic consumers were found. Altruistic consumers care about the

welfare of others, thus it is expected that a strong CA has more influence on brand hate when consumers do not care for the welfare of others. As long as the company keeps producing high quality products these consumers are satisfied. It seems that respondents felt empathy for the girl with the exploded phone, as well for the employees who are treated badly. Therefore, these participants showed the same level of brand hate when the company has a strong CA.

Furthermore, it was expected that a strong CA had a lower influence on brand hate for consumers with *high biospheric values*. However, no difference between high and low biospheric consumers were found. High biospheric consumers care for preventing the environment and the work environment of the employees. For biospheric consumers producing high quality products comes second. It is possible that respondents, high or low biospheric, felt for the main characters in the scenarios, and therefore developed the same level of brand hate.

Marketing Implications

The findings of this study may help marketers and practitioners further in their investigation towards brand hate. While the topic of brand hate is still rising it is of grave importance that research towards the negative side of branding increases. It is just as important knowing why consumers do not want to purchase, as knowing what they do want to purchase (Banister & Hogg, 2001). An important question towards the topic of brand hate is why some people avoid certain brands even when their financial state allows them to purchase their products.

While moral avoidance was the strongest motivator for brand hate, it is important for companies behind a brand to distinguish themselves from moral doubts. When consumers believe that a brand's management policies has a negative effect on society, it can lead to brand avoidance or rejection. Companies should behave politically correct and avoid activities like exploitation. Furthermore, when consumers find out that the environment where the company produces is

questionable, and employees of the company gets treated badly, consumers will avoid the brand.

For companies it is important to have a good image, and to achieve a solid image companies have to gain a strong CSP. Consumers are more loyal and satisfied with companies when they give back to society (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). Companies with negative CSP will be avoided by consumers once negative news about the company reach them (Delmas & Cuerel Burbano, 2011). In general, bad information about brands will be processed more thoroughly by consumers than positive information (Baumeister et al., 2001). When companies have proven themselves able to produce quality products the public will forgive them if a product fails.

Limitations and further research

In this study a smartphone manufacturer was used as the brand of subject. A smartphone is a daily user product which nowadays everybody has. If more and different brands were used it is possible that this study showed different results. Different products like low vs. high involvement products, for example products consumers purchase on a daily basis vs. products consumers purchase infrequently. Low involvement products are for example bubble gum, and high involvement products could be a car or a washing machine. It is possible that consumers who have spent a lot of money on a big product develop more hatred towards a brand that disappoints them in many ways.

Furthermore, this study used a fictitious website and stimulus material, and a fictional brand to avoid brand preference. It is possible that consumers could not relate with the brand while it does not exist. The other brands used in this research were existing brands, and that could have been a distraction for participants in this study. In future research more fictitious brands could be used to avoid this distraction.

The study sample consists only of Dutch participants. Results of this study can therefore not be generalized. In future research multiple populations should be used that they can be examined for differences between for example cultures. A distinction between Eastern and Western cultures can be made. Eastern cultures are known for their collectivism, while Western cultures are famous for their individualistic cultures. It will nicely interact with the consumer characteristics.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Scales and items used in the study

<p>Brand hate</p> <p>I don't want anything to do with Calmida</p> <p>I cannot control my hatred for Calmida</p> <p>I would like to do something to hurt Calmida</p> <p>I have violent thoughts about Calmida</p> <p>Calmida is scum</p> <p>Calmida is awful</p> <p>I do not like Calmida</p> <p>I hate Calmida</p> <p>Calmida makes me nervous</p> <p>I'm disgusted by Calmida</p> <p>I'm totally angry about Calmida</p> <p>I don't tolerate Calmida and its company</p>	<p>Zeki & Romaya (2008)</p> <p>Salvatori (2007)</p>
<p>Experiential avoidance</p> <p>The performance of products of Calmida is poor</p> <p>The brand products are inconvenient</p> <p>I don't like this brand because I think I would be dissatisfied by this brand</p> <p>My hate for this brand is linked to the bad performance this product has</p>	<p>Lee et al. (2009)</p> <p>Salvatori (2007)</p>
<p>Identity avoidance</p> <p>The products of Calmida do not reflect who I am</p>	<p>Lee et al. (2009)</p>

<p>The products of Calmida do not fit my personality</p> <p>I don't want to be seen with Calmida</p> <p>This brand does not represent what I am</p> <p>This brand symbolizes the kind of person I would never wanted to be</p> <p>Moral avoidance</p> <p>In my opinion, Calmida acts irresponsible</p> <p>In my opinion, Calmida acts unethical</p> <p>In my opinion, Calmida violates moral standards</p> <p>The brand doesn't match my values and beliefs</p> <p>Corporate Social Performance</p> <p>Calmida supports good causes</p> <p>Calmida behaves responsibly regarding the environment</p> <p>Corporate Ability</p> <p>Calmida develops innovative products and services</p> <p>Calmida offers high-quality products</p> <p>Calmida offers products with a good price-quality ratio</p> <p>Value Orientation</p> <p><i>Egoistic value orientation</i></p> <p>Social Power</p> <p>Wealth</p> <p>Authority</p> <p>Influential</p> <p>Ambitious</p> <p><i>Altruistic value orientation</i></p>	<p>Lee et al. (2009)</p> <p>Berens et al. (2005)</p> <p>Berens et al. (2005)</p> <p>Groot & Steg (2007)</p>
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<p>Equality</p> <p>A World of Peace</p> <p>Social Justice</p> <p>Helpful</p> <p><i>Biospheric value orientation</i></p> <p>Preventing Pollution</p> <p>Respecting the earth</p> <p>Unity with nature</p> <p>Protecting the Environment</p>	
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