BRAND NEGATIVITY: A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ANTI-BRAND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Author Details

Laurence Dessart
HEC Liège, Management School of the University of Liège, Liège, Belgium
Tel: +32 4 2327251
laurence.dessart@uliege.be

Cleopatra Veloutsou
Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK
Tel: +44 141 3304055
cleopatra.veloutsou@glasgow.ac.uk

Anna Morgan-Thomas
Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK
Tel: +44 141 3302548
anna.morgan-thomas@glasgow.ac.uk

Accepted for Publication: European Journal of Marketing, May 2020

BRAND NEGATIVITY: A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ANTI-BRAND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Abstract

Purpose: This paper focuses on the phenomena of negative brand relationships and emotions to evidence how such relationships transpose into willingness to participate in collective actions in anti-brand communities.

Design/methodology/approach: An online survey was carried out, targeting Facebook anti-brand communities, dedicated to sharing negativity towards technology products. A total of 300 members of these communities participated in the study.

Findings: The study shows that the two dimensions of negative brand relationship (negative emotional connection and two-way communication) lead to community participation in anti-brand communities, through the mediating role of social approval and oppositional loyalty. Anti-brand community growth is supported by members' intentions to recommend the group and is the result of their participation.

Research limitations/implications: The study's focus on technology brands calls for further research on other brand types and categories, and the inclusion of other independent variables should be considered to extend understanding of collective negativity in anti-brand communities.

Practical implications: The paper provides insight to brand managers on the ways to manage negativity around their brand online and understand the role that brand communities play in this process.

Originality/value: The paper proposes the first integrative view of brand negativity, encompassing emotions and behaviors of consumers as individuals and as members of a collective, which allows understanding of the dynamics of anti-branding and highlights the mechanisms that facilitate anti-brand community expansion.

Keywords: anti-branding, anti-brand community, brand relationships, brand community

Introduction

The proliferation of collective consumer movements, rooted in anti-consumption (Hogg et al., 2009) and the accompanying rise in negative emotions towards brands, are key features of the contemporary branding landscape (Romani et al., 2012). Research approaches brand negativity, or negative brand relationships, using terms such as brand avoidance (Grégoire et al., 2009; Japutra et al., 2018), rejection of brand hegemony (Cromie & Ewing, 2009), brand dislike (Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015; Dalli et al., 2006), brand boycott (Balabanis, 2013), or brand hate (Bryson et al., 2013, Zarantonello et al., 2018; Fetscherin, 2019). With very few exceptions (Wong et al., 2018), this research focuses on negative emotions and behavior against products and services that consumers express as independent individuals and as members of a collective separately. From the brand management perspective, the different themes share a concern about the harmful potential of anti-brand emotions and behaviors and studies emphasize negative consequences including consumer revenge (Hegner et al., 2017), brand sabotage (Grégoire et al., 2009) or loss of brand strength (Cova & D'Antone, 2016).

The power of negative consumer actions targeting brands is a significant concern because opposition has a much stronger effect than support (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Negativity can be harmful not only to targeted brands but by also having wider repercussions on the broader marketing activity (Balabanis, 2013). Negative emotions towards brands can be of different intensity ranging from brand dislike to brand hate, depending on the level of passion (Fetscherin

et al., 2019). In the most severe instances, negative affect leads to brand hate, which is the foundation of negative consumer-brand relationships, a passionate negative bond with the brand (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014) and the strongest form of emotional opposition to a brand (Bryson et al., 2013; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

When viewed from the collective context, emotions individuals have towards a brand are related to their willingness to engage in groups that allow them to articulate their emotions. Anti-brand communities are groupings of people who have negative feelings towards a brand and self-select to join together to voice their antipathy to the brand. Brand community participation is driven by consumers' desire to find other likeminded individuals in terms of brand interest, to interact, and to be socially approved as members of the group (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Popp et al., 2016; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Similarly, membership to groups articulating strong negative feelings towards a brand allows consumers to develop feelings of belonging (Osuna-Ramirez et al., 2019). While brand communities can greatly benefit brands (Algesheimer et al., 2005), anti-brand communities bear strong harmful potential, particularly in highly empowered and connected online settings (Kucuk, 2008). However, one of the most striking features of current research related to the anti-branding phenomenon is a sharp disconnect between the treatment of consumers acting independently (e.g., Grégoire et al., 2009) and as members of collectives (e.g., Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). There is limited understanding concerning how individuals' feelings and behaviors evolve from the individual pursuit of negativity to participating in collective actions against brands.

The disconnect in the study of individuals as independent entities and as members of a collective in anti-brand communities is surprising, for multiple reasons. Participation in anti-brand communities stems from individual affects and behaviors and the link between the two seems to explain the widespread engagement of consumers in collective actions and the seemingly growing importance of these movements (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017). Past studies have shown how detrimental strong negativity in the form of brand hate can be (Kähr et al., 2016), calling for a better understanding of collective negativity towards brands and its causes (Cova & D'Antone, 2016). Since brand negativity is detrimental to the brand (Alba & Lutz, 2013), it seems imperative to understand how strong negative feelings move from affecting consumers as individuals acting independently to joining others and developing collective behavior (Bryson et al., 2013). Such an understanding is important because groups such as anti-brand communities are a clear manifestation of the rising rejection of brand hegemony (Cromie & Ewing, 2009) and market dominance (Holt, 2002). Finally, contrasted with the significant volume of research that addresses the positive impact of communities of fans on brands (e.g., Algesheimer et al., 2005; Laroche et al. 2013) the dark side of brand communities clearly deserves more attention (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; 2010).

The present study examines negativity towards brands by framing the concept as a collective phenomenon that underpins the existence of anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). This paper focuses on the impact of individual negative relationships between consumers and brands on consumers´ willingness to form groups to manifest their negativity towards brands (Awasthi et. al. 2012). Building on the emerging theory of negative brand relationships (Park et al., 2013), and going further than the approach focusing on individual behaviors, the paper argues that participation in an anti-brand community captures the willingness to engage in collective brand animosity, resulting from an individual's negative relationship with a brand. The paper aims to address the following research questions: (1) how do individual consumer-brand relationships impact anti-brand community participation; and, (2) how do individual anti-brand community members contribute to the proliferation of negativity towards brands through

anti-brand community recommendation. To achieve these goals, the study uses a unique data set of primary quantitative data collected from online anti-brand communities targeted at multinational corporate brands in the technology sector.

This work extends the current research on brand opposition and brand community in several important ways. The key contribution concerns an integrative view of negativity that concurrently encompasses emotions and behaviors of consumers as independent entities and as group members. By evidencing how the brand negativity consumers experience as individuals transposes into willingness to participate in collective actions in anti-brand communities, the findings help to explain the dynamics of anti-branding and highlight the mechanisms that facilitate community expansion and growth. Such insights enhance the understanding of negative relationships from both an individual and collective perspective and, in turn, allow to better predict their short- and long-term impact on brands (Awasthi et al., 2012).

The paper opens with a review of negative brand emotions and behaviors and anti-brand communities. The next section integrates research insights and develops research hypotheses into a conceptual model. The methodology and results are followed by discussion, theoretical implications and managerial recommendations.

Negative brand emotions and behaviors

Negative brand emotions can manifest through rejection, dislike or hatred depending on the strength of the emotion and possible associated actions or behavioral intensions (Alvarez & Fournier, 2013). In terms of the terminology adopted to explain the negative emotions, and in particular negative brand relationships, there is no clear consensus in the literature. Some researchers use the term brand hate to capture various negative emotions from simple "distancing" or "devaluation" of the brand to "frustration" and intense "anger" (Kucuk, 2018). Others argue that brand hate can take an active or passive form incorporating, on the one hand, anger, contempt, and disgust and, on the other, fear, disappointment, shame, and dehumanization of the brand (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Brand hate has also been conceptualized as one emotion incorporating multiple sub-dimensions and overall rejection of the brand (Hegner et al., 2017). Recent studies have used the label "negative brand emotions" to encapsulate various negative sentiments, namely: sadness, sorrowfulness, distress, irritation, anger, annoyance, offence, and depression (Wong et al., 2018). Other conceptions of negative relational emotions have highlighted the level of negative passion and suggested that negative emotions can take the form of brand dislike or brand hate (Fetscherin et al., 2019). Brand dislike, is the feeling of displeasure, antipathy or aversion towards the brand (Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015) and is negative emotion with limited passion (Fetscherin et al., 2019). Brand hate is a stronger, passionate, and more complex negative feeling (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014; Bryson et al., 2013; Fetscherin et al., 2019), the extreme negative emotion that consumers feel toward a brand (Bryson et al., 2016). Where all the literature tends to agree is that the strength of emotions can vary for different individuals; furthermore, the same person can go through different emotional states and their negative feelings towards a brand may evolve over time (Zarantonello et al., 2018; Fetscherin, 2019; Fetscherin et al., 2019).

Negativity towards brands can be expressed through behaviors that consumers may manifest as individual endeavor aimed at a particular brand directly or through communal effort where individuals contribute to the effort of a group (table 1). Consumers can act individually by complaining, avoiding a brand, or seeking brand revenge, all of which are proactive behaviors (Romani et al., 2012; Zarantonello et al., 2016). By contrast, individual passivity involves brand

avoidance (Lee et al., 2009), where a consumer rejects the brand and either withdraws from interactions with the brand (Grégoire et al., 2009; Rindell et al., 2014; Hegner et al., 2017) or terminates their purchasing behavior (Johnson et al. 2011). Frequently, negativity acquires a communal dimension where consumers involve others by spreading negative word of mouth (WoM) (Romani et al., 2012; Ullrich & Brunner, 2015, Hegner et al., 2017), boycotting a brand (Albrecht et al., 2013; Balabanis, 2013; Klein et al, 2004) or unifying with other consumers who also have negative feelings towards a brand. Groups of consumers that express negativity towards brands are referred to as anti-brand communities (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Recent advances on customer-brand engagement also show that consumers may seek contact and interaction with brands they have negative feelings towards (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Similar to positive emotions, negativity can thus involve the need to exchange information and stay informed about the latest brand news and learn about it, which is a communicative action that anti-brand community participation can support (Popp et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2018).

In contrast to a significant body of research concerning individual perspectives on anti-brand emotions and behaviors, research on negative emotions and collective anti-brand behavior is limited (Albrecht et al., 2013; Balabanis, 2013; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Klein et al., 2004; Popp et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2018). Past studies have tended to emphasize individual-level antecedents and outcomes of brand negativity (table 1). The former include self-esteem (Hogg & Banister, 2001), incongruence (Bryson et al., 2011; Hegner et al, 2017; Lee et al., 2009), or moral and ethical considerations (Rindell et al., 2014; Romani et al., 2015) whereas the latter encompass brand avoidance (Khan and Lee, 2014), or brand rejection (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). To date, only a handful of studies have attempted to examine anti-brand community behavior (Wong et al., 2018). Overall the behavior of individuals as members of groups seems largely overlooked (Hoffman & Lee, 2016).

The other feature of the extant research is its emphasis on the behavioral dimension of negativity, in contrast to its emotional dimension (table 1). Studies seem to implicitly or explicitly focus on the implications of negativity for behaviors (e.g., non-purchase, avoidance) and tend not to acknowledge the broader relationships with brand or other consumers which may extend beyond these behaviors and may also pertain to emotions such as hate and dislike (Dalli et al. 2006; Bryson et al., 2013; Romani et al., 2015).

Looking at antecedents of negativity (table 1), there is also an emphasis on drivers associated with transactions such as unmet expectations, dissatisfaction, and problems related to product experience (Bryson, et al., 2013; Grégoire et al., 2009; Dalli et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2009). All the above reflect relationships in a consumption context. While transactional concerns are relevant, online anti-brand sites are not usually about seeking a solution to a transactional issue (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Emotional and communications aspects of brand relationships (Veloutsou, 2007; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009) amount to a substantive volume of customer-brand interactions in online brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013).

Table 1 about here

Anti-brand communities

Empowered consumers can form anti-brand collectives that criticize, parody, and expose the actions and intentions of brands (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Embedded in the wider anti-branding movement (Holt, 2002), anti-brand communities are groupings of people who have negative feelings towards a brand and who join together to voice their disapproval of corporate

actions. Such groupings emancipate consumer activists (Kozinets, 2002; Thompson & Arsel, 2004) and frequently target top global corporate brands (Kucuk, 2015; Wong et al., 2018; Osuna-Ramirez et al., 2019), such as Starbucks (Thompson & Arsel 2004), Wal-Mart and McDonald's (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006), Nike or General Electrics (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Endemic to the rise of empowered consumers, anti-brand communities allow consumers to express and share negativity toward brands (Awasthi et al., 2012).

Anti-brand communities can form offline or online (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010); for instance, they can be embedded in dedicated anti-branding websites (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009) or in social networks (Popp et al., 2016). They have all the characteristics of brand communities (Popp et al., 2016) and fulfil similar purposes. Hateful consumers use anti-brand communities as loci for interactive engagement centered on the hated brand (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014).

In general, few studies have examined online anti-brand communities. Empirical examinations have tended to rely on qualitative designs with data primarily collected through observation, ethnography and netnography (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006, Popp et al., 2016) and quantitative studies that confirm the various insights are only slowly emerging. Considering the antecedents of community participation, research has emphasized individual (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Popp et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2018) and social motives (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006, Popp et al., 2016) and has tended not to look into the nexus of consumer-brand relationships. Few exceptions addressing consumer brand relationships do so from a transactional perspective (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009) incorporating only some hateful emotions and behaviors (Popp et al., 2016). While some negative emotions have been examined as antecedents of anti-brand community citizenship behavior (Wong et al., 2018), past scholarship tends to defect from emotions, communications, and engagement (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014) to the benefit of transactional aspects. Furthermore, it generally overlooks individual negative relationships with a brand as drivers of collective anti-brand action. The very question of how negative brand relationships, formed between a brand and an individual consumer, transpose into participation in collective anti-brand actions requires more attention, given the context of collectively empowered consumer resistance (Dalli et al., 2006).

Research Focus

The current study builds on the concept of negative brand relationships (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017), derived from consumer-brand relationships research. Specifically, the study elaborates on Park et al., (2013) who expand the traditional notion of positive brand relationships (attachment), to include the negative side (aversion). Relationships with negative valence depend, in part, on the emotions felt by consumers toward brands and can be represented by negative emotions (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013; Zarantonelo et al., 2016; Hegner et al., 2017; Fetscherin et al., 2019). To address the multidimensional aspect of individual negative brand relationships the paper uses the Veloutsou (2007) conceptualization of consumer brand relationships, which draws from social psychology, philosophy and marketing, and suggests that the consumer brand relationship has two aspects: emotion and communication. The emotional aspect involves the negative feelings toward the brand, and communication is the willingness to engage in two-way interaction where consumers receive communications from and send communications to the brand (Veloutsou, 2007).

A critical headway within the brand relationship literature concerns the proposition that relational issues with brands relate to the formation of dissident consumer communities (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Cova & White, 2010) and that individual negative brand relationships

and a group phenomenon of an anti-brand community are closely correlated (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010; Cova & D'Antone, 2016). Thus, individual negative brand relationships and the collective manifestation of behavior through anti-brand community participation share a common strong denominator in the form of a negative relationship (possibly hate) (Zarantonello et al., 2016), and their interdependence needs to be studied to understand the mechanisms whereby individual brand hate translates into collective behaviors (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

This work addresses an important gap in the anti-brand literature: the role of individual negative brand relationships in anti-brand community participation. The link between them is yet to be explored; this is surprising given its prominence in the positive brand community literature. Indeed, brand community studies show that brand relationship (McAlexander et al., 2002), brand loyalty, (Algesheimer et al., 2005), knowledge, passion and trust (Füller et al., 2008) are all determinants of brand community participation. The assertion that positive consumer-brand relationships and brand community participation are linked is amply supported. Extending this insight into anti-brand consumer behavior and negative individual consumer-brand relationships significantly influences community-based consumer-to-consumer relationships in anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010). Negative brand relationships, particularly those that bear extreme negative emotions like hate, can result in affiliation and participation in anti-brand communities. The link between individual negative brand relationships and community participation can be explained by psycho-social phenomena that help the consumer assert his/her identity as a brand hater in comparison to in- and out-groups (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Social identity theory, which has been thoroughly examined in the brand community literature, provides a relevant framework to understand the link between the individual and collective levels (e.g., Kuo and Hou, 2017). By achieving social approval in an in-group (of haters) and further asserting brand negativity through oppositional loyalty (O'Guinn and Muniz, 2005, Kuo and Hou, 2017), consumers may legitimize their individual-level negativity and ground their community participation.

Additionally, the role of anti-brand community participation in the promotion of the community to outsiders has received limited attention. The paper seeks to examine how anti-brand community participation can foster community recommendation intentions and thus impact individuals beyond the community. This recommendation behavior is particularly important to understand because community recommendation can help the community grow (Casaló et al., 2008), and contribute to the exposure of the brand (Koh & Kim, 2004) which, may be hatred. Recommendation of the community can thus reinforce a strong negative brand relationship, spread it, and the harm to the brand can be increased. In brand communities, participation can result in members' intention to recommend the community because they feel morally invested in its welfare (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Consequently, the relevant question is whether anti-brand community members also feel invested in a sense of moral obligation after participating in the community (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006) to the point of wanting to recruit more members.

As a result of the current gap in the research and the recent calls for greater attention to the causes of anti-consumption phenomena such as anti-brand communities (Hoffman & Lee, 2016), this paper explores the causal impact of negativity anchored at an individual level (brand relationships and oppositional loyalty) on their collective anti-brand feelings and behaviors as community members (social approval, community participation, and community participation). The conceptual arguments have been formalized into a model, depicted below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

Hypotheses development

Negative emotions in brand relationships are likely to generate increased oppositional loyalty, that is, loyalty to brands competing with the object of hatred (Japutra et al., 2018). Oppositional loyalty entails the premise that love and opposition go hand in hand, that love for a brand increases the propensity to oppose competing brands, and there is recent evidence that brand communities reinforce such feelings (Kuo & Hou, 2017; Marticotte et al., 2016) and research implies that this could be the case for anti-brand community members (Popp et al., 2016). One consequence of a negative relationship is preference for the competition, as examples of alter-brand communities or counter-brand communities suggest (Cova & White, 2010; Cromie & Ewing, 2009). Having negative feelings for, and interactive communication of a negative nature with a brand can thus lead to increased loyalty to another brand. There are reasons to expect that the more consumers interact with the negatively-evaluated brand, the more they find out about it, the more they have material to fuel and reason their negativity, and develop a higher loyalty for the competing brand (Thompson & Sinha, 2008). Recent findings on the formation of oppositional loyalty suggest that having more information and feedback about one of the rival brands positively influences the likelihood of developing oppositional loyalty to a competing brand (Marticotte et al., 2016). The existence of the willingness to communicate with the brand as part of their relationship with it is thus expected to generate more interest for competing brands.

Hypothesis 1: Negative brand relationships, specifically (a) emotional connection and (b) communications with the brand, positively impact oppositional loyalty.

Since negative emotions towards a brand can represent a form of resistance towards the market and common market ideologies that polarize (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), consumers engaged in negative emotional brand relationships may seek assistance and support from a reference group for social approval of their choices (Cova & D'Antone, 2016). The individual negative brand relationship may push consumers towards legitimation through social approval seeking. The paper conceptualizes this search for social approval as the act of looking for approval, or recognition, from other members of the anti-brand community (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

Modern consumers in the digital age are keen to share feedback, good or bad, with brands, and online anti-branding is often associated with the communication aspect of the relationship, where consumers voice their disagreement (Kucuk 2015). Negative communication may take a form of activism, which is often derived from the need for social approval and recognition as (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). The opportunity to vent issues, communicate strong emotion, or seek information provides a foundation for two-sided communication with a negatively-assessed brand (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014), which can fuel a need for social recognition from the community. Negative relationships are thus likely to increase a consumer's search for social outlets and recognition.

Hypothesis 2: Negative brand relationships, specifically (a) emotional connection and (b) communications with the brand, positively impact social approval.

Oppositional loyalty is an under-researched form of counter-identification with a brand other than the hated aspect and a marker of in- and out-group identification (Thompson & Sinha, 2008). The concept signals preference for another brand, thus increasing propensity of

identification with the anti-brand community (Popp et al., 2016). Just like loyalty to a brand can increase online brand community participation (Brodie et al., 2013), oppositional loyalty to another loved brand is an important aspect of brand community members' consciousness of a kind (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Oppositional brand loyalty is likely to push consumers to actively participate and identify with the community of opposers, and subsequently engage with it online and, in extreme cases, even lead to the development of anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2006; Kuo and Feng, 2013).

Engagement and community identification represent key facets of anti-brand community participation. Community engagement captures the interactive behaviors of community members (Algesheimer et al., 2005) and, although engagement is often associated with positive feelings (Brodie et al., 2013), it can also be representative of relationships of negative valence (Hollenbeck & Chen, 2014). Community engagement has been recognized as a core concept in understanding online brand community functioning and capturing members' participation in a holistic manner, as it represents cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets of consumer interactions with a brand and a community (Dessart et al., 2015, 2016). Community identification reflects the degree of similarity between the consumer's own self-concept and that of other members of the group (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Identity concerns are important for anti-brand activists (Lee et al., 2009) as is the identity-formation aspect of community participation.

Hypothesis 3: Oppositional loyalty positively impacts community participation through (a) community engagement and (b) community identification.

Customers who seek social approval are more likely to become active community participants because actual social approval is more likely to occur for people who engage in the community. The connection with like-minded consumers is likely to provide a moral and emotional support and a spiritual harmony, which enables the personal development of the individual (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). By supporting people in their goals and ideas, anti-brand communities provide a liberating environment where consumers can create their own consumption identities (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). Indeed, in anti-consumption contexts, self-consciousness (disposition toward the self as perceived by others) is known to have an impact on anti-consumption patterns (Iyers & Muncy, 2009). Specifically, a need for social approval by others is likely to increase members' community engagement and identification (Algesheimer et al., 2005), and brand community research shows that gaining social acceptance and approval is one of the key drivers of community participation (Dholakia et al., 2004). The search for social approval may be an antecedent of anti-brand community participation as represented by engagement and identification.

Hypothesis 4: Social approval positively impacts community participation through (a) community engagement and (b) community identification.

Even the early literature on brand communities suggests that community identification is a good predictor of brand community engagement (i.e., Algesheimer et al., 2005). The relationship between these two variables is also suggested in anti-brand communities (Popp et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 5: Community identification positively influences community engagement.

Participation in the community is likely to encourage loyalty to the community and thus generate intentions to recommend the community to members of one's network that are not part

of the community (Algesheimer et al., 2005) or anti-brand community (Popp et al., 2016). The community spill-over effect is a common outcome of social group participation (Algesheimer et al., 2005) whereby members are encouraged to share about their center of interest and help the community thrive by recommending it positively. By recommending the community to outsiders, members create a network effect and ensure future participation and community survival (Casaló et al., 2008; Hsu & Lu, 2007) and give access to negative brand-related interaction to an increased number of people who are interested. Community participation often leads to members recommending the community because it can also give them a certain status in the community and show their influence (Trusov et al., 2010).

Hypothesis 6: (a) Community engagement and (b) community identification positively impact community recommendation intentions.

Methodology

A total of 30 items capture the seven constructs used in the study (see table 3) and all items are measured using seven-point Likert scales. Negative brand relationships are operationalized using two constructs (emotional connection and communication) that measure an individual's relationship with a brand. The scale was adapted from Veloutsou (2007) and, to reflect the negative emotional connection, the study has reversed the originally positively valenced emotional connection scale. Items that measure the communication part of the relationship have been adopted from the same source, retaining the positive valence. Social approval is operationalized using Veloutsou and Moutinho's (2009) scale. Three concepts are adopted from Algesheimer et al. (2005): (1) community engagement; (2) community identification; and, (3) the two dimensions of community recommendation intention. To adapt measures, the researchers first extensively discussed the wording and then asked for feedback from five academics.

Failing to identify in the literature a scale for oppositional loyalty at the stage of the instrument development, the study mirrored an approach adopted by other scholars (Kuo & Feng, 2013; Kuo & Hou, 2017). The items capturing oppositional loyalty were developed for the purpose of this study using a systematic process. An initial list of items was developed following the search of literature on brand loyalty and extensive discussion. To secure content validity, this list of items was scrutinized through separate discussions with five academic experts who have extensively published on brand loyalty in the context of brand management. The scrutiny involved three rounds of corrections where iterations were made based on feedback and where the revised items were again scrutinized until each of the experts was satisfied with the items and the scale was finalized. Table 3 provides evidence concerning its statistical properties (reliability and validity).

The study focuses on participants of anti-brand communities hosted on Facebook. Anti-brand community members represent a difficult to access population because they remain partially hidden and are not officially listed (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; Wright, 2005). To access such participants, the study adopted a two-step sampling procedure, involving first targeting the communities of interest followed by sampling individuals within these communities. A similar approach has proven useful in the social media and brand community literature where community members cannot be accessed through means other than the community itself (Dessart et al., 2016). To sample communities, one of the authors compiled a list of the 35 largest Facebook based anti-brand communities in the technology sector and contacted their

community managers. To protect the anonymity of the anti-brand communities, the names of the brands under attack are not mentioned in this study.

The sampling focused on communities related to multinational corporate brands selling technology products. These brands are leading consumer technology brands offering hardware, software and telecommunications products. They are all listed in the top 20 Interbrand 2018 ranking (Interbrand, 2018). Multinationals attract the largest number of followers but are also most prone to consumer boycott (Balabanis, 2013) and negativity online (Rogers et al., 2017). Technology products seem a valid focus because their purchase entails a relatively high level of involvement together with significant financial cost. In addition, the frequent change in both the depth and breadth of product lines attracts significant consumer interest and attention thus providing a vibrant context for the study of negative emotions (Lam & Shankar, 2014).

Several procedural steps were taken to ensure community participation. The initial contact with brand community managers attempted to gain the trust of the community and reassure about the purpose of the study. The brand community managers were contacted using the messaging function of the community, which allows direct contact with community hosts. The communities were selected on a purposive basis (Akrout and Nagy, 2018). In total, five community managers of anti-technology brands agreed to post the link to the survey on their Facebook group. Following a short period of acculturation where one of the authors interacted with the community to gain its trust (Casaló, Flavián & Guinalíu, 2013), the survey links were posted on group feeds. Though all the members of the anti-brand communities could access the link, the authors could not ensure that everyone would see it.

The study data were collected through an online questionnaire hosted on SurveyMonkey. The managers of the five anti-brand communities agreed to post the survey to 17,317 individuals. In total, 472 community members initiated the questionnaire on a self-selected basis (Breitshol et al., 2015; Demiray and Burnaz, 2019) and the survey response rate amounted to 2.73% for the first question. The survey further secured community participation of the respondents by asking the name of the brand community that redirected them to the study. This response rate is acceptable because it exceeds the 2% click-through rate typically reported on social media posts (Salesforce, 2013). After analysis of missing values and deletion of invalid questionnaires, a sample of 300 respondents, 63% of the initial 472, was retained for further analysis. This final number allows having a participant to item ratio of 10:1, which is largely above the commonly accepted minimum of 5:1 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1967).

The study sample encompasses a diverse group of respondents (table 2). Male respondents dominate the sample, amounting to some 87% of the total, which can be explained owing to several factors. While it was not possible to assess the gender-representativeness of our sample with respect of the community populations, two considerations lead us to consider that our sample is adequate. Firstly, while community membership is in constant evolution on Facebook, an observation of the member lists of the communities that do display it (it is sometimes hidden, according to privacy rules of the groups) shows that membership of anti-brand tech communities is largely male. Anonymity of the respondents, of community members and difficulty to ascertain gender based on name and profile picture, did not allow us to get a perfect count, unfortunately. Second, past studies also verify that studies on online brand communities related to technology products gather more male respondents. For instance, Jang et al. (2008) investigated Korean phone operators and 78.6 % of their sample is male. In exploratory studies as well, male seem to be much more engaged and numerous in tech communities, as shown in Apple Newton study (Muniz and Schau, 2005) While it may be due

to a response bias, leading men to be keener to answer to our study, we believe this gender unbalance in the results is representative of the composition of the communities rather than of a response bias.

Table 2 about here

Results

The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS (Byrne, 2013). The empirical model includes seven constructs measured with 30 indicators linked by 11 hypotheses. Analysis followed a two-step procedure where the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) precedes SEM and where model fit, validity and reliability are assessed using a range of statistics including parameter estimates and fit indicators such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA and CMIN (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012).

Step 1: CFA. The CFA model involving seven constructs shows adequate fit as reflected by the absolute, incremental and parsimony fit indexes with Chi-square = 669.442 (df: 354; $p < 0.01$), CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, CMIN = 1.89 and RMSEA = 0.05. In terms of measure reliability, the estimates reflect acceptable internal consistency and discriminant validity. More specifically, Cronbach's Alphas are all above 0.75 with high inter-items correlations (above 0.50) for the items representing each construct within the model. All AVE values are above 0.50 (see diagonal of table 4), supporting the internal consistency of the variables (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 3 about here

Discriminant validity is evidenced in several ways. First, the correlations between the latent constructs are measured. Additionally, the AVE of each construct is compared with all the squared correlations involving this construct, as suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981). Further evidence of discriminant validity is shown by the fact that all AVEs are greater than all the paired-squared correlations related to it (on the top half of the table). MSVs and ASVs were also greater than the AVE (Table 4).

Table 4 about here

Step 2: Structural model estimation. The structural model includes all seven study constructs and 11 hypotheses. The fit statistics for the structural model show acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2006) with values similar to the CFA model, (a Chi-square = 698.141 (df: 362, $p < 0.01$), CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, CMIN = 1.92 and RMSEA = 0.05). To test the robustness of the model, we carried out two types of additional analyses. Firstly, the two estimated bootstrap models (maximum likelihood and Bollen-Stine) are used to check against violations of multivariate normality. Both models confirm the substantive findings (Table 5). Secondly, the direct pathways between model constructs to test for mediation are also estimated. The direct pathways not included in the models were insignificant (details available in supplementary files).

The results provide support for several research hypotheses (Table 5). In particular, H1a concerning oppositional loyalty is supported but H_{1b} is not supported and the model fails to confirm that communication relationship influences oppositional loyalty ($R^2 = 0.11$). The results support the relationship between negative emotional relationship and communication with social approval with H_{2a} and H_{2b} ($R^2 = 0.18$). The data seem to confirm that oppositional

loyalty impacts community identification, in support of H_{3b} but does not seem to impact community engagement and H_{3a} is not supported. Considering the relationship between social approval and anti-brand community participation, the results show a positive influence on both community engagement and community identification, thus providing support for H_{4a} and H_{4b}. The data also seem to validate the role of community identification in community participation. Overall, community engagement has an R^2 of 0.43 and community identification of 0.54, indicating that they are both relatively well explained by their antecedents. Considering the outcome of anti-brand community participation, the recommendation intention is influenced by both community engagement and identification in support for H6 and H7, with an R^2 of 0.38.

Table 5 about here

Discussion

The current paper aimed to empirically examine how individual negative brand relationships translates into their participation in communities and community dynamics in anti-brand communities. The study uses a unique set of primary survey data collected from members of anti-brand communities dedicated to the negativity towards multinational technology brands and hosted on Facebook. The findings depict a complex set of relationships and indicate that participation in an anti-brand community, focused on a technology brand, strongly depends on the individual influences of negative consumer-brand relationships. In particular, the results highlight the role of the negative relationship with the brand on community participation. These relationships feed into anti-brand community participation and identification through the mediating role of social approval and oppositional loyalty to another brand. Anti-brand community members are motivated to recommend the community to non-members, which might help contribute to the growth and sustenance of the community.

The findings advance the current research on negative brand emotions and brand communities in several important ways. The most important contribution concerns the empirical verification of the link between individual negative brand relationships and anti-brand community participation (Cova & D'Antone, 2016), which can be manifestations of brand hate (Zarantonello et al., 2016). This finding shows that individuals motivated by negative relationships with a technology brand are likely to engage in collective membership in the form of community participation. Individual negative relationships thus transpose into social membership and take a social dimension. Negative relationships, therefore, extend beyond the individual to include other individuals with similar feelings (Romani et al., 2015) and to affect how consumers relate to other brands (Thompson & Sinha, 2008). In essence, the paper extends individual-focused motivations for negative brand relationship and negative brand relationship behaviors (Bryson et al., 2013; Zarantonello et al., 2016) and advances the relational collective of other individuals and other brands in negative brand relationships. Echoing social movement theory (Kozinets & Handelmann, 2004), the study suggests an important link between an individual's negative consumer brand relationship and community affiliation. The study positions anti-brand community participation as a modern way to counter market dynamics in hyper-connected and networked online environments. In such contexts, consumers are embedded in complex ecosystems of brand hate, involving a number of other actors and entities (the hated brand, competing brands, and other brand haters) whose feelings and actions influence one another (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013). The study shows that when technology brand hate first emerges in the form of negative brand relationships, behaviors and attitudes develop in the form of oppositional loyalty for a competing brand and social approval

seeking, resulting in anti-brand community engagement and identification, in the community context.

Parting with the individual-bias in past anti-branding research, the paper further offers a broader contribution to the anti-consumption stream and places brand relationships at the forefront of brand-focused anti-consumption actions. Specifically, the study moves from an existing transactional focus of consumer brand-relationships, where the experiences with the product or service (Dalli et al., 2006) or failed expectations (Lee et al., 2009) served to justify brand hate or avoidance (Bryson et al., 2013). Instead, the paper argues that anti-branding behavior is not necessarily founded on experiential or ideological incongruence (Lee et al., 2009) but can also be driven by feelings of unease at the idea of buying the brand, emotional distance and lack of emotional complementarity. These are congruent with the notion of being displeased or embarrassed by a brand (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Anti-brand community members also join these groups because, despite their negative feelings, or rather alongside these feelings, they enjoy being kept informed about the company news, they seek information about it and do not mind sharing their views with it, too. With consumer empowerment and their increasing control over brand meaning (Fournier & Avery, 2011), anti-brand communities have the power to satisfy the brand hater's need for brand-related information, which has been re-conditioned and manipulated to provide a satirical meaning and consumers' own views.

Lastly, the study provides an important contribution to the anti-branding literature by showing that negative brand relationships with opposed technology brands lead to anti-brand community participation through the mediating impact of social approval and oppositional loyalty. Negative brand relationships have a direct impact on the need for social approval and oppositional loyalty as expected, whereas the communication aspect of the relationship only impacts the need for social approval. The fact that it does not influence oppositional loyalty before joining the community could be explained by the fact that it is, in effect, the information shared and acquired through the community of the hater that will truly increase oppositional loyalty as a result (Thompson & Sinha, 2008; Marticotte et al., 2016). It might be worth considering that there is a feedback loop between oppositional loyalty and anti-brand community participation.

Although the specific links between the variables in this study have a focus on negatively valanced elements, the findings indicate that anti-brand communities may have more similarities than differences with brand communities in the way they are formed and function. As for the brand communities (Black & Veloutsou, 2017), the members of anti-brand communities choose: (a) to join the collective to find and interact with other like-minded individuals and share their common stand towards the brand; and, (b) the type and intensity of their engagement in this community. What is also notable is that members with a higher degree of participation act as recruiters of new members for both brand and anti-brand communities.

Managerial implications

From a practical standpoint, the study provides insight into the attitudes and behaviors of technology brand opposers, what drives them to engage in collective participation, and their ensuing recommendation behavior. Similar to love, hatred may be conceived as a broader social phenomenon that extends beyond the individual consumer – targeted brand nexus. Negative emotions and anti-brand behaviors are shared and social, and the sharing of hate in an online collective setting has a higher viral potential and harm for the brand (Kähr et al., 2016). This

has implications for technology brands wishing to understand and possibly control negative WoM in anti-brand communities, and thus proliferation of negative comments. The findings suggest that negative brand relationships can also be of an emotional nature and dependent upon the information communicated across channels that is not controlled by the brand. An emotional and communication aspect of a relationship can exist and lead to anti-brand community behavior, even when a hater does not consume a brand. Considering management's inability to fully control the reputation of a brand online (Fournier & Avery, 2011), and given that non-consumers can lead the discussion around brand hate, brands need to take action to monitor existing negative relationships and assess their likelihood to transform into group participation and recommendation. Moreover, given the impact of oppositional loyalty, brands with strong competitive positioning and market presence may be more prone to be the objects of negative brand relationships and negative brand related behaviors (Awashthi et al., 2012; Rogers et al., 2017). The role of social approval in the negativity towards the brand process is also noteworthy and impactful. Since the findings highlight that affiliation with an anti-brand community is strengthened by social approval seeking, brands are advised to control for social influence because when a brand falls out of favor, the influencing consumers might have a wider impact over consumers that are less strong minded.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study has several limitations. In terms of the data collection, by focusing only on technology brands, the study's scope is limited and future research may extend the findings to other product categories to assess potential idiosyncrasies within the technology sector. Indeed, research on brand negativity in brand communities is still in early stages. There is some work in the sports (Popp et al., 2016), retail (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2010), and food and beverage industries (Thompson and Arsel, 2004), on the broad topic of brand hate, negative experiences and negativity. Studies have also investigated several types of hated brand categories together (e.g. Hegner et al., 2017). At this stage, there is little understanding if the type of product, service, or industry has any influence on negativity, and if there would be industry-related idiosyncrasies in anti-brand community participation. Further investigation of this parameter is thus warranted.

Anti-brand community members were approached through the anti-brand community page to participate in the study. This method is common in this kind of research and ensures that all respondents were members of these communities. However, the most active anti-brand community participants may have been keener to complete the questionnaire, influencing the results of this study. As discussed, while membership of the community under investigation seemed well-represented by a largely male sample, the role of gender in negative brand relationships remains to be elucidated. As the study showed, it would seem that different brand categories may attract more brand negativity from a specific gender. Yet, we could not affirm whether this was due to community composition or other factors, and whether gender has a specific impact on the variables under investigation. It seems that combining different brand categories (technology, retail and fashion) offers a more balanced gender-representativeness in sample composition (Hegner et al., 2017). This consideration begs for a more refined understanding of the role of gender on negative brand relationship and anti-brand community participation, in areas with a potentially better gender balance such as travel or retail.

In terms of the study variables, other drivers of anti-brand community affiliation are worth exploring, and focus on the social elements seems to be particularly warranted. Since online

customer reviews tend to matter less for strong brands (Ullrich and Brunner, 2015), it would be interesting to observe the impact of recommendations from the anti-brand community on the behavioral intentions of non-community members and on brand equity: does negativity within the anti-brand community really impact others? What role does brand equity play and does equity moderate impact? (Ho-Dac, Carson & Moore, 2013). Focusing on anti-brand community recommendations and their outcomes, it seems unclear how far their influence goes and how much it matters. Chevalier & Mayzlin (2006) show that negative WoM has a stronger negative impact than positive WoM on online sales, so the recommendations of the anti-brand community may be powerful. However, the size needs to be granted further attention.

A key challenge of contemporary brand management centers on the dramatic rise in volume and visibility of negative brand emotion and the power of consumer collectives to leverage negativity to harm brands. Considering the growing proliferation of online anti-brand communities and enriching results of this paper, the study calls for further research into negative brand relationships as an important and urgent agenda for brand scholarship in the 21st century.

References

Abosag, I. and F. Farah, M. (2014), "The influence of religiously motivated consumer boycotts on brand image, loyalty and product judgment", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48m No. 11/12, pp. 2262-2283.

Akrout, H., & Nagy, G. (2018). Trust and commitment within a virtual brand community: The mediating role of brand relationship quality. *Information & Management*, Vol. 55 No. 8, pp. 939-955.

Alba, J. W. and Lutz, R. J. (2013), "Broadening (and narrowing) the scope of brand relationships", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 265-268.

Albrecht, C. M., Campbell, C., Heinrich, D. and Lammel, M. (2013). "Exploring why consumers engage in boycotts: Toward a unified model", *Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 180-189.

Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U. M. and Herrmann, A. (2005), "The social influence of brand community: Evidence from European car clubs" *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69 No. 3, pp. 19-34.

Alvarez, C. and Fournier, S. (2016), "Consumers' relationships with brands", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Vol. 10 August, pp. 129-135.

Awasthi, B., Sharma, R. and Gulati, U. (2012), "Anti-Branding: Analyzing Its Long-Term Impact", *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 48-65.

Bagozzi, R. P. and Yi, Y. (1988), "On the evaluation of structural equation models", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 74-94.

Bagozzi, R. P. and Yi, Y. (2012), "Specification, evaluation, and interpretation of structural equation models", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 8-34.

Balabanis, G. (2013), "Surrogate boycotts against multinational corporations: consumers' choice of boycott targets", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 515-531.

Banister, E. and Hogg, M. (2004), "Negative symbolic consumption and consumers' drive for self-esteem: the case of the fashion industry", *European Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 38 No.7, pp. 850-868.

Black, I., & Veloutsou, C. (2017). Working consumers: Co-creation of brand identity, consumer identity and brand community identity. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 70, pp. 416-429.

Breitsohl, J., Kunz, W. H., and Dowell, D. (2015). "Does the host match the content? A taxonomical update on online consumption communities", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 31 No.9-10, 1pp. 040-1064.

Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B. and Hollebeek, L. (2013), "Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis", *Journal of Business Research,* Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 105-114.

Bryson, D., Atwal, G. and Hultén, P. (2013), "Towards the conceptualisation of the antecedents of extreme negative affect towards luxury brands", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 393-405.

Byrne, B. M. (2013). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*, Routledge.

Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C. and Guinalíu, M. (2013), "New members' integration: Key factor of success in online travel communities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 6, pp. 706-710.

Chevalier, J. A. and Mayzlin, D. (2006), "The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 345-354.

Cova, B. and D'Antone, S. (2016), "Brand Iconicity vs. Anti-Consumption Well-Being Concerns: The Nutella Palm Oil Conflict", *Journal of Consumer Affairs,* Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 166-192.

Cova, B. and White, T. (2010), "Counter-brand and alter-brand communities: the impact of Web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3/4, pp. 256-270.

Cromie, J. G. and Ewing, M. T. (2009), "The rejection of brand hegemony", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 218-230.

Dalli, D., Romani, S. and Gistri, G. (2006), "Brand Dislike: the Dark Side of Consumer Preferences", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 33, pp. 87-95.

Demiray, M., and Burnaz, S. (2019), "Exploring the impact of brand community identification on Facebook: Firm-directed and self-directed drivers", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 96, pp. 115-124.

Demirbag-Kaplan, M., Yildirim, C., Gulden, S. and Aktan, D. (2015), "I love to hate you: Loyalty for disliked brands and the role of nostalgia", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 136-153.

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C., & Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015). Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. Vol 24 No. 1, pp. 28-42

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A. (2016), "Capturing consumer engagement: duality, dimensionality and measurement", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 35 No. 5/6, pp. 399-426.

Dholakia, U. M., Bagozzi, R. P. and Pearo, L. K. (2004), "A social influence model of consumer participation in network-and small-group-based virtual communities", *International journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 241-263.

Fetscherin, M. (2019), "The five types of brand hate: How they affect consumer behavior", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 101 August, pp. 116-127

Fetscherin, M., Guzmán, F., Veloutsou, C. and Roseira Cayolla, R., (2019), "Latest research on brand relationships: introduction to the special issue", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 133-139.

Fetscherin, M. and Heinrich, D. (2014), "Consumer brand relationships: A research landscape", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 366-371.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981), "Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 382-388.

Fournier, S. and Alvarez, C. (2013), "Relating badly to brands", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 253–264

Fournier, S. and Avery, J. (2011), "The uninvited brand", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 193-207.

Füller, J., Matzler, K., & Hoppe, M. (2008). Brand community members as a source of innovation. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 25(6), 608-619.

Grégoire, Y., Tripp, T. M. and Legoux, R. (2009), "When customer love turns into lasting hate: the effects of relationship strength and time on customer revenge and avoidance", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 6, pp. 18-32.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E. and Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis*, 6th edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Universit .

Hegner S.M., Fetscherin M. and van Delzen M., (2017), "Determinants and outcomes of brand hate", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 13-25.

Ho-Dac, N. N., Carson, S. J. and Moore, W. L. (2013), “The effects of positive and negative online customer reviews: do brand strength and category maturity matter?”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 77 No. 6, pp. 37-53.

Hoffmann, S. and Lee, M. S. (2016), “Consume Less and Be Happy? Consume Less to Be Happy! An Introduction to the Special Issue on Anti-Consumption and Consumer Well-Being”, *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 3-17.

Hogg, M. K., Banister, E. N. and Stephenson, C. A. (2009), “Mapping symbolic (anti-) consumption”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 148-159.

Hollebeek L. and Chen, T. (2014),"Exploring positively- versus negatively-valenced brand engagement: a conceptual model", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 62- 74.

Hollenbeck, C. R. and Zinkhan, G. M. (2006), “Consumer activism on the internet: The role of anti-brand communities”, *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 33, pp. 479-485.

Hollenbeck, C. R. and Zinkhan, G. M. (2010), “Anti-brand communities, negotiation of brand meaning, and the learning process: The case of Wal-Mart”, *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 325-345.

Holt, D. B. (2002), “Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 70-90.

Hsu, C. L. and Lu, H. P. (2007), “Consumer behavior in online game communities: A motivational factor perspective”, *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 1642–1659.

Interbrand (2018). Best Global Brands Ranking 2018. Accessed March 2019. Available online https://www.interbrand.com/best-brands/best-global-brands/2018/

Islam, T., Attiq, S., Hameed, Z., Khokhar, M. and Sheikh, Z. (2019), "The impact of self-congruity (symbolic and functional) on the brand hate: A study based on self-congruity theory", *British Food Journal*, Vol. 121 No. 1, pp. 71-88.

Iyers, R. and Muncy, J. A. (2009), “Purpose and object of anti-consumption”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 160-168.

Jang, H., Olfman, L., Ko, I., Koh, J., and Kim, K. (2008), “The influence of on-line brand community characteristics on community commitment and brand loyalty”, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 12 No.3, pp. 57-80.

Japutra, A., Ekinci, Y. and Simkin, L., (2018) "Positive and negative behaviours resulting from brand attachment: The moderating effects of attachment styles", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 52 No. 5/6, pp.1185-1202.

Johnson, A., Matear, M. and Thomson, M. (2011), "A coal in the heart: Self-relevance as a post-exit predictor of consumer anti-brand actions", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 108-125.

Kähr, A., Nyffenegger, B., Krohmer, H. and Hoyer, W. D. (2016), “When hostile consumers wreak havoc on your brand: The phenomenon of consumer brand sabotage”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 80 No. 3, pp. 25-41.

Khan, M. and Lee, M. (2014), “Prepurchase determinants of brand avoidance: the moderating role of country-of-origin familiarity”, *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 329-343.

Kim, E., Ratneshwar, S., Roesler, E. and Chowdhury, T., (2016), “Attention to social comparison information and brand avoidance behaviors”, *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 259-271.

Klein, J. G., Smith, N. C. and John, A. (2004), “Why we boycott: Consumer motivations for boycott participation”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 3, 92-109.

Knittel, Z., Beurer, K. and Berndt, A. (2016), "Brand avoidance among Generation Y consumers", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal,* Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 27-43.

Koh, J. and Kim, Y. G. (2004), "Knowledge sharing in virtual communities: an e-business perspective", *Expert Systems with Applications*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 155-166.

Kozinets, R.V. (2002), "Can consumers escape the market? Emancipatory illuminations from burning man", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 20-38.

Kozinets, R. V. and Handelman, J.M. (2004), "Adversaries of consumption: Consumer movements, activism, and ideology", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 691-704.

Krishnamurthy, S. and Kucuk, U. (2009), "Anti-branding on the internet", *Journal of Business Research,* Vol. 62 No. 11, pp. 119–1126.

Kucuk, S.U. (2008), "Negative double jeopardy: The role of anti-brand sites on the internet", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 209-222.

Kucuk, S.U. (2015), "A semiotic analysis of consumer-generated antibranding", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 243–264.

Kucuk, S.U. (2018), "Macro-level antecedents of consumer brand hate", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 35 No. 5, pp. 555-564.

Kuo, Y.-F. and Feng, L.-H., (2013), "Relationships among community interaction characteristics, perceived benefits, community commitment, and oppositional brand loyalty in online brand communities", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 33 No. 6, pp. 948-962.

Kuo, Y-F and Hou, J-R. (2017), "Oppositional Brand Loyalty in Online Brand Communities: Perspectives on Social Identity Theory and Consumer-Brand Relationship", *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 254-268.

Lam, S.Y. and Shankar, V. (2014), "Asymmetries in the effects of drivers of brand loyalty between early and late adopters and across technology generations", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 26-42.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M.R. and Richard, M.O. (2013), "To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media?", *International Journal of Information Management,* Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 76-82.

Lee, M. S., Motion, J. and Conroy, D. (2009), "Anti-consumption and brand avoidance", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 169-180.

Marticotte, F., Arcand M. and Baudry, D. (2016), "The impact of brand evangelism on oppositional referrals towards a rival brand", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. *25* No. 6, pp. 538-549.

McAlexander, J.H., Schouten, J.W. and Koenig, H.F. (2002), "Building brand community", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 38-54.

Muniz, A.M. and O'Guinn, T.C. (2001) "Brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 412–432.

Muniz, A. M. and Schau, H. J. (2005), "Religiosity in the abandoned Apple Newton brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No.4, pp. 737-747.

Nunnally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. (1967), "*Psychometric Theory",* 3rd ed., New-York: McGraw-Hill.

O'Guinn, T. C., and Muñiz, A. M. (2005). Communal consumption and the brand. In D. G. Mick and S. Ratneshwar, (Eds.), *Inside Consumption: Frontiers of Research on Consumer Motives* (pp. 252–272). Oxon, UK: Routledge

Osuna-Ramirez, S.A., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas., A., (2019), "I hate what you love: Brand polarization and negativity towards brands as an opportunity for brand management", *Journal of Product & Brand Management,* Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 614-632.

Park, C.W., Eisingerich, A.B. and Park, J.W. (2013), "Attachment–aversion (AA) model of customer–brand relationships", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 229-248.

Popp, B., Germelmann, C.C. and Jung, B. (2016), "We love to hate them! Social media-based anti-brand communities in professional football", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 349-367.

Rindell, A., Strandvik, T. and Wilén, K. (2014), "Ethical consumers' brand avoidance", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 114-120.

Rogers, A., Daunt, K. L., Morgan, P., and Beynon, M. (2017), "Examining the existence of double jeopardy and negative double jeopardy within Twitter", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 No. 7/8, pp. 1224-1247.

Romani, S., Grappi, S. and Dalli D. (2012), "Emotions that drive consumers away from brands: Measuring negative emotions toward brands and their behavioral effects", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 55-67.

Romani, S., Grappi, S., Zarantonello L. and Bagozzi R. (2015), "The revenge of the consumer! How brand moral violations lead to consumer anti-brand activism", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 22 No. 8, pp. 658–672.

Salganik, M.J. and Heckathorn, D.D. (2004), "Sampling and estimation in hidden populations using respondent-driven sampling", *Sociological methodology*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 193-240.

Salesforce (2013) The Facebook ads benchmark report. Accessed June 2014. Available online http://www.salesforcemarketingcloud.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/The-Facebook-Ads-Benchmark-Report.pdf

Sandıkcı, Ö. and Ekici, A. (2009), "Politically motivated brand rejection", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 208-217.

Sarkar, A., Sarkar, J.G., Sreejesh, S., Anusree, M.R. and Rishi, B. (2019), "You are so embarrassing, still, I hate you less! Investigating consumers' brand embarrassment and brand hate", *Journal of Brand Management,* Vol. 27, pp. 93–107.

Thompson, C.J. and Arsel, Z. (2004), "The Starbucks brandscape and consumers' (anticorporate) experiences of glocalization", *Journal of Consumer* Research, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 631-642.

Thompson, S.A. and Sinha, R.K. (2008), "Brand communities and new product adoption: The influence and limits of oppositional loyalty", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 72 No. 6, pp. 65-80.

Trusov, M., Bodapati, A. V. and Bucklin, R. E. (2010), "Determining influential users in internet social networks", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 643-658.

Ullrich, S. and Brunner, C. (2015), "Negative online consumer reviews: Effects of different responses", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 66-77.

Veloutsou, C. (2007), "Identifying the dimensions of the product-brand and consumer relationship", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1/2, pp. 7-26.

Veloutsou, C. and Moutinho, L. (2009), "Brand relationships through brand reputation and brand tribalism", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 314-322.

Veloutsou, C. and Guzmán, F. (2017), "The evolution of brand management thinking over the last 25 years as recorded in the Journal of Product and Brand Management", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 2-12.

Wong, T.C., Haddoud, M.Y., Kwok, Y.K. and He, H., (2018), "Examining the key determinants towards online pro-brand and anti-brand community citizenship behaviours: A two stage approach", *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol. 118 No. 4, pp. 850-872.

Wright, K.B. (2005), "Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 10 No. 3.

Zarantonello, L. Romani, S., Grappi, S. and Bagozzi, R. P. (2016), "Brand hate", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 11-25.
Zarantonello, L., Romani, S., Grappi, S. and Fetscherin, M., (2018), "Trajectories of brand hate", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 549–560.

			NEGATIVITY		LEVEL	ANTECEDENTS			
AUTHORS	**YEAR**	**METHOD**	**Emotion**	**Behavior**		**Brand-related**	**Individual-related**	**Brand-relationship**	**Social**
Hogg and Banister	2001	Qualitative	Negative perception towards brands	Brand avoidance	Individual		• Undesired self • Self-esteem		• Views of significant others • Negative stereotypes of brand users
Klein et al.	2004	Quantitative		Brand boycott	Involving others		• Making a difference • Self-enhancement • Counterargument • Constrained consumption		
Dalli et al.	2006	Qualitative	Brand dislike		Individual	• Corporate brand level: ethical issues • Corporate brand level: market practice issues • Brand level		• Product-brand level issues: relational issues • Product-brand level issues: exchange unfairness	
Hollenbeck and Zinkhan	2006	Qualitative		Anti-brand community participation	Involving others		• Workplace challenges		• Common moral obligation • Support network • Resource hub
Grégoire and Fisher	2008			Retaliatory Behavior	Individual	• Service failure			
Cromie and Ewing	2009	Qualitative		Anti-brand community participation	Involving others		• Utility • Creative enjoyment • Control and freedom • Self-improvement • Philosophical match • Altruism		• Sense of community
Grégoire,et al.	2009	Mixed		Customer revenge & avoidance	Individual	• Service failure		• Relationship strength	

			NEGATIVITY		LEVEL	ANTECEDENTS			
AUTHORS	**YEAR**	**METHOD**	**Emotion**	**Behavior**		**Brand-related**	**Individual-related**	**Brand-relationship**	**Social**
Krishnamurthy and Kucuk	2009	Qualitative		Anti-brand community participation	Involving others	• Brand strength • Transactional dissatisfaction	• Ideological dissatisfaction		
Lee et al.	2009	Qualitative		Brand avoidance	Individual		• Identity - symbolic incongruence • Moral incompatibility	• Experiential avoidance - unmet expectations	
Sandikci & Ekici	2009	Qualitative		Brand rejection	Individual		• Incongruence with political views		
Johnson et al.	20011	Quantitative		Negative WoM	Involving others		• Self-relevance	• Relationship quality	
Albrecht et al	2013	Mixed		Brand boycott	Involving others	• Brand commitment	• Involvement with the cause of boycott		• Perceived participation of others
Balabanis	2013	Quantitative		Brand boycott	Involving others	• Egregiousness of brand actions			
Bryson et al.	2013	Qualitative	Brand hate		Individual	• Country of origin • Consumer dissatisfaction with service	• Moral incongruence		• Negative stereotypes of brand users
Abosag & Farah	2014	Quantitative		Brand boycott	Individual		• Religious Animosity • Consumer ethnocentrism		
Hollebeek and Chen	2014	Qualitative	Negative brand engagement	Negative brand engagement	Individual & involving others	• Brand/company actions • Brand quality/performance • Brand value • Brand innovativeness • Brand/company responsiveness • Delivery of brand promise			
Khan and Lee	2014	Quantitative		Brand avoidance	individual		• Self-congruence	• Perceived animosity	• Social influence
Rindell et al.	2014	Qualitative		Brand avoidance	individual		• Ethical considerations		
Romani et al.	2015	Quantitative	Brand hate		individual	• Moral violations			

			NEGATIVITY		LEVEL	ANTECEDENTS			
AUTHORS	**YEAR**	**METHOD**	**Emotion**	**Behavior**		**Brand-related**	**Individual-related**	**Brand-relationship**	**Social**
Kim et al.	2016	Quantitative		Brand avoidance	individual	• Brand distinctiveness • Brand Prestige			• Social comparison
Knittel et al.	2016	Qualitative		Brand avoidance	individual	• Poor performance • Store environment • Deficit-value	• Moral issues		• Negative reference group
Popp et al.	2016	Qualitative		Anti-brand community participation	Involving others	• Rivalry • Oppositional brand loyalty	• Self-Expression of congruence		• Group membership • Disassociation with other groups
Hegner et al.	2017	Quantitative	Brand hate		individual	• Past negative experience	• Symbolic incongruity • Ideological incompatibility		
Kucuk	2018	Quantitative	Brand hate		individual	• Product/service failures • Corporate social irresponsibility			
Islam et al.	2019	Quantitative	Brand hate		individual	• Functional incongruity	• Symbolic incongruity		
Sarkar et al.	2019	Quantitative	Brand hate		individual		• Negative brand social self-expressiveness • Brand embarrassment		

Table 1: Papers reporting antecedents of negative emotions and behavior towards brand

	No	%		No	%
GENDER			LENGTH OF INTERNET USAGE		
Male	261	87	Less than 5 years	3	1
Female	39	13	5-10 years	40	13
EDUCATION			10-15 years	115	38
Completed high school	58	19	More than 15 years	142	47
Completed graduate school	171	57	FREQUENCY OF INTERNET ACCESS		
Completed university	71	24	Several times a week	3	1
AGE			Every day	38	13
18-20	40	13	Several times a day	259	86
20-25	64	21	AVERAGE DAILY TIME SPENT ONLINE		
25-30	52	17	Less than 1 hour	3	1
30-35	51	17	1- 4 hours	128	43
35-40	34	11	4-8 hours	91	30
40-45	28	9	Over 8 hours	78	26
45-50	10	3	EMPLOYMENT		
50-55	11	4	Employed for wages	153	51
55+	3	1	Self-employed	49	16
NA	7	2	Out of work and looking for work	19	6
			Out of work and not looking for work	3	1
			Student	66	22
			Retired	4	1
			Unable to work	6	2

Table 2: Sample characteristics

Items	St. loading	t-value
Negative Emotional Connection α = 0.81; CR = 0.82; AVE=0.55		
I would feel uncomfortable buying this brand	0.46	8.09
This brand does not complement me	0.80	7.70
This brand does not reflect my personality	0.91	7.87
This brand seems distant from me	0.71	7.38
Communication α = 0.77; CR = 0.79; AVE=0.51		
I would like to be informed about this brand	0.73	9.06
I am more willing to learn news about this brand than about other brands	0.88	12.67
I listen with interest about information about this brand	0.76	7.87
I am willing to give feedback to the manufacturer of this brand	0.40	7.38
Social approval α = 0.75; CR = 0.86; AVE=0.51		
I would not buy this brand because I am sure that they will not approve	0.66	10.78
I am not loyal to this brand because they are not either	0.65	9.20
I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with them	0.32	4.95
I achieve a sense of belonging by avoiding the same brand as them	0.72	10.03
All of my online network avoids this brand	0.47	7.02
I avoid this brand because I want to be associated with certain group of people who do not like it	0.66	9.39
Oppositional attitudinal loyalty α = 0.90; CR = 0.90; AVE=0.58		
There is another brand (than the one I oppose) that… I will never betray	0.79	6.88
… I am proud to buy	0.83	6.96
I would feel upset if I had to buy a brand other than my favorite one	0.69	6.60
… I feel attached to	0.90	7.10
… is my favorite	0.90	7.12
… I feel confident buying	0.70	8.00
… I believe is fairer	0.40	9.67
Community identification α = 0.84; CR = 0.85; AVE=0.58		
I am very attached to the other people who oppose this brand	0.82	14.24
Other people who oppose this brand and I share the same objectives	0.72	13.04
The friendships I have with other people who dislike the brand mean a lot to me	0.87	16.11
I see myself as part of the group of people that do not support this brand	0.62	14.23
Community recommendation intentions α= 0.84; CR = 0.84; AVE=0.73		
I would definitely recommend friends or relatives to take part in this group	0.80	11.09
I never miss an opportunity to recommend activities of people who are against this brand to others	0.90	12.06
Community engagement α = 0.82; CR = 0.83; AVE=0.61		
I am motivated to participate in online activities organized by people who oppose this brand because…I feel better afterwards	0.72	10.89
…They allow me to support other members	0.85	12.65
…They allow me to reach personal goals	0.78	12.05
CFA Model Fit: Chi-square = 669.442 (df: 354; p= 0.000), CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, CMIN = 1.89; RMSEA = 0.05		

Table 3: Measurement model

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
F1. Negative emotional exchange	0.74						
F2. Communication	-0.12	0.71					
F3. Social approval	0.24	0.27	0.71				
F4. Oppositional loyalty	0.32	-0.04	0.32	0.76			
F5. Community engagement	0.16	0.29	0.58	0.29	0.78		
F6. Community identification	0.27	0.20	0.70	0.46	0.63	0.76	
F7. Community recommendation intention	0.20	0.27	0.53	0.22	0.59	0.55	0.85

Table 4: Reliability and discriminant validity
NB: Diagonal values represent the square root of the AVEs and below the diagonal are the pairwise correlations.

	Causal path	Std. reg. weights	t-value	Sig.	Support
H1a	Emotional Connection -->Oppositional Loyalty	0.33	3.96	***	Supported
H1b	Communication --> Oppositional Loyalty	0.02	0.29	0.77	Not supported
H2a	Emotional Connection --> Social Approval	0.30	3.90	***	Supported
H2b	Communication --> Social Approval	0.33	3.88	***	Supported
H3a	Oppositional Loyalty --> Community Engagement	0.01	0.31	0.75	Not supported
H3b	Oppositional Loyalty --> Community Identification	0.30	4.60	***	Supported
H4a	Social Approval --> Community Engagement	0.30	3.24	**	Supported
H4b	Social Approval --> Community Identification	0.64	8.42	***	Supported
H5	Community Identification --> Community Engagement	0.41	3.72	***	Supported
H6	Community Engagement --> Community Recommendation	0.38	4.55	***	Supported
H7	Community Identification --> Community Recommendation	0.38	3.36	***	Supported
*** Significant at the 0.001 level ** significant at the 0.01 level Model fit: Chi-square = 698.141 (df: 362, $p < 0.001$), CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, CMIN = 1.92; RMSEA = 0.05.					

Table 5: Summary of SEM results

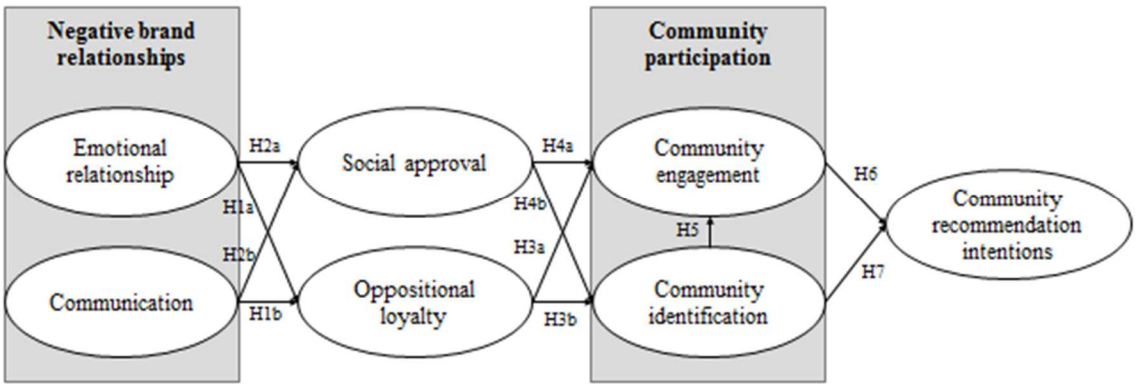

Figure 1: The research model