THE EVALUATION OF THE POSSIBLE RESULTS OF BRAND HATE IN TERMS OF BRAND AVOIDANCE[1]

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ABSTRACT

While today's marketing world prioritizes the importance of creating and managing brand love, the concept of brand hate appears as a relatively overlooked issue which theoreticians and practitioners do not concentrate on. From this perspective, this study aims to investigate the mediating effect of brand hate on the relationship between the experiential, moral, and identity dimensions of brand avoidance and brand revenge and brand rejection behaviors. A total of 202 usable questionnaires were collected to test the developed model, and the model was tested through SEM. As a result of the research, while it has been proved that brand hate has a mediating effect on the relationship between experiential and identity avoidance and brand revenge and brand rejection behaviors, it has also been presented that brand hate has a mediating role in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection behavior.

Keywords: Brand hate, experiential avoidance, moral avoidance, identity avoidance, brand revenge, brand rejection

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ÖZ

Son yıllarda günümüz pazarlama literatüründe ve işletme çevresinde marka kavramına verilen önem gittikçe artmaya başlamıştır. Marka değeri, marka imajı kadar önemli bir kavram olan marka nefreti çalışmalarına her ne kadar bu kadar ilgi gösterilmese de marka nefreti kavramı hem literatürde hem de pratikte tüketici davranışlarını anlama ve buna uygun strateji geliştirme açısından şüphesiz göz ardı edilmemesi gereken bir kavramdır. Bu bakış açısıyla, söz konusu çalışma marka nefretinin deneyimsel, ahlaki ve kimliksel kaçınma boyutları ile marka nefreti sonrası oluşabilecek marka öcü ve marka reddi davranışları arasındaki ilişkide aracı etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada geliştirilen modeli test etmek üzere 202 kişiye anket uygulanmış ve model YEM aracılığıyla test edilmiştir. Yapılan araştırma sonucu marka nefretinin söz konusu kaçınma boyutlarının bir kısmı ile marka öcü ve marka reddi arasındaki ilişkide aracı rolü olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Elde edilen sonuçlar konuyla ilgilenen şirketlerin strateji geliştirmesinde önemli bilgiler sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marka nefreti, deneyimsel kaçınma, ahlaki kaçınma, kimliksel kaçınma, marka öcü, marka reddi

1. Introduction

Consumers differ greatly in terms of their relationships with brands (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016:267; Fournier, 1998:344). Marketing academics and practitioners have traditionally focused on the positive rather than negative side of consumption; therefore, research on the positive emotions triggered toward the brand is widely represented in the literature (Bagozzi et al., 1999:185; Laros& Steenkamp, 2005:1438; Richins, 1997:68). Recently, researchers (Albert et al., 2008:3; Batraet al., 2012:1; Carroll &Ahuvia, 2006:81: Gültekin&Ülkü, 2015; Yasin, 2015) have focused on the concept of brand love as the most intense feeling of consumers and determined that the consumer who is in love with a brand is more loyal, more positive speaking and more resistant to negative information about the brand (Batraet al.,2012:2).On the other hand, while some consumers feel love for brands, some may be indifferent to brands, and some may even feel hateful towards some brands(Khan & Lee, 2014:231).

It is clearly seen in the literature review that studies on negative emotions against brands are very limited. The concept of brand hate, which emerges as the most intense and important negative emotion that consumers feel towards a brand, has been largely neglected as a research concept (Zarantonello et al., 2016:11). Brand studies provide insufficient information about the negative emotional states experienced by consumers about the brands (Romani et al., 2012:59), and therefore there is a need for more research about the extreme negative emotions or dark sides of the relationship between consumers and brands (Fetscherin& Heinrich, 2015:369; Hegner et al., 2017:14).

This study is significant in investigating the impact of brand avoidance factors on brand hate and assisting researchers and literature in better understanding the association between brand avoidance, brand hate, brand rejection, and brand revenge. The current literature has a gap in empirically explaining the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between brand avoidance on the one hand and brand revenge and brand rejection on the other. To fill this gap, this research is intended to examine the effects of avoidance factors on brand hate and the dimensions of revenge and rejection behavior after brand hate. The aim of the study is to reveal the mediating role of brand hate behavior in the relationship between avoidance factors (experiential avoidance, identity avoidance, and moral avoidance) and brand revenge and brand rejection behavior. The study's primary significance is that it is the first theoretical article in the literature to reveal the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between avoidance behaviors and brand revenge and brand rejection, which also shows the contribution of the subject in a theoretical sense. The findings obtained from the research results are expected to guide both marketing literature and marketing professionals in developing brand strategies in the business world.

2. Theoretical Structure and Hypothesis Development

2.1 The Concept of Brand Hate, Brand Revenge, and Brand Rejection

Research in psychology shows that emotions depend on subjective experience and behavior (Shaver et al., 1987:1080). In a study in the literature, the basic level of emotion categories was investigated by asking participants to name their emotional prototypes. It was revealed that hate was the second most important emotion after love (Fehr & Russell, 1984:182). Later, Shaver et al. (1987:1083) confirmed this finding and state that hate is in third place among 213 emotional words (Hegner et al., 2017:14).

As mentioned earlier, although most of the research in the literature focuses on consumers' positive feelings, beliefs, and attitudes towards brands, it is difficult to find literature studies that directly examine the concept of hate in the context of the consumer-brand relationship. In other words, compared to brand love, less attention has been paid to the concept of brand hate in the literature. The current literature can be divided into three different categories: psychoanalysis (e.g., Blum, 1997; Kernberg, 1995), social psychology (e.g.,Allport, 1950; Brewer, 1999), and basic emotion research (e.g., Ben-Ze'ev, 2000; Shaver et al., 1987; Rempel& Burris, 2005:299). In this context, some authors treat hate as a motivation (Rempel& Burris, 2005:300) or emotion (Weingarten, 2006:279), while others treat it as an emotional attitude (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001:5). But in general, most authors manage their work by treating hate as a stable, permanent, and long-term emotion (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001:5; Rempel& Burris, 2005:300; Royzman, 2004:13; Weingarten, 2006:270).

Hate, which is a more intense feeling than disliking a brand, differs according to the intensity of consumers' negative emotions towards the brand. Sonnemans and Frijda (1994:366) state that this density is multidimensional and that the factors affecting the density could be determined by the duration of the emotion, the peak, the tendency-intensity to act, and the degree of behavior. For example, anger is seen as an instant strong magnitude emotion, but it is shorter (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001:8). The peak intensity of love and hate is slightly lower than the rate of anger, but it may take longer with a higher level of intensity (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001:8). In light of the literature information, brand hate can be considered a stable and ongoing negative emotion created against the brand. In this context, in general, brand hate is the intense negative emotional effect developed against the brand (Bryson et al., 2013:395).

The first conceptualization of brand hate is seen in the work of Grégoire et al. (2009). In their work, the authors consider hate to be a desire for revenge and avoidance. Brand hate, which was first defined as "the customers' desire to harm and punish businesses for losses caused by the business", was later expressed as "the customer's need to withdraw from any interaction with the business" (Grégoire et al., 2009:19). These two desires are described as leading to different actions. The desire for revenge that the consumer has developed is an active and

passive desire that usually occurs to punish and retaliate against the company. The desire to avoid is a passive and non-aggressive desire associated with the need to escape from a client's relationship with a company and is often referred to as reducing/releasing the state of being a client. These two desires may arise from a service failure and coexist side by side (Zarantonello et al. 2016:13).

Johnson et al. (2011:110) present the second conceptualization of brand hate. In their study, the concept of "grudge" is considered a strong resistance of the consumer to the brand, which can arise especially from critical experiences (related to the product or service) and generally represented by the concept of revenge. In their empirical study, the authors show that the sense of shame could also explain the concept of brand hate. Furthermore, it is shown in the same research that the feeling of shame is an important variable that pushes people to act in the context of hate (Zarantonello et al., 2016:12).

The third conceptualization of brand hate is provided by Alba and Lutz (2013), defining the concept of brand hate as "real disgust from the brand" (Alba & Lutz, 2013:268). According to the authors, "brand grudge" is explained as the business "holding [the customer] hostage" with high exchange costs or practices such as monopoly. Grudge may cause the consumer to express-disappointment through social media, make submissions to hate sites on the internet, and convey negative effects in daily interaction with other consumers (Zarantonello et al. 2016:12).In the same years, Bryson et al. (2013:394) defined brand hate as an intense negative emotional effect created against the brand, which may be caused by customer dissatisfaction, the country of origin of the brand, or negative patterns defined by brand users. Brand hate results in deliberate intent to prevent or reject a brand, which includes typical behaviors such as mouth-to-mouth negative words, boycotts, sabotage, and other behaviors that demonstrate rejection (Zarantonello et al. 2016:12).

The fourth conceptualization of brand hate is demonstrated by the work of Romani et al. (2012:57). The authors consider hate to be an emotion that defines the negative emotions that people develop against brands. They see the feeling of hate as excessive dissatisfaction with the brand (Zarantonello et al. 2016:13). The latest study of Zarantonello et al. (2016) provides a rich review of hate literature in terms of branding. The authors describe hate as a compound that contains mostly primary and sometimes secondary emotions. They state that the emotions that trigger active and passive brand hate are composed of feelings such as anger, disgust, fear, frustration, embarrassment, and de-humanization (Hegner et al., 2017:14).

The concept of brand rejection is defined as when consumers consciously choose to reject a brand (Lee et al., 2009:2). As opposed to satisfaction, which leads to loyalty, dissatisfaction may lead to brand rejection (Oliva et al.,1992:86). In the concept of brand rejection, which is often used in conjunction with brand replacement, a particular focus is on its deliberate rejection. The person demonstrates brand hate as a result of avoidance of rejecting the brand (Lee et al., 2009:2).

Based on this information;

H_1: Brand hate has a statistically significant positive effect on brand rejection.

Brand revenge is defined as a consumer harming the company in response to receiving unacceptable service (Grégoire et al., 2010:741; Zourrig et al., 2009:997). Revenge behavior can be divided into indirect (complaining) or direct (payback) behavior (Grégoire et al., 2009:20; Thomson et al., 2012:293). Brand revenge occurs as a strong output of brand hate. A consumer who hates a brand has strong feelings about taking revenge on the brand and thus wants to take direct and strong individual action against it (Thomson et al., 2012:293). Brand revenge is motivated by a personal interest such as destroying the brand, and consumers seek revenge, especially after feeling brand hate, which is caused by avoidance (Thomson et al., 2012:294).

Based on this information;

H_2: Brand hate has a statistically significant positive effect on brand revenge.

2.2. The Concept of Brand Avoidance

Studies in the psychology literature show that different negative emotions motivate cognitive and behavioral responses (Roseman, 1984:13). Brand avoidance is the situation when the consumer turns his back on a certain brand and prefers a rival brand or does not consume that product or service at all. According to previous studies, the consumer's perception of the brand relationship is determined by how they respond emotionally to the brand, how they relate to the brand, and how they feel towards the brand (Monga, 2002:37; Breivik&Thorbjørnsen, 2008:2). If the consumer has developed a negative feeling for a brand, this causes avoidance and divergence (Grégoireet al., 2009:19; Park et al., 2013:231; Zarantonelloet al., 2016:13).

Lee et al. (2009:2) define brand avoidance as the consumer choosing to deliberately avoid or reject a brand. Grégoire et al. (2009:19) define the desire to avoid as the consumer being disconnected from a firm (Hegner et al., 2017:15). Similarly, Grégoire et al. (2009:19) and Park et al. (2013:231) define brand avoidance as the opposite of brand intimacy, occurring due to negative feelings toward the brand. Brand avoidance is a negative emotion that can arise not only from the consumer has purchased a brand's product or service in the past but also before the purchasing behavior of the consumer develops.

In this study, the dimension of brand avoidance defined by Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009:4) will be examined. The first avoidance dimension, which is experiential avoidance, is associated with the consumer undergoing a brand's negative experience. In experiential avoidance, which occurs after consuming the branded product, the person may become hateful of the brand due to this negative experience. Especially with the internet becoming more active in daily life, consumers can now easily express their complaints about a brand online. They can evaluate, grade, or report on the product itself or any complaints against

the business through a third website. Such consumers can find ways to express opinions about their negative experiences in order to harm the company under any circumstances (Grégoire et al., 2009:20).VanDelzen et al. (2014), Salvatori (2007), and Bryson et al. (2010) reveal in their studies that experiential avoidance is the strongest predictor of brand hate, and also Platania et al. (2017) present that brand hate has a mediator role in the relationship between avoidance factors, brand rejection, and brand revenge.

Based on this information;

H_3: *Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand hate.*

H_4: *Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand rejection.*

H_5: *Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand revenge.*

H_6: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand rejection.*

H_7: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand revenge.*

The second type of avoidance, identity avoidance, occurs when the brand does not comply with a person's characteristics. The product purchased by a person generally reflects the image they desire. Based on this information, according to Sinha et al. (2011:186), brands have a common purpose: to enable people to express their style. In other words, people consume products that fit their personalities and avoid products that do not fit (Lee et al., 2009:2). Individuals relate brands to specific images. If this image does not fit their identity, they will not buy this brand. Lee et al. (2009:2) investigate the reasons for avoiding a brand in their interviews and reveal that identity mismatch is an incentive to avoid the brand. Identity avoidance occurs when the brand image does not match the individual's identity, also causes people to hate that brand after a while. Besides these studies, Platania and his colleges (2017) state that identity avoidance plays a more decisive role in the emergence of brand hate, and brand hatred leads to brand revenge and brand rejection.

Based on this information;

H_8: *Identity avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand hate.*

H_9: *Identity avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand rejection.*

H_{10}: *Identity avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand revenge.*

H_{11}: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between identity avoidance and brand rejection.*

H_{12}: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between identity avoidance and brand revenge.*

The third type of avoidance, moral avoidance, occurs when the consumer's ideological beliefs do not match the brand. Portwood-Stacer (2012:96) states that moral anti-consumption defines practices motivated by judgments of right and wrong. In addition, moral issues express one's ideological beliefs and values (Lee et al., 2009:4). In other words, people take the moral impact of their consumption into account in their behaviors. If a brand does not fit a consumer's morality, the consumer refrains from consuming it and may develop a sense of hatred toward the brand after a while. Platania et al. (2017), Hegner and his colleges (2017), Bosse, (2014), Van Delzen (2014), andGünaydın and Yıldız (2020) find evidence that avoidance factors that trigger brand hate include experiential, identity, and moral avoidance.

Based on this information;

H_{13}: *Moral avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand hate.*

H_{14}: *Moral avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand rejection.*

H_{15}: *Moral avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on brand revenge.*

H_{16}: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection.*

H_{17}: *Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand revenge.*

3.Research and Methodology

In this research, a quantitative descriptive study, the convenience sampling method was used due to time and cost constraints. 240 surveys were collected by online questionnaire in two cities, Samsun and Istanbul, and 202 of them were used after screening. While calculating the sample size of the research, the calculation (N>50+8m) suggested by Tabachnich and Fidell (2001) was used, and Holter's Index (minimum 200 questionnaires in Structural Equation Modelling) was considered (Byrne, 2010). Ethical approval for this study was obtained from İstanbul Aydın University (Social Sciences Ethics Committee, Date: 30.10.2020, Meeting no: 2020/9).

The questionnaire first asks the participant whether they have so far experienced a feeling of hate against any brand and continues with participants who answer "yes". Apart from the threshold question, the questionnaire consists of five sections.

While the first part consists of the demographic questions, the second part consists of a brand hate scale with six items adapted from Hegner et al. (107:25). The third part of the questionnaire includes questions measuring avoidance factors, adapted from Van Delzen (2014:22). The experiential avoidance scale consists of six items, the identity avoidance scale consists of seven items, and the moral avoidance scale consists of four items. In the fourth and fifth parts of the questionnaire, the three-item brand rejection scale and four-item brand revenge scale adapted from Romani et al. (20120:60) and Thomson et al. (2012:296) are used. All items were measured using the 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The conceptual model of the study is given in Figure 1.
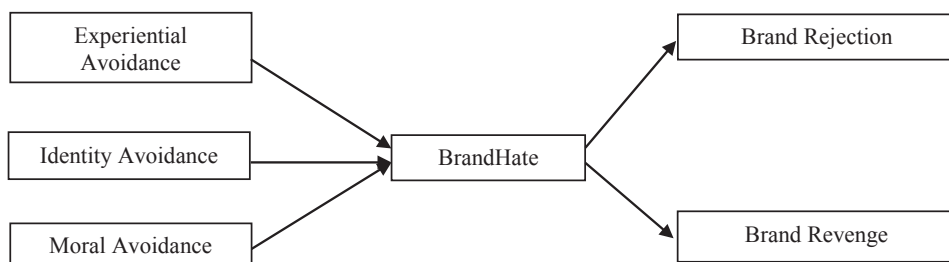

Figure1. Conceptual model of the study

3.3. Research Findings

3.3.1. The Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

When the demographic data of the study were examined, it was seen that 61 percent of the participants were female and 38 percent were male, while 39 percent of these participants were between the ages of 26-34 and 29 percent were between the ages of 35-44. Of the 202 respondents, 58 percent were single, 41 percent were married, 37 percent were college graduates, and 28 percent were high school graduates. 38 percent of participants were private-sector employees, and 33 percent of household income was between 3,501TL and 5,000TL.

3.3.2. Assumption Tests

In the research, skewness and kurtosis values were examined to test the normality assumption. Skewness and kurtosis values were first examined to see whether the data had a normal distribution. It was determined that the skewness value was between -1.161 and 0.703, and the kurtosis value was between -1.185 and 1.007, which showed a normal distribution. In addition, the Tolerance and VIF values of all independent variables were examined to test whether there are multiple correlation problems in the data. As a result of the analysis, the tolerance value was below 0.1 and the VIF value below 10, which established no multiple correlation problem in the research.

3.3.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the KMO value was 0,839, and Bartlett's test value was 0.000. Still, the analysis was repeated because the factor loadings of two items of the identity avoidance variable were below 0.50. After the repeated analysis, the KMO value was 0.829 and Bartlett's test value was 0.000, and the scales were collected under a total of six factors in accordance with their original status. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient was used to calculate each factor's reliability in the questionnaire. Scales were higher than 0.7, showing sufficient reliability. The factor and reliability analysis results of the scales are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Construct/Factor	Item	Total Variance Explained	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO
Identity Avoidance	KK4		,852		
	KK3		,845		
	KK2	31,730	,839	,883	
	KK5		,822		
	KK6		,717		
Experiential Avoidance	DK2		,809		
	DK6		,805		
	DK3	9,613	,794	,845	
	DK1		,756		
	DK4		,645		
	DK5		,634		
Brand Hate	MN5		,891		
	MN4		,841		
	MN1	8,796	,771	,854	,829
	MN2		,760		
	MN3		,651		
Moral Avoidance	AK3		,871		
	AK2	7,466	,869	,876	
	AK4		,784		
	AK1		,741		
Brand Revenge	MO4		,924		
	MO3	6,400	,882	,860	
	MO2		,816		
	MO1		,724		
Brand Rejection	RED3		,810		
	RED2	5,174	,789	,869	
	RED1		,722		

3.3.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to determine the validity of the scales. Convergent validity was examined by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) and the construct validity (CV), where the minimum values should be 0,50 and 0,70 respectively. (Fornell& Larcker,1981:46). As shown in Table 2, the scale's CR values were higher than 0.70, and the AVE values were higher than 0.50, which meant that all variables' convergent validities were achieved. Furthermore, discrimination validity was tested by using the Fornell and Larckerapproach (1981:46). The AVE square root of a factor should be greater than the correlation value of this factor to the value factors and the MSV value less than the AVE value. As a result of the analysis, we concluded that discriminant validity was achieved (Table 2).

Table 2. Result of Validity Analysis

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Brand Rejection	0,871	0,692	0,308	0,873	0,832					
Identity Avoidance	0,884	0,603	0,248	0,886	0,498	0,777				
Experiential Avoidance	0,845	0,510	0,171	0,878	0,396	0,333	0,695			
Brand Hate	0,841	0,519	0,243	0,884	0,404	0,472	0,368	0,720		
Moral Avoidance	0,882	0,654	0,308	0,903	0,555	0,445	0,413	0,483	0,809	
Brand Revenge	0,839	0,573	0,243	0,892	0,166	0,426	0,244	0,493	0,335	0,757

In the confirmatory factor analysis conducted, the goodness of fit indices were examined to see if the factor structure's validity was verified. As seen in Table 3, when the factor structure of the research variables and the model fit values were analyzed, it was seen that the scale items were loaded with an acceptable fit in the relevant dimensions as a result of the findings obtained (CMIN/DF=1,946; CFI=0.915; RMSEA= 0,069).

Table3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Goodness of Fit Statistics

GOF index	Acceptable value	Obtained value
X^2/df (CMIN/df)	<3 good; <5 acceptable	1,946
Probability (p value)	> 0,05	0,000
CFI	>0,95 good; >0,90 medium, >0,80acceptable	0,915
RMSEA	<0,05 good; 0,05-0,10 medium; >0,10bad	0,069

3.3.5. Hypothesis Tests

Since the measurement model obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis provided acceptable goodness of fit indices, a structural equation model was created to test the research hypotheses. SPSS and AMOS programs were used to test the model. The SEM analysis results measuring the effects of experiential avoidance, identity avoidance, and moral avoidance on brand hate, brand revenge, and brand rejection are given in Figure 2, and the values of model fit indices are given in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, the value of $X^2/df=1.364$ complies with the value's suggested criteria to less than 3. In addition, GF index=0.975, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)=0.953, CFI=0.993 and RMSEA=0.043. As shown in Table 4, each statistic meets the minimum requirement of acceptable values (Joreskok&Sorbom, 1993; Kline, 1998). Thus, these results indicate a good fit of the conceptual model to the empirical data of this study.
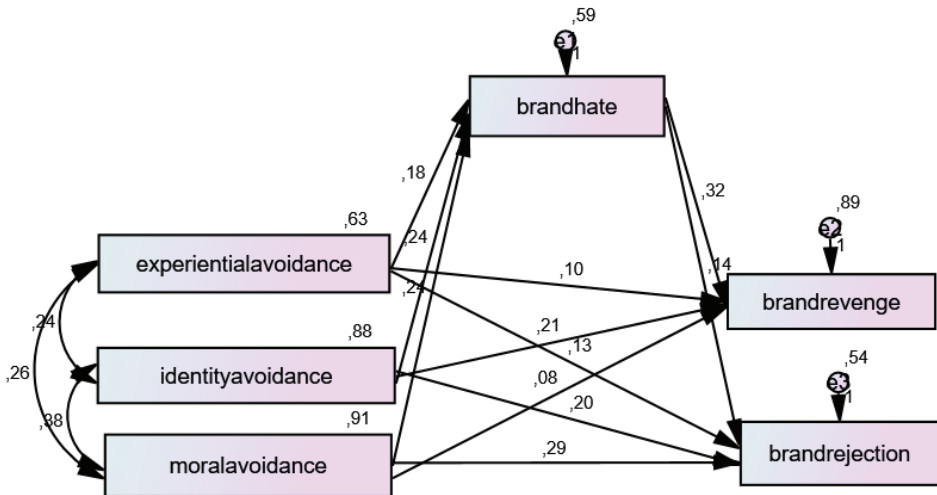

Figure 2. SEM model

Table 4. Model fit results for SEM model

	X²	df	X²/df	CFI	GFI	NFI	TLI	AGFI	RMSEA
GOF Index	6.818	5	1.364	.993	.989	.975	.979	.953	.043
Good GOF Index			<3	>.95	>.95	>.95	>.95	>.95	<.05
Acceptable GOF Index			3<(x2/df)<5	>.90	>.90	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.08

After determining that the model was structurally fit, research hypotheses were tested to check whether the relationships in the model were meaningful in the predicted manner. The obtained p values of the result of the structural model are presented in Table 5. According to SEM results, it is indicated that experiential

avoidance (β =.16; p<.05), identity avoidance (β =.25; p<.05), and moral avoidance (β =.25; p<.05) have statistically significant effects on brand hate. Thus, H_3, H_8, and H_{13} are supported. When the effect of avoidance dimensions on brand revenge and brand rejection are examined, the findings are as follows. It is found that experiential avoidance (β =.07; p=.269) and moral avoidance (β =.07; p=.309) have no effect on brand revenge, but identity avoidance is found to have a statistically significant effect (β =.18; p<.05) on brand revenge behavior. Thus, H_5 and H_{15} are supported, but H_{10} is not supported. When exploring the effect of avoidance dimensions on brand rejection, it was revealed that identity avoidance (β =.21; p<.05) and moral avoidance (β =.30; p<.05) have statistically significant effects on brand rejection, but experiential avoidance has no significant effect (β =.11; p=.06) on brand rejection. Thus, H_9 and H_{14} are supported, but H_4 is not supported. On the other hand, it has been found that brand hate has a statistically significant effect on brand rejection (β = .13; p<.05) and brand revenge (β =.27; p<.05). Based on these findings, H_1 and H_2 are supported.

Table 5. Path Results

Estimate Parameters	Standardized	Unstandardized	SH
Paths			
Brand Hate ← Experiential Avoidance	.163	.185	.075
Brand Hate ←Identity Avoidance	.253	.242	.065
Brand Hate ←Moral Avoidance	.258	.243	.065
Brand Revenge ← Brand Hate	.271	.321	.086
Brand Rejection ← Brand Hate	.137	.137	.067
Brand Revenge ← Experiential Avoidance	.076	.103	.093
Brand Rejection ← Identity Avoidance	.214	.205	.064
Brand Rejection ← Moral Avoidance	.306	.288	.064
Brand Rejection ← Experiential Avoidance	.117	.133	.072
Brand Revenge ← Identity Avoidance	.186	.211	.082
Brand Revenge ← Moral Avoidance	.075	.084	.082

3.3.5.1. Test of mediating effect of brand hate

In this research, hypotheses were created to investigate the mediator role of brand hate in the relationship between experiential, identity, and moral avoidance, and brand rejection and brand revenge.To test H_6, H_7, H_{11}, H_{12}, H_{16}, and H_{17}, path analysis based on the Bootstrap method was applied. It has been suggested that the Bootstrap method gives more reliable results than the traditional method of Baron and Kenny and the Sobel test (Gürbüz, 2019:123; Hayes, 2018). In the mediation effect analysis applied with the Bootstrap technique, the value of 95% confidence interval was found (CI should not include zero (0) to support the research hypothesis) (Hayes, 2018).

At first, H_6 was tested in order to determine the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand rejection. According to the Bootstrap results, the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand rejection behavior was significant. As a result of the values obtained, (β =.022, p=.041, %95 CI(.002, .055)) H_6 was supported. Additionally, the result of the analysis of H_7, which tests the mediation of brand hate in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand revenge, proved that brand hate also has a statistically significant mediation effect (β = .044, p=.003 %95 CI(.020, .130)) on this relationship. Thus, H_7 is supported.

As a result of the H_{11} analysis applied to determine the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between identity avoidance and brand rejection, it was found that brand hate has a statistically significant mediation effect (β =.035, p=.001, %95 CI(.002, .100)) on this relationship. Thus, H_{11} is supported. Furthermore, the H_{12} hypothesis analysis results revealed that brand hate has a statistically significant mediation effect (β =.035, p=.010, %95 CI(.020, .130)) on the relationship between identity avoidance and brand revenge. Thus, H_{12} is supported.

H_{16} was tested to determine the mediation effect of brand hate in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection. According to the results, brand hate has a statistically significant mediating effect (β =.070, p=.001, %95 CI(.003, .093)) in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection. Besides, the result of the analysis of H_{17}, which tests the mediation of brand hate in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand revenge, proved that brand hate also has a statistically significant mediation effect (β = .044, p=.003 %95 CI(.020, .130)) on this relationship. Thus, H_{16} and H_{17} are supported.

4. Conclusion

Although there has been a focus on brand hate in the marketing literature in recent years, this subject is still limited in the literature. In general, brand hate, which occurs due to the consumer having a negative experience with a product or brand, is defined as intense negative emotions experienced consistently.

The present study has examined the mediating effect of brand hate on the relationship between the avoidance dimensions of experiential, identity, moral avoidance, and brand rejection and brand revenge, which are possible outcomes of brand hate. The fact that the concept of brand hate has not been approached from this point of view before revealing the gap in the literature. Supported and unsupported hypotheses are given in Table 6. The findings revealed that consumers exhibit the behavior of taking revenge and rejecting the brand after brand hate. In light of these findings, it is possible to say that consumers tend to take revenge on a brand by actively and directly acting to harm the brand or its employees as a result of the hatred they feel towards a brand. At the same time, they do not include it in their purchasing alternatives by intentionally rejecting the brand and not being affected by the brand's promotional activities.

The current study also examines the relationship between the brand avoidance dimensions of experiential, identity, and moral avoidance, and brand rejection and brand revenge. As a result of the findings obtained, it is seen that experiential, identity, and moral avoidance have a significant effect on brand hate, but experiential avoidance does not result in rejecting and taking revenge from the brand. Experiential avoidance, which arises as a result of the consumer expectations not being met, in cases such as low performance, or the brand not fulfilling the promises offered, results in the consumer hating the brand. However, it does not cause consumers to take revenge on or reject the brand. In other words, consumers develop a sense of hatred towards the brand when their expectations from a brand are not fully met. Or when they have a negative experience with the brand, such as the purchase of defective products, poor service performance, or low quality (Salvatori, 2007:34; Lee et al., 2009:9), but they do not exhibit revenge or rejection. In addition, the study has determined that the moral avoidance that emerges as a result of consumers' ideologies or negative points of view towards the brand's country of origin results in people hating the brand and rejecting the brand, but it has revealed that they do not exhibit revenge behavior. Several brand activities can conflict with consumers' moral understanding. Seeing that brands have negative impacts on society or that they are engaging in unethical activities leads to a perception of the brand as irresponsible and causes a feeling of hate and rejection of the brand (Lee et al., 2009:7). However, this perceived moral conflict does not direct the individual to take revenge on the brand. Besides, it has been demonstrated that identity avoidance occurs when the consumer perceives a contradiction between their personality and the brand image, causes people to hate the brand, reject the brand, and seek revenge on the brand. In situations where the brand is associated with reference groups that not reflect the customer's own identity or the symbolic meaning of the brand creates negative associations by themselves (Bryson et al., 2013:396; Lee et al., 2009:7; Salvatori, 2007:35). It was determined that the hate the consumer develops directs them towards taking revenge from the brand and rejecting the brand.

Besides these, this study examines the mediating effect of brand hate in the relationship between avoidance factors (experiential, moral, and identity) and brand revenge and brand rejection. The findings reveal that consumers' brand hate emotions mediate the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand rejection, and brand revenge. It has been determined that consumers develop brand hate as a result of a problem that they experience, and as a result of the brand hate they develop, they can exhibit the behavior of rejecting the brand, namely ignoring the brand and actively taking revenge on the brand. Similarly, it has been determined that consumers' brand hate has a mediating effect on the relationship between identity avoidance and brand rejection and brand revenge. In other words, it is revealed that consumers develop brand hate against a brand that they think is incompatible with their own identity or that they believe will harm their own identity. A result of the brand hate they develop, they can turn towards the behavior of taking revenge on the brand and rejecting the brand.

The research has also revealed that brand hate has a mediating effect on the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection. In other words, it has been determined that consumers form brand hate against brands that they think exhibit behaviors incompatible with the moral values of the consumer, and the hate created will also result in the rejection of the brand. However, the findings reveal that brand hate does not affect the relationship between moral avoidance and brand revenge. The current study shows that, in line with the results obtained regarding the effect of the relationship between previous moral avoidance and brand revenge, brand hate does not have a mediating effect on the relationship between moral avoidance and brand revenge. Thus, it can be said that the sense of hate that people have against brands that they cannot morally associate with does not direct people to take revenge on the brand. As a result of these contributions to the literature, it can be said that, first and foremost, businesses should consider that all the avoidance factors that consumers can create will lead to brand hate and should develop preventive strategies. The brand hate resulting from identity, moral, and experiential avoidance will not advance to brand rejection and brand revenge if compensation strategies and effective customer-brand relationships are developed.

This study also has some limitations due to time and cost constraints, with the data obtained on consumers residing in Istanbul and Samsunonly. For future studies, expansion of the research area is recommended, including different consumer groups and even different countries. In future studies, it is recommended to examine the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between brand rejection and brand revenge for Generation Z, who constitute a new consumer group. Besides, investigating the moderator role of factors such as actual self, ideal self, symbolic incongruity, and functional incongruity on this relationship will contribute to the marketing literature.

Table 6. Research Hypothesis Results

H_1: Brand hate has a statistically significant effect on brand rejection.	Supported
H_2: Brand hate has a statistically significant effect on brand revenge.	Supported
H_3: Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand hate.	Supported
H_4: Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand rejection.	Not Supported
H_5: Experiential avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand revenge.	Not Supported
H_6: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand rejection.	Supported
H_7: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between experiential avoidance and brand revenge.	Supported
H_8: Identity avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand hate.	Supported
H_9: Identity avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand rejection.	Supported
H_{10}: Identity avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand revenge.	Supported
H_{11}: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between identity avoidance and brand rejection.	Supported
H_{12}: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between identity avoidance and brand revenge.	Supported
H_{13}: Moral avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand hate.	Supported
H_{14}: Moral avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand rejection.	Supported
H_{15}: Moral avoidance has a statistically significant effect on brand revenge.	Not Supported
H_{16}: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand rejection.	Supported
H_{17}: Brand hate has a mediator effect in the relationship between moral avoidance and brand revenge.	Not Supported

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