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Investigating the Brand Love-Brand Hate

Relationship, and the Effects of Brand Attitude

and Brand Attachment on Brand Hate

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Abstract

There has been an increase in consumer research on consumer-brand relationships, specifically positive relationship between the consumer and brands. This thesis tries to shed light on a topic that has received less attention, though highly related, namely brand hate. Study 1 was conducted in order to investigate an antecedent to brand hate, building on the fact that love for a competing brand can cause brand hate. To our knowledge this topic has not been examined before. However, a line of research indicates that such relationships exists between brand hate and brand love. This relationship is very apparent in the sports industry, just imagine the rivalry between competing football teams. We believe that such relationships are mirrored in other categories as well, even though not as evident. Results from study 1 confirm this relationship in some of the investigated categories. Specifically, we get support for the hypothesis in product categories with high signaling value. Further, we get a surprising result showing that when hate (love) for one brand increases, so does hate (love) for the competing brand in that category. Study 2 was conducted to examine how consumers with love for a brand with high signaling value would react to positive information about a direct and an indirect competitor. Previous research indicates that when given positive information about a direct competitor, feelings of love, liking and attachment will increase, while positive information about an indirect competitor will have no effect on previous attitudes and attachment. Results from study 2 support our hypotheses to some degree. Positive information concerning the direct competitor showed significant results for brand attachment, but not for brand love and brand liking. Positive information concerning the indirect competitor showed no significant change across the three items, as expected. Findings from the current research contribute to literature by suggesting an antecedent of brand hate. Investigating further, results indicate that there are differences between categories with high badge value and those with lower badge value. In addition, our results confirm previous theory on the difference between brand attitudes and brand attachment.

1. Introduction

Increasingly, consumers voice their opinion online about brands and services. They might be motivated by their own need of self-expression or in search of other consumers' experiences with certain brands and services. Online consumer complaint sites are growing in number and reveal examples of people who have developed hate towards brands once loved, or simply oppose brands that are not aligned with the self. The ease of making these statements makes it important to understand what motivates and drives these behaviors.

On World Versus (2014), people can vote on a numerous set of brands within many different categories, ranging from technology e.g., PS3 versus Xbox 360 to celebrities e.g., Katy Perry versus Lady Gaga, to name a few. This site is one of many showing that consumers tend to have certain attitudes about brands in different categories. We all have our favorites, meaning that we also have brands that we are less found off. Why we either love or hate certain brands vary, nevertheless consumers seem to have an opinion about the brands they choose to either love or hate. Or is it that simple? If I love something, does that mean that I hate something else? Is hate the opposite of love? For brand managers it is important to have an understanding of what consumers think about their brand, but not necessarily everyone has any opinion about the brands they use e.g., brands used out of necessity, such as soap. On World Versus (2014), "I love Coca Cola" got 7562 votes (70,79%), while "I love Pepsi" only got 3121 votes (29,21%). Another infamous battle is Apple versus Samsung. When considering operating systems, "I love Android" got 8563 votes (60,96%), while "I love Apple iOS" got 5485 votes (39,04%), however the battle reached a tie when considering a specific smart phone developed by each of the brands, where "I love Samsung Galaxy" got 5762 votes (51,53%), while "I love iPhone" got 5419 votes (48,47%). This shows how complex the understanding of consumers actually is, when they can love parts of the brand, but not the brand in total.

From previous research we know that some consumers build very strong and intense connections with brands, positive and negative. Certain brands can even be characterized as polarizing, i.e. having both haters and lovers of the brand. One example is McDonald's, which people have either a love or hate relationship towards, indicated by 33% lovers and 29% haters. Amazon on the other hand has

56% lovers and 3% haters, making it the least polarizing brand according to YouGov Brandindex (Lou, Wiles, and Raithel 2013). However, consumers are not necessarily pro or against a brand, they just might be indifferent to the brand due to e.g., brand-self distance.

We want to investigate when feelings towards brands turn negative i.e., relationships where people are very adverse to certain brands. According to Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) there are three components that determine whether you develop brand attachment or brand aversion. Enticing versus annoying the self, enabling versus disenabling the self, or enriching versus impoverishing the self. When the brand possesses e.g., the three negative components, the likelihood that consumers develop an adverse attitude toward the brand is increased. Fournier (1998) developed a framework for better understanding the relationships that consumers form with brands they know and use, and argues for the validity of the relationship proposition in the consumer-brand context, i.e., brands can serve as actual relationship partners where consumers attribute human characteristics to brands. Consumers are not only buying brands because they enjoy them, but also due to the benefits the brands add into their lives. Simply put, consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives (Fournier 1998, 367).

Positive customer brand connections such as "Brand Love" labeled by Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012), and other related constructs, has received much attention in the marketing field, which is understandable as such connections tend to be associated with positive WOM, brand loyalty, increased willingness to pay a price premium, and forgiveness of brand failures. On the contrary, negative consumer brand connections, which might be labeled "Brand Hate," have received less attention throughout the years. Current research on brand dislike (Dalli, Romani, and Gistri 2006) and related constructs such as brand avoidance (Lee, Motion, and Conroy 2009), negative emotions towards brands (Romani, Grappi, and Dalli 2012), far brand-self distance causing negative relationships (Park, Eisingerich, and Park 2013), and emotional brand attachment (Mälar et al. 2011, Park et al. 2010) raises question about the need for a construct such as brand hate. The answer to this question is elusive for many reasons. Although academic researchers and practitioners in marketing have shown interest in studying positive brand connections and brand love (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi 2012),

research to date has not verified how brand hate and brand love differ conceptually or empirically, nor has research focused on the antecedents of brand hate. To the best of our knowledge, subsequent research on antecedents of brand hate is limited, and literature on related constructs cannot fill the gap we wish to address, as there is no assurance that antecedents of related phenomena mirror antecedents of brand hate. Through an extensive literature review we discovered many possible antecedents of brand hate, summarized in the following table:

Antecedents of Brand Hate	Authors
Dissatisfaction	Bryson, Atwal, & Hultén 2013; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012
Personality Traits	Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar 2013; Bryson et al. 2013; Aaker 1997; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012; Dalli, Romani, & Gistri 2006; Escalas & Bettman 2005; Park, Eisingerich, Park 2013; Lee, Motion, & Conroy 2009; Johnson, Matear, & Thomson 2011
Past Experience	Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar 2013; Park, Eisingerich, Park 2013; Lee, Motion, & Conroy 2008
Controllable Information (e.g., advertising)	Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar 2013; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012
Uncontrollable Information (e.g., negative WOM)	Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar 2013; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012
Physical Object (attributes and functions)	Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012; Park, Eisingerich, Park 2013
Symbolic Cultural Object	Mälar et al. 2011; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012
Contagion Effect/Spillover Effect	Norman, Luthans, & Luthans 2005; Roediger III, Meade, & Bergman 2001
David and Goliath (small vs. big)	Gladwell 2013
Unmet Expectations/Promises	Lee, Motion, & Conroy 2009; Dalli, Romani, & Gistri 2006
Business Practices and Ethics	Romani, Grappi, & Dalli 2012; Lee et al. 2009; Dalli, Romani, & Gistri 2006
Country of Origin	Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu, & Hyder 2000; Bryson, Atwal, & Hultén 2013, Batra en al. 2000
Re-branding	Muzellec & Lambkin 2006
Brand Relevance	Fisher, Völckner, & Sattler 2010
Product Category	Fetscherin et al. 2014

Table 1: Summary of antecedents of brand hate

Negative brand relationships have the ability to affect both the consumer and the companies involved. As negative information is more memorable, processed more deeply, and more likely to be shared, Fournier and Alvarez (2013) argue that managing negatives may be more important for developing brand equity, compared to cultivating positive connections with brands, due to the harm it can induce the company as a whole, not only e.g., a specific brand offered by the company. Further, they emphasize the need for more in-depth explorations of specific negative brand engagements, such as love-hate relationships that may contribute to the unexplored dimensions of negative relationships. Moreover, emotions experienced by the consumers are central to the behaviors of consumers.

Thus, the need to investigate negative emotions, such as brand hate, and not only positive emotions is highly relevant in terms of the consequences it might have.

After reviewing previous studies on the topic of brand hate, we are left with many questions we wish to investigate further. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to fill some of the abovementioned gaps in theory. It seems that well known brands and more specifically brands that indirectly express something about the user are the brands most often linked to strong feelings from consumers i.e. brands belonging to visible categories, such as consumer electronics and fast-moving consumer goods. Therefore, we want to explore whether brand hate is caused by love for a competing brand within the same category, as well as in which categories this effect is more apparent. In addition, we want to test how resistant consumers are toward positive information about a direct competitor and how this influences the existing relationship. Hopefully we will receive some valuable insights, which either confirm or challenge previous theory.

2. Theoretical Framework

As mentioned, prior research is limited in terms of looking at the negative aspect of consumer emotions and relationships toward brands. The following section will present a review of previous research and theoretical aspects relevant for the present research. We start by structuring the phenomenon of brand hate and describe the conceptual difference between brand love and brand hate. We then go on to look at important findings related to brand attitude and brand attachment. Finally, we discuss some related constructs to the relationship between brand love and brand hate.
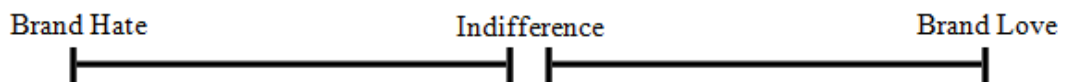
2.1. Brand Hate

2.1.1. Defining Brand Hate

"The opposite of love is not hate, its indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, its indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, its indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, its indifference." – Elie Wiesel (1986)

Ahuvia, Bagozzi, and Batra (2014) use the term brand love to refer to a consumer-brand relationship that corresponds with positive attitude valence, positive emotional connection, self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, and attitude strength. Keller (2013) also discusses brand love and defines it as affinity and adoration towards the brand, especially with respect to other alternatives. Love includes the beliefs that the brand is uniquely qualified as a relationship partner, as well as irreplaceable. Bryson, Atwal, and Dreissig (2010) on the other hand, simply define brand hate as an intense negative emotional affect towards the brand. However, we believe the construct is more complex and in need of deeper understanding. Hate is one of the most overused and misused words in the world, therefore we find it interesting to investigate what this phenomenon actually entails in a marketing context.

Equal to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, there exists a controversy about whether love and hate are equal and opposite (i.e., two opposite points on a single continuum) or independent to some degree. In other words, that the presence of brand hate implies the lack of brand love, and vice versa. Johnson, Matear, and

Thomson (2011) propose that brand attachment and brand aversion represent opposite ends on the scale, and that a transition from one end to the other is possible over time. Building on this, Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013), argues that in the middle of these two ends is indifference i.e., the brand relationship is neutral and there are no feelings for or against the brand. In a similar vein, Giese and Cote (2000) argues that consumer satisfaction and consumer dissatisfaction is not the opposite of each other. Consumers may be satisfied with some aspects and dissatisfied with others, or they may simply not determine whether they are satisfied at all, they are just not dissatisfied i.e., indifferent. We propose that this reasoning also applies for brand hate and brand love i.e., the opposite of brand love is not brand hate, but rather indifference and consequently lack of interest regarding the brand. The figure below shows an illustration of the construct.

Figure1: Brand Love - Indifference - Brand Hate

2.1.2. Effects of Brand Hate

Romani, Grappi, and Dalli's (2012) research focuses on negative emotions related to the intangible aspects of brands and their behavioral effects. The authors seek to identify a full range of negative emotions most frequently experienced in a brand-related context. In their research they derive the negative emotions toward brands (NEB) scale. This scale proves to consist of six negative brand-related emotions: anger, discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness, and worry. Further, the authors test how the NEB scale can be used to predict consumer behavior. Their findings show that sadness and discontent has no effects on consumers negative behavioral responses, worry is expected to lead to brand switching, anger will likely lead to complaining, dislike is likely to lead to negative WOM and brand switching, and embarrassment is likely to lead to complaining.

Further, research indicates that the more self-relevant a consumer-brand relationship is, the more likely anti-brand behaviors are to occur after the brand relationship ends (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011). This may be due to the fact that consumers with a strong relationship to a brand often are harder critics

than consumers with no particular relationship with the brand (Grégoire and Fisher 2008). Consumers with no particular or a neutral relationship with the brand is more likely to avoid it (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011). Consistent with Johnson, Matear, and Thomson's (2011) research, Park, Eisingerich, and Park's (2013) research suggests that when there exist strong dislike toward a brand, the willingness to perform anti-brand actions increases. Johnson, Matear, and Thomson (2011, 113) propose that the reason for this anti-brand behavior is "*the experience of loss and harm to a person's self-concept, not the critical incident or lack thereof.*"

2.2. Brand Attitude and Emotional Brand Attachment

In order to understand our premise of brand hate it is also important to differentiate between brand attitude and emotional brand attachment. On a daily basis, consumers encounter hundreds of brands. Even though they can form an attitude toward each of these brands, they rarely develop an intense emotional attachment with each of these objects, which often is characterized as irreplaceable objects (Schouten and McAlexander 1995).

An attitude is defined as generalized predispositions toward an object (Park and MacInnis 2006). According to Katz (1960), consumers form attitudes toward brands because they provide a function of some kind for a person. Further, he developed a functional theory of attitudes to account for the different types of roles that attitudes can play, and identified four main functions: 1) the utilitarian function where people develop attitudes towards brands to reflect how useful or rewarding they are, 2) the value-expressive function deals with an individual's self and personality, 3) the ego-defensive function deals with attitudes to bolster a perceived weakness and as a defense mechanism from anything threatening, and 4) the knowledge function linked to simplification of decision making due to bounded rationality. Even with this knowledge, it is difficult for managers to understand why consumers have positive or negative attitudes towards brands, based on the notion that attitudes not necessarily is a direct reflection of the obvious characteristics of the brand. In addition, these different types of attitudes toward a brand have implications for the relationship formed with that brand (Keller 2013).

Park and MacInnis (2006) questions the boundaries of the attitude constructs, and identifies a behavioral hierarchy that reflects both stability in the object-behavior linkage and resources devoted to the object. The base level reflects simple brand preferences, while the other extreme is characterized by behaviors such as price insensitivity, involvement, and investment of resources in the brand. Brand attitudes are conceptually, psychologically, and behaviorally distinct from the construct of emotional attachment. Similar to attachment theory in psychology (Bowlby 1979) and the parent-infant relationships, consumers' emotional attachment to a brand might predict their commitment (e.g., brand loyalty) and investment to the brand (e.g., willingness to pay a price premium). The strongest consumer loyalty relationships typically occur when brands combine both functional and emotional considerations (Keller 2013).

Consumers develop different types of relationships with brands. The quality and stability of the brand relationship may vary, from casual to intense, making consumers act differently (Fournier 1998). Keller (2013) proposed a concept termed brand resonance to characterize the nature of brand relationships, more specifically the extent to which a person feels resonated with a brand, as well as "in sync" with it. Brand resonance is explained along two dimensions, intensity and activity. Intensity refers to the strength of the attitudinal attachment to the brand and a sense of community with others, while activity refers to the behavioral changes engendered by this loyalty e.g., repeat purchase rates. Stronger brand attachments are associated with stronger feelings of connection, affection, love, and passion (Thompson, MacInnis, and Park 2005).

Park et al. (2010, 1) conceptually and empirically differentiate between brand attachment and brand attitude strength, defining brand attachment as the strength of the bond connecting the consumer with the brand and brand attitude strength as the positivity or negativity of an attitude weighted by the confidence or certainty with which it is held i.e., the extent to which the attitude is considered valid. The attachment and attitude constructs differ in several ways. While the concept of self is relevant for the attitude construct, it is a critical aspect of attachment (Escalas and Bettman 2003). Attachment is developed over time and can be described as a long-term interaction between the brand and the self. Attachment has strong

motivatinal and behavioral implications such as proximity maintenance i.e., desire to be close (Park et al 2010), separation distress (Bowlby 1979), willingness to defend and preserve the relationship against other alternatives (Johnson and Rusbult 1989), and invest financial resources in the attachment object (Thompson, MacInnis, and Park 2005).

Summing up, attachment range from weak to strong and has "hot" emotional affects, while attitude range from positive to negative and has "cold" judgmental affects. To conclude, brand hate is developed through long-term emotional brand attachment, not short-term attitudes. Also, we agree with the main implication from Kevryn, Fiske, and Malon's (2012) research on "Brands as Intentional Agents Framework," which conclude that consumers can perceive brands in the same way that consumers perceive people i.e., consumers have relationships with brands that resembles that of people, thus creating the possibility to develop deep intense feelings such as love or hate.

2.3. Related Constructs to the Relationship between Brand Love and Brand Hate

2.3.1. Brand Relationship Strength

Since consumers develop different types of relationships with brands, brands take on different roles as well e.g., the brand as a neutral partner, the brand as a negatively viewed partner in a relationship of necessity, or the brand as a partner in a relationship of desire. The strength of the relationship will vary for different brands, even within the same category (Hausman 2001). Fournier (1998) conducted research on the measurement of brand strength in terms of the concept of brand relationship quality, or BRQ, which included the following six main dimensions: 1) interdependence, 2) self-concept connection, 3) commitment, 4) love/passion, 5) intimacy, and 6) partner quality. The construct emphasize the fact that there is more to keeping a brand relationship alive than only positive emotions, it evolves through both brand and consumer actions. Brand relationship strength is also closely connected to the duration of the relationship. Drawing upon Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory, which provide an understanding of the closeness between two individuals, we posit the same theory

to be valid for the interpersonal relationship that develops between consumers and certain brands, progressing from superficial to intimate. A brand love relationship takes time to build, thus the longer the relationship, the stronger it will become.

Previous research has found that when consumers develop a strong brand relationship they are likely to protect this relationship against negative WOM, as well as being more forgiving. Hess, Ganesan, and Klein (2003) predicted in their research that consumers with a strong brand relationship are likely to demand more regarding recovery in service failure. However, their results showed the opposite to be true, as strong brand relationships lead consumers to respond more favorably and have a greater tolerance of failures. This might be because these consumers consider the actions across a longer time horizon (i.e., inadequate performance will be equalized in future exchanges) (Hess, Ganesan, and Klein 2003). Ahluwalia (2002) find similar results in her research on the negativity effect. The negativity effect describes how negative information often gets a greater weighting compared to an equal amount of positive information. The author finds that the negativity effect is restrained when consumers are familiar with and like the brand. Drawing upon this, we posit that a stronger brand relationship is related to restrained negativity effect. Given a strong relationship, positive information will be viewed more positive than it actually is. In conclusion, consumers only see what they want to see.

Further, Johnson and Rusbult (1989) argue that when people are less committed to the relationship, devaluation is unnecessary. Thus, the motivation to devalue alternatives comes from the desire to protect an ongoing relationship. Their findings show that committed people are more likely to judge alternatives more poorly given that they often are very satisfied with their ongoing relationship which they might use as a standard for comparison. We suggest that this also is true regarding the relationship between brand love and brand hate. That is, loving one brand leads one to hate the competing brand. To illustrate, most people knows or have heard about the rivalry between the football clubs Manchester United and Liverpool. Research around sponsorship (e.g., Hickman and Lawrence 2010) show that consumers evaluate the rivaling teams sponsor more negatively and have lower purchase intentions, which may be labeled as the "pitchfork effect."

Further, if the strength of the relationship with the brand is weak one does not evaluate the competitor as negatively as when it is strong. Thompson and Sinha's (2008) research supports this argument. Looking at brand communities, they find that higher levels of participation increase the negative bias toward comparable products from competitors in terms of the type of information discussed and attitudes toward the products. Their results show that higher levels of participation in brand communities leads to loyalty and oppositional loyalty in adoption behavior.

2.3.2. Social Demonstrance and Self-Brand Connection

Levy (1959) took the definition of goods into new realms, recognizing the importance of the symbolism of consumer goods, meaning that the things people buy have personal and social meanings, not only a means to satisfy practical needs. Thus, brands serve as symbolic devices allowing consumers to project their self-image and consequently becoming part of the individual identity of consumers. Similarly, Keller (2013, 552) describes a brand with a symbolic concept as one designed to associate the individual with a desired group, or self-image. It is well established that each consumer's personality influence buying behavior and as brands also have personalities, people tend to choose brands closely aligned to their own personality. In other words, a person's self-concept is easily described in terms of "we are what we consume" and is one of the six facets of brand relationship quality (Keller 2013). Closely related, self-brand connection measure the extent individuals incorporate brands into their self-concept (Escalas and Bettman 2003) and builds on the notion that a brand becomes more meaningful the more closely it is linked to the self (recall the value-expressive function by Katz 1960).

Further, Escalas and Bettman (2005) demonstrated that consumers have stronger self-brand connections to brands consistent with an ingroup than brands inconsistent with an ingroup. This effect was more pronounced for brands that were relatively more symbolic i.e., brands that communicated something to others about the user's self-identity. Thus, consumers may form self-brand connections to brands associated with reference groups to which they belong and avoid self-

brand connection to brands associated with reference groups to which they do not belong. This distinction was also reviewed by Brewer (1999), building on the idea by Sumner (1906) that attitude towards ingroups and corresponding outgroups are negatively related e.g., positive sentiment, attachment and loyalty toward the ingroup may be directly correlated with hatred and hostility toward outgroups. This discrimination between ingroups and outgroups is a matter of favoritism i.e., favoritism toward the ingroup and the absence of favoritism toward the outgroup. Especially when two groups are pursuing the same goal or outcomes e.g., Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola pursuing market share in the carbonated soft drink category or McDonald's and Burger King competing for market share in the fast food category, the outgroups represent a perceived threat. Dissociative reference group are out-groups that the individual is particularly motivated to avoid being associated with, which describes a sense of disidentification. White and Dahl (2007) demonstrated that dissociative reference groups have more important implications for consumer self-brand connections and choices, compared to brands associated with out-groups alone.

Consumers may evaluate different aspects of a brand related to their self-concept e.g., the prestige or exclusivity. However, a prerequisite for the use of brands as symbols is the visibility and social recognition, which is dependent upon the specific product category. In addition, the opportunity for personalization of the product, traditions, and cultural norms are other important factors (Fisher, Völckner, and Sattler 2010). Thus, publicly consumed products are better able to convey symbolic meaning, compared to privately consumed products. Products consumed out of necessity might not provide the symbolic benefits desired of a brand (Bearden and Etzel 1982). In addition, when a product becomes too popular and consequently used by a diverse set of personalities, the product may lose its ability to communicate the specific associations about the individuals using it (e.g., Ed Hardy apparel), thus deteriorating the symbolic value (Escalas and Bettman 2005).

It is understandable that brand hate needs to be investigated further. From the above-mentioned research it is apparent that there is little research on this rather new phenomenon, and it is hard to explain or define what it entails. However, it is reasonable to assume that brand hate is strongly connected to brand attachment.

From previous theoretical findings we also get a clear indication that the connection consumers' form with some brands might say something about the opinions they will have about other brands. Further, looking at theory around ingroup and outgroup makes us question whether it is possible that the love and attachment consumers develop toward a brand makes them hate other brands. In order to explore this, research and theoretical findings regarding oppositional loyalty is interesting. In study 1 we want to examine the concept of oppositional loyalty, especially how brand hate might be affected by love for another brand.

3. Study 1

The purpose of study 1 is to test one possible antecedent of brand hate. Drawing upon relevant findings from previous research and theory around oppositional loyalty, we start with the development of the hypothesis. We propose that the stronger the love for a brand, the stronger the hate for the competing brand. Further, an explanation of the method used to obtain the results will be provided. Specifically, we will describe how the study was designed and which methods were used to acquire respondents. The chapter ends with a discussion of the results.

3.1. Oppositional Loyalty: Hate for the Competing Brand

Johnson and Rusbult (1989) studied personal relationships and how individuals resist temptations. They find that as individuals become more committed to their partners they tend to describe alternatives in increasingly negative terms. When alternative partners look less appealing to the committed individual, the relationship is protected. The tendency to devalue alternative partners comes from the experience of happiness and satisfaction from the current relationship. The authors argue that there are two lines of reasoning as to why highly committed individuals devalue alternative partners: 1) a motivational explanation, which indicates that the presence of an attractive alternative produces a conflict for the individual that might be reduced or removed by devaluing that alternative, and 2) a perceptual explanation, where alternatives looks less good to the highly committed individual since their expectations have been inflated as a consequence of involvement in a very satisfying relationship (Johnson and Rusbult 1989, 968). As mentioned, the tendency to devalue alternatives is highest when individuals are highly committed and the alternative proposes a big threat. Thus, it is only when individuals have strong positive feelings (love) for a brand that they will develop strong negative feelings (hate) toward the competing brand.

Oppositional loyalty can be applied to explain why we believe that love for a competing brand can be characterized as an antecedent of brand hate. Oppositional brand loyalty may be described as *loyal users of a given brand may derive an important component of the meaning of the brand and their sense of self from their perceptions of competing brands, and may express their brand loyalty*

by playfully opposing those competing brands" (Muniz and Hamer 2001, 355). Oppositional brand loyalty manifests itself in two ways, 1) consumers define themselves in terms of what and how they do not consume, not just in the way they do consume, and 2) consumers show their opposition to competing brands by starting rivalries with users of the competing brand (Muniz and Hamer 2001). This oppositional loyalty that leads to an adversarial view of competing brands may benefit companies by reducing the likelihood that customers switch to other competing brands (Thompson and Sinha 2008), e.g., members of a brand community tend to avoid discussing the merits and use of products from rival brands in favor of products from the preferred brand (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). As members of brand communities tend to be loyal to the preferred brand and have oppositional loyalty for the competing brand, we believe that love for a brand leads to hate toward the competing brand.

Our central assumption is that love for a competing brand can be considered an antecedent of brand hate. However, we argue that a prerequisite for this to be true is that a strong competitor with similar products exists. Thompson and Sinha (2008, 67-68) investigated oppositional loyalty and argue that oppositional loyalty is conditional on the presence of a comparable product, as 1) bias is only created when there is a product to make comparison, 2) oppositional loyalty may be inhibited in the absence of a comparable product from the preferred brand (diffusion theory), and 3) out-group bias should lead to oppositional loyalty in the form of a reduced likelihood of adopting a new product from a competing brand, given the availability of a comparable product. Johnson and Rusbult (1989, 968) also support this. They find that the more committed one is to the relationship, the more likely one is to devalue alternatives. This process is most apparent when the alternative poses the greatest threat to the current relationship i.e., when the alternative is exceptionally attractive, and when the individual is faced with an actual opportunity to become involved with that brand. In a similar vein, Festinger (1954) and social comparison theory posits that a fundamental component of human nature is in fact to compare one's self with others. However, this tendency to compare one's self with others decreases as the difference between others opinion and one's own increases. Therefore, the prerequisite to hate something is to love something else, but only in situations where direct competitors exist. Based on the previous notions we developed the following hypothesis:

H₁: Love for a competing brand strengthens brand hate for direct competitor.

Figure 2 presents an illustration of our hypothesis. The model shows that brand hate is caused by love for a competing brand. The stronger the brand love, the stronger the brand hate will become.
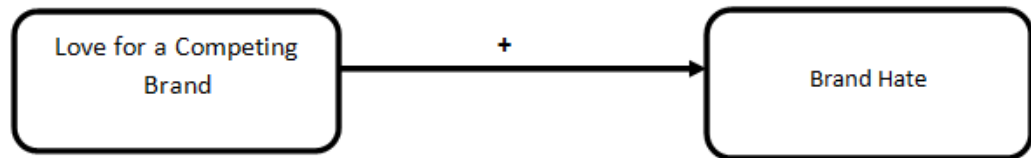
Figure 2: Framework linking love for a competing brand to brand hate

3.2. Method

The literature has given us a background and an indication of the connection between love for a competing brand and brand hate. However, this needs to be tested empirically in order to establish actual consumer perceptions. Study 1 was designed in order to test *H₁*, which states that love for a competing brand strengthens brand hate for direct competitor. To test the hypothesis, an analysis of consumers' level of hate and love for pre-specified brands within five categories was carried out. We start this section by presenting how and where the data was collected. We then explain which measures were used, followed by the results obtained from study 1. Finally, a discussion of the result will be presented.

3.2.1. Data Collection and Sample

Before conducting the research, we had to determine the population from which we wanted to draw conclusions. We see a tendency that the most famous brands receive the highest frequency of negative (and positive) emotions and feedback. Given that many of the world's biggest and most famous brands originates from the U.S. we see it as most interesting for our research. Respondents were reached by using the crowdsourcing service Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which is a web page that enables individuals or businesses to co-ordinate the use of human intelligence to perform tasks. This is an inexpensive and rapid method to obtain high-quality data, and realistic compensation rates do not affect data quality

(Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011). We used probability sampling when selecting respondents in order for our results to become generalizable (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2012). More specifically, we used stratified probability sampling. That is, we got a random sample of respondents registered in MTurk. Further, the representativeness of a sample is often judged by comparing the characteristics of the sample to those of the population (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2012). Buhrmester, Kwang and Gosling (2011) find that MTurk participants are more demographically diverse and representative of non college participants, than those typically used in traditional samples. Based on the notion that a relatively small sample (a few hundred) is enough to represent millions of people (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2012), 150 respondents were considered appropriate for this study.

In order to improve the response rates in our survey we followed recommendations from Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2012). We made the survey as short and concise as possible, assured respondents of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as offering respondents incentives to take part in our study. In addition, we pre-tested the questionnaire on a small sample in order to identify and eliminate potential problems. The survey was refined based on the comments, then distributed through MTurk. The first 20 respondents obtained were classified as "masters." This is respondents who have demonstrated consistent accuracy in a certain types of human intelligence tasks (HIT) across a variety of requesters. However, due to time limitations we had to change the criteria to: 1) total approved HITs is not less than 5000, and 2) HIT approval rate is not less than 98%. These criteria let us attract serious and dedicated respondents and avoid scammers. As an incentive to participate in our study the respondents were paid between 50 to 80 cent. In total 165 respondents (n = 165) participated in the study, of whom 59.6 % were males and 40.4% females, and 44.9% was in the age group 25-35. In addition, 41.7% of respondents had completed a 4-year college degree.

In the survey we used five different categories to determine the proposed love-hate relationship, each category consisting of two brands. Table 2 shows an overview of the categories and brands within each category. We chose different categories to distinguish between potential differences in the strength of the

relationship between love for a competing brand and brand hate. The decision of which categories to examine was taken after a thorough discussion.

Category	Brand
Carbonated Soft Drinks	Coca-Cola Pepsi-Cola
Consumer Electronics	Apple Samsung
Political Parties	The Republican Party The Democratic Party
Fast Food	McDonald's Burger King
Discounted Retailer	Walmart Target

Table 2: Overview over category and brand

Within the carbonated soft drinks category we choose two obvious rivals, Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola. This is two brands that offer a very similar product, and who puts many resources into marketing in order to differentiate their product (e.g., Pepsi Max taste challenge). Coca-Cola is a brand for everyone, focusing on cohesion, most recently represented with the "share a Coke with..." campaign. On the other hand, Pepsi-Cola is targeting young people by portraying a sporty and "live for now" image. In the consumer electronics category, Apple and Samsung were chosen. This is due to the fact that the two brands represent a symbolic value to the consumers, e.g., consumers buy Apple in order to feel a connection to other users of Apple, and not merely to satisfy practical needs. As mentioned earlier, communities are more likely to form around strong brands such as Apple and Samsung, with high competition and a strong image, thus we expect differences in opinion concerning these two brands. Political parties were also chosen due to its connection to social demonstration. Consumers tend to support the party who has both personal and social meaning to them. Further, political parties are very symbolic for consumers and project their self-image. For the fast food category, McDonald's and Burger King were chosen which two very similar fast food chains are. McDonald's may be described as being family friendly with the mascot "Ronald McDonald" and "happy meal" for the children, while Burger is pursuing a more American and tough image. This category was chosen to see if there are any category effects regarding brand love and brand hate, i.e., that you either love or hate the whole category, not only one specific brand within the

category. The same reasoning applies to why Walmart and Target were chosen for the discounted retailer category. Walmart and Target offers the same kind of products and services, and are the two largest discount retailer chains in the U.S. To conclude, all brands chosen were based on their popularity and competitiveness (a prerequisite for our model) within their respective category.

Before starting the questionnaire, a brief introduction was presented to the participants. Qualtrics was used to develop the questionnaire and to collect the data needed. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part, respondents were introduced to the brands within the five categories. All respondents were presented with every brand. However, the brands were randomized in order to control for order effects. The hate and love for each brand were measured based on five questions. The final part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions in order to obtain a better understanding of our respondents. Lastly, the respondents were thanked for their participation and received a code needed to collect their money. All respondents were required to answer all questions in the survey.

3.2.2. Measures

Our measurement scales are based on empirically validated scales from previous studies. In order to measure brand love and brand hate toward the different brands within each category we used a measurement scale from Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013). The authors used the scale to test a brand's heart share among respondents, and we consider this to be appropriate for our study as well. A value of 100 indicated the highest degree of love and 0 indicated the highest degree of hate (item 1). It is recommended to measure a construct using several measurement scales in order to obtain higher validity. Thus, in order to get a better overview of the two constructs, we adapted two questions from Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012). These were measured on a ten-point Likert scale anchored by "not at all" and "very much" (item 2-5). An overview of the items used is displayed in the table below. For an overview of the complete survey, please refer to appendix 1.

Item	Question
Item 1	Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to "brand X," relative to all other brands in the category?
Item 2	Overall, how much do you hate "brand X?"
Item 3	Overall, how much do you love "brand X?"
Item 4	Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward "brand X?"
Item 5	Describe the extent to which you feel love toward "brand X?"

Table 3: Overview of items used in study 1 questionnaire.

3.2.3. Results

The data was downloaded to SPSS in order to conduct the analysis. There were some unfinished responses which were excluded from further analysis (9 respondents in total). Thus, we ended up with 156 (n = 156) valid responses. Before running the analysis some adjustments were made in order to be able to assess the data in a more appropriate manner. We found it suitable to combine two of the variables measuring brand hate and brand love (item 2 and 4, and item 3 and 5). A reliability analysis was conducted to make sure that the variables measured the same underlying construct. In order to combine the items into one, a Cronbach Alpha above .80 is preferred (Pallant 2011). Appendix 2 shows the new variables, all with a Cronbach's Alpha above .90.

A correlation analysis was conducted to test H_1. This analysis allows us to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. Preliminary analysis was conducted to make sure that there were no violation to the assumptions of linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity. Correlation analysis was used to explore the relationship between brand love and brand hate for the competing brand in the five categories. To decide the strength of the correlation we used Cohen's (1988) guidelines where .10 - .29 indicates a weak correlation, .30 - .49 a moderate correlation, and .50 - 1.0 a strong correlation. The correlation values can vary from -1 to +1 where the sign indicates whether there is a positive correlation (i.e., as one variables increases, so does the other) or a negative correlation (i.e., as one variable increases, the other decreases) between the variables. If the correlation is 0 it indicates no relationship between the variables. We proposed that love for a competing brand strengthens brand hate. This implies that we expected to get a positive correlation between love for one brand and hate for the competing brand, or a negative correlation between

hate (love) for one brand and hate (love) for the competing brand. Significant results were achieved for all categories. However, some of the results challenge our hypothesis. In total, the analysis shows support for H_1 in three out of five categories.

Carbonated Soft Drinks Category

For the carbonated soft drinks category results indicates a weak positive correlation between love for Coca-Cola and love for Pepsi-Cola, r = .281, n = 156, p = .000, with high levels of for love for Coca-Cola associated with high levels of love for Pepsi-Cola, and vice versa. Results between hate for Coca-Cola and hate for Pepsi-Cola shows a strong positive correlation, r = .445, n = 156, p = .000, with high levels of hate for Coca-Cola associated with high levels of hate for Pepsi-Cola, and vice versa. Result for the continuous rating scale (item 1) is in agreement with these results with a weak positive correlation, r = .221, n = 156, p = .005. There are no significant result showing that when love for one brand increases so does hate for the competing brand. Thus, H_1 is not supported. The correlation scores for Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola are displayed in the following table:

	Love/Hate		Love/Love		Hate/Hate		Assign 100 points	
	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value
Pepsi-Cola	.022	.783	.281	.000	.445	.000	.221	.005
Coca-Cola	- .063	.438	.281	.000	.445	.000	.221	.005

Table 4: Correlations between love and hate for Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola

The figure below shows an illustration of the average scores of love and hate for Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola measured on a ten-point scale (item 2-5) and on a continuous rating scale (item 1). As we can see, the respondents do not feel strong hate toward any of the two brands, nor do they express strong love towards the brands. In all, the feelings of love and hate for Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola are quite similar, but as we might expect Coca-Cola is ranging a little higher on love and a little lower on hate than Pepsi-Cola.
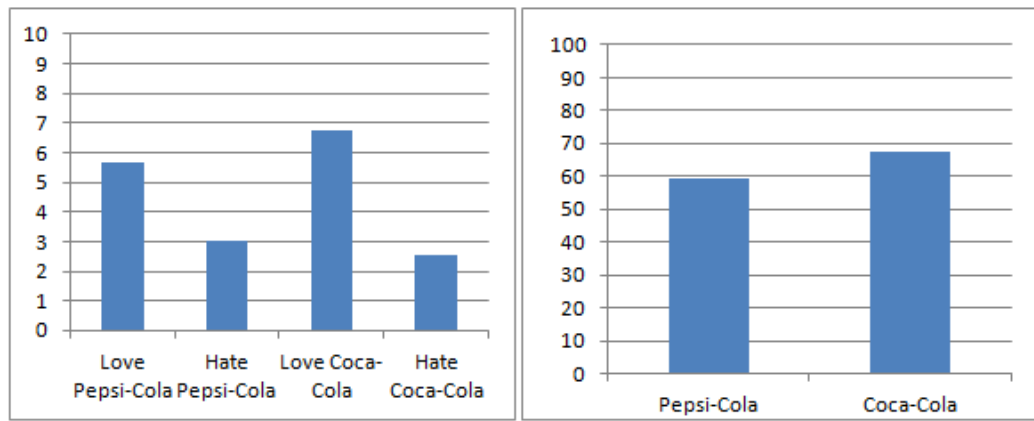
Figure 3: Mean scores for love and hate towards Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola

Consumer Electronics Category

For the consumer electronics category results shows a moderate positive correlation between love for Apple and love for Samsung, r = .381, n = 156, p = .000, with higher levels of love for Apple associated with higher levels of love for Samsung, and vice versa. Results between hate for Apple and hate for Samsung shows a weak positive correlation, r = .210, n = 156, p = .008, with higher levels of hate for Apple associated with higher levels of hate for Samsung, and vice versa. The continuous rating scale shows the same results with a moderate positive correlation, r = .316, n = 156, p = .000. Further, results shows a weak positive correlation between love for Apple and hate for Samsung, r = .187, n = 156, p = .019, with higher levels of love for Apple associated with higher levels of hate for Samsung, which supports H_1. The correlation scores for Apple and Samsung are displayed in the following table:

	Love/Hate Correlation	P-value	Love/Love Correlation	P-value	Hate/Hate Correlation	P-value	Assign 100 points Correlation	P-value
Apple	.187	.019	.381	.000	.210	.008	.316	.000
Samsung	.110	.170	.381	.000	.210	.008	.316	.000

Table 5: Correlations between love and hate for Apple and Samsung

The figure below shows an illustration of the average scores of love and hate for Apple and Samsung measured on a ten-point scale (item 2-5) and on a continuous rating scale (item 1). Similar to the carbonated soft drinks category, measures for love and hate are more or less similar for both brands, with love ranging higher than hate. This might be because love is easier to express than hate, or because consumer feel indifferent toward the brand.
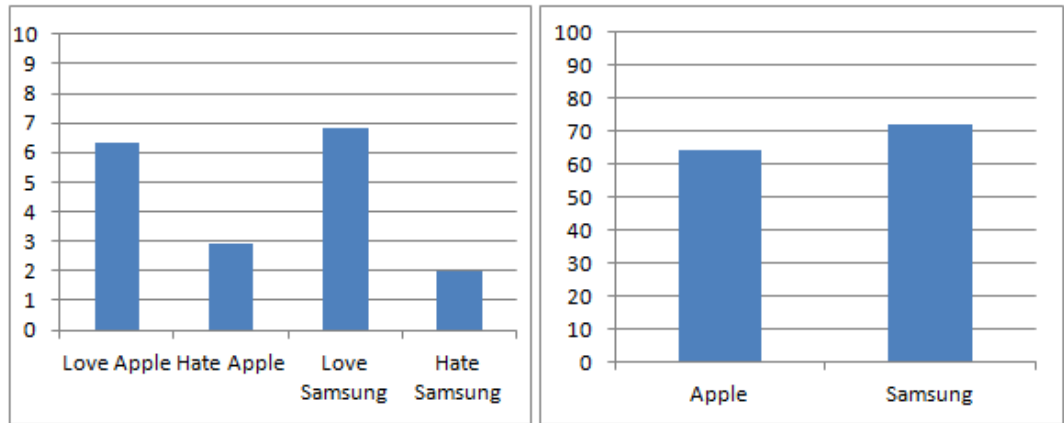
Figure 4: Mean scores for love and hate towards Apple and Samsung

Political Parties

For political parties results show a moderate positive correlation between love for the Republican Party and hate for the Democratic Party, r = .483, n = 156, p = .000, with higher levels of love for the Republican Party associated with higher levels of hate for the Democratic Party. We achieved the same result between love for the Democratic Party and hate for the Republican Party, showing a moderate positive correlation, r = .301, n = 156, p = .000, with higher levels of hate for the Republican Party associated with higher levels of love for the Democratic Party. The continuous rating scale shows the same results with a moderate negative correlation, r = - .316, n = 156, p = .003. These results support H_1. The correlation scores for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are displayed in the following table:

	Love/Hate Correlation	P-value	Love/Love Correlation	P-value	Hate/Hate Correlation	P-value	Assign 100 points Correlation	P-value
Republican Party	.483	.000	-.096	.233	-.097	.230	-.237	.003
Democratic Party	.301	.000	-.096	.233	-.097	.230	-.237	.003

Table 6: Correlations between love and hate for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party

The figure below shows an illustration of the average scores of love and hate for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party measured on a ten-point scale (item 2-5) and on a continuous rating scale (item 1). Compared to the average scores for the brands in the other categories the scores for love and hate for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are more on the same level. This is

also the only category in which love is rated lower than hate (the Republican Party). That the scores for love and hate are more similar here compared to the other categories might be why we got the strongest support for our hypothesis in this category.
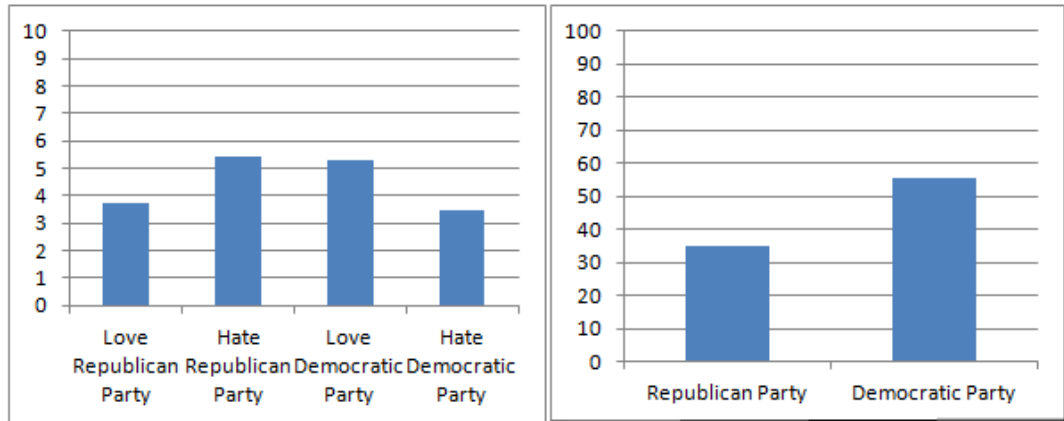

Figure 5: Mean scores for love and hate towards the Republican Party and the Democratic Party

Fast Food Category

For the fast food category results are similar to those of the carbonated soft drinks category. There was a strong positive correlation between love for McDonald's and love for Burger King, $r = .679$, $n = 156$, $p = .000$, with higher levels of love for McDonald's associated with higher levels of love for Burger King, and vice versa. Results between hate for McDonald's and hate for Burger King shows a strong, positive correlation, $r = .601$, $n = 156$, $p = .000$, with higher levels of hate for McDonald's associated with higher levels of hate for Burger King. The continuous rating scale shows a strong positive correlation, $r = .601$, $n = 156$, $p = .000$, and results between hate for McDonald's and love for Burger King shows a weak positive correlation, $r = - .195$, $n = 156$, $p = .015$, shows the same result. This does not support H_1. The correlation scores for McDonald's and Burger King are displayed in the following table:

| | Love/Hate | | Love/Love | | Hate/Hate | | Assign 100 points | |
	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value
McDonald's	- .104	.197	.679	.000	.601	.000	.601	.000
Burger King	- .195	.015	.679	.000	.601	.000	.601	.000

Table 7: Correlations between love and hate for McDonald's and Burger King

The figure below shows an illustration of the average scores of love and hate for McDonald's and Burger King measured on a ten-point scale (item 2-5) and on a continuous rating scale (item 1). The scores for love and hate for the two brands are almost identical. This might be a reflection of the correlation results showing that as hate or love for one brand increases so does it for the other brand.
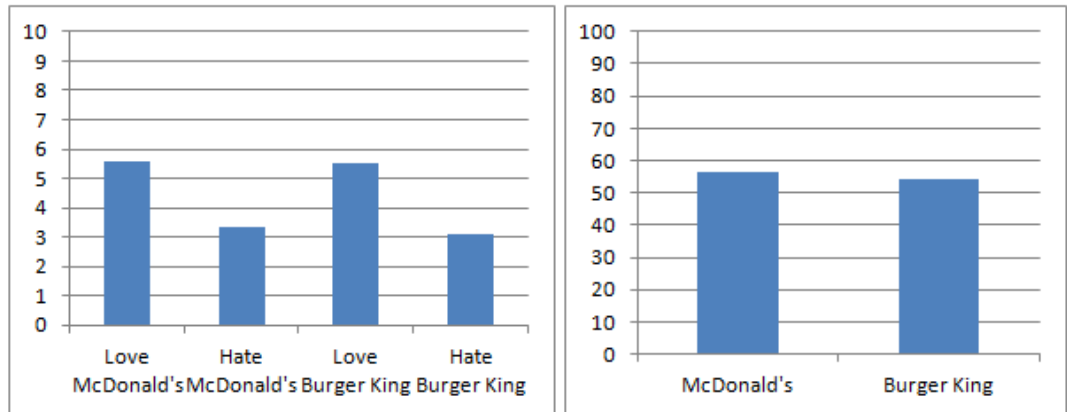

Figure 6: Mean scores for love and hate towards McDonald's and Burger King

Discounted Retailer Category

Results for the discounted retail category show a weak positive correlation between love for Walmart and love for Target, r = .244, n = 156, p = .002, with higher level of love for Walmart associated with higher levels of love for Target, and vice versa. Results shows a weak positive correlation between hate for Walmart and hate for Target, r = .200, n = 156, p = .012, with higher levels of hate for Walmart associated with higher levels of hate for Target. Further, results shows a weak positive correlation between love for Walmart and hate for Target, r = .179, n = 156, p = .025, with higher levels of love for Walmart associated with higher level of hate for Target. This result shows support for H_1. The correlation scores for Walmart and Target are displayed in the following table:

	Love/Hate		Love/Love		Hate/Hate		Assign 100 points	
	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value	Correlation	P-value
Walmart	.179	.025	.244	.002	.200	.012	.020	.806
Target	.042	.602	.244	.002	.200	.012	.020	.806

Table 8: Correlations between love and hate for Walmart and Target

The figure below shows an illustration of the average scores of love and hate for Walmart and Target measured on a ten-point scale (item 2-5) and on a continuous

rating scale (item 1). Here we got the highest measure of hate across all categories. It is also worth noticing that the average score for love and hate for Walmart are more similar than that for Target.
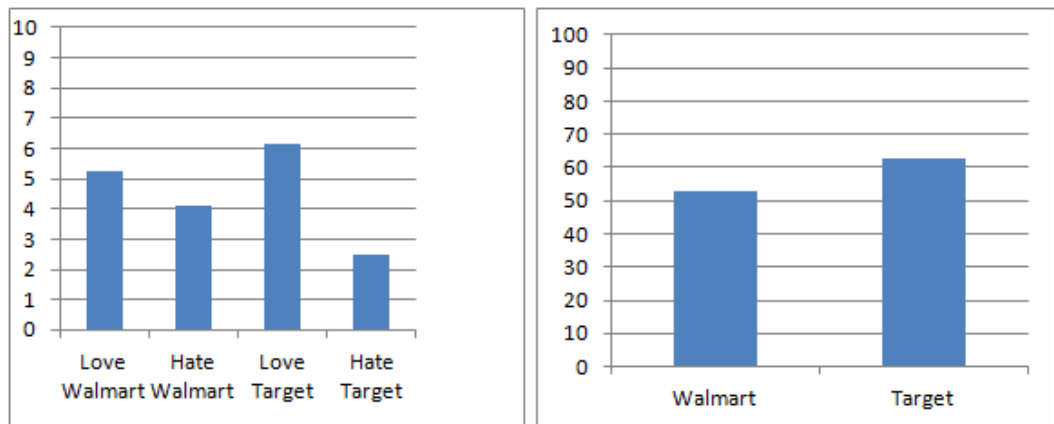
Figure 7: Mean scores for love and hate towards Walmart and Target

3.2.4. Discussion

The primary focus of study 1 was to investigate if love for a competing brand is an antecedent of brand hate. The results provides support for our hypothesis in three of the five categories i.e., consumers who feel love towards one brand (e.g., Apple) feel hate towards the competing brand (e.g., Samsung). Results show strongest support for the hypothesis within the political party category and the consumer electronics category. We posit that this is because these two categories are characterized by having a higher signaling value than the other three categories (carbonated soft drinks, fast food, and discounted retailer). For the Republican Party and the Democratic Party we got that the stronger the love for one party, the stronger the hate for the other party. Regarding the consumer electronics category it is worth noting that we only obtained significant result for increased love towards Apple and consequently increased hate towards Samsung, but not vice versa. However, we argue that this is likely to happen eventually and that the p-value would become significant if the sample size had been larger. The same applies to the discounted retailer category, where we obtained results showing higher levels of love for Walmart associated with higher levels of hate for Target but not vice versa.

Drawing upon the results from study 1 we can conclude that H_1 is strongest in categories with high signaling function i.e., badge value. When the ownership or use of a specific product category is socially visible, and consequently has high social and declarative value, it is often referred to as the "badge value" of products. In other words, product categories high in social signaling value (Batra et al. 2000). Voting for e.g., the Democratic Party signal more about a consumer than e.g., going to McDonald's. This emphasizes the fact that some categories are used out of necessity, while other categories are used specifically by consumers to communicate to others who they are and what they stand for. Brands such as Louis Vuitton or Hermés are often characterized by high price, which differentiate these brands from other brands and creates a shared sense of exclusivity. For Louis Vuitton and similar brands the high price is a part of the brands badge value as it clearly signals something to the "outsiders", e.g., "I make enough money to buy this bag."

Another takeaway from study 1 is the fact that people develop relationship towards brands, often characterized by strong and intense feelings, both toward the preferred brand and the competitor. What can managers learn from this? Can I as a manager take advantage of the fact that consumers love my brand, and hate my competitor? That situation often rises through involvement in a brand community, which is the most common way of using brands to signal status or group membership. According to Keller (2013), the brand may convey a sense of community, where customers feel a connection with other people associated with the brand, fellow users or even employees of the brand e.g., Apple. In their study, Ewing, Wagstaff, and Powell (2013) focuses specifically on the rivalry between two competing mainstream brand communities, the automotive brands Ford and Holden (part of General Motors) in Australia. The most interesting finding in their study is described by the following, "the hatred they felt for the opposition was only matched by the loyalty they felt for their own company." While a community may form around any brand, especially now with the ease of the Internet, communities are more likely to form around brands with a strong image and badge value, rich history and threatening competition (Muniz and Hamer 2001). Social identity theory relates to brand communities, as social psychologists explain how belonging to a group engenders the social "we," rather than the individual "I." Social identification is the cognitive mechanism underlying group

behavior and through identification with the ingroup, the perception of oneness with or belongingness to the group, i.e., comparing "us" to "them" (Haslam et al., 2006).

Looking at how communities form around brands and how they might develop oppositional loyalty made us interested in investigating this further. From previous research we know that a consumer tend to respond favorably toward ingroups and unfavorably toward outgroups. This effect seems to be more pronounced for brands with higher signaling value. Therefore, we wished to examine how consumers involved with a brand with strong badge value would react if they were given positive information about an outgroup. Will there be a change in their attitude and attachment toward the brand? Will they respond favorably, unfavorably, or will they simply not care? Drawing upon the abovementioned theory, as well as results found in study 1, we developed study 2.

4. Study 2

Study 2 extends study 1 by further exploring results found in study 1. More specifically, we want to explore how people react to positive information about both a direct and an indirect competitor of their preferred brand. From study 1 the strongest love-hate relationship exists in categories high in signaling value, therefore we decided to examine a category that clearly signal differences between consumers, namely choice of higher educational institution. Further, we wanted to investigate how consumers' scores on three variables, brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment, change after receiving positive information about a direct competitor, as well as an indirect competitor.

We propose that brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment toward brand A will increase after being exposed to positive information about brand B (direct competitor), creating a bolstering effect. According to Chernev (2001), this confirmatory processing describes consumers with an already established preference for one alternative (brand A) and the likelihood that these consumers interpret the new information (about brand B) in a biased manner that bolsters the attractiveness of the initially preferred brand (brand A). Further, we propose that this result only is valid when the positive information concerns a direct competitor, i.e., positive information about brand C (indirect competitor) should have no effect on brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment, indicating indifference. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, the reasoning behind this prediction is due to the negative effect positive information regarding competitor can have on the respondents preferred brand. When respondents are made aware of a potentially better alternative to their place of study, this information can pose a threat to their self-identity.

Obviously, negative information receives more weight and attention than positive information, due to the consequences negative information might have. In terms of a consumer-brand relationship, negative information can have a devastating effect while positive information only contributes to the relationship or helps strengthen the consumer-brand relationship. Negative publicity rarely has an advantageous impact, yet its existence is prevailing. Past research shows that strong consumer-brand relationships minimize the impact of negative brand information (positive brand information regarding competitor) on brand equity

(Ahluwalia, Burnkrkant & Unnava 2000), as well as promoting tolerance against negative information.

Related to our research objective, Johnson and Rusbult (1989, 967) tested the hypothesis that people who are more committed to their relationships devalue potential alternative partners, especially attractive and threatening alternatives. In other words, the more attractive the alternative, the greater the threat. Drawing upon this, a direct competitor poses a greater threat due to similar offerings, compared to an indirect competitor. Thus, respondents will devalue the direct competitor while at the same time increasing their scores across the three variables (brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment). The indirect competitor will not be affected, as respondents are indifferent to information not applicable to them. Based on this, we propose the following conceptual model and the associated hypotheses:
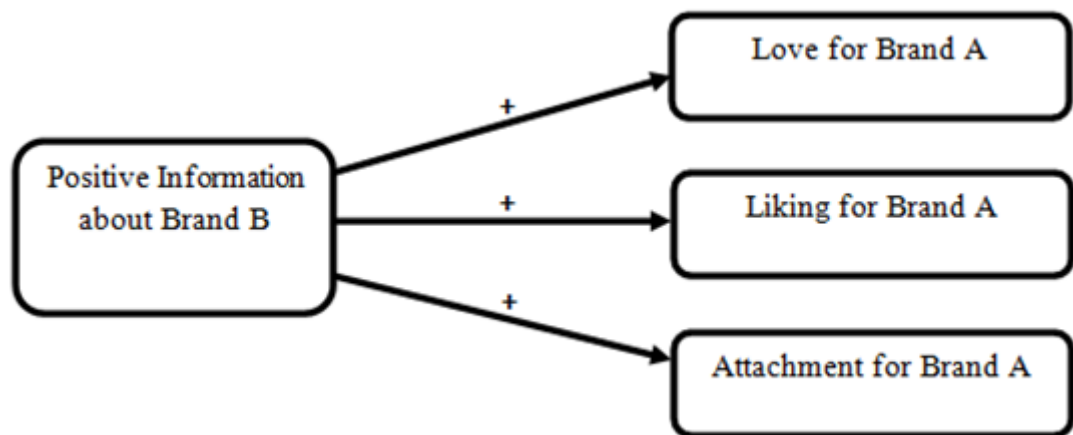

Figure 8: Conceptual framework linking positive news about competitor to brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment

> H_{2a}: *Positive information about brand B strengthens love for brand A*
> H_{2b}: *Positive information about brand C has no effect on love for brand A*
> H_{3a}: *Positive information about brand B strengthens liking for brand A*
> H_{3b}: *Positive information about brand C has no effect on liking for brand A*
> H_{4a}: *Positive information about brand B strengthens attachment for brand A*
> H_{4b}: *Positive information about brand C has no effect on attachment for brand A*

4.1. Method

The objective of this study was to examine the differences in scores on three variables related to a specific brand, before and after exposure to positive information about a direct competitor and an indirect competitor. We start by presenting how and where the data was obtained, as well as an explanation of the measures used, followed by an analysis of the results. Finally, a discussion of the results will be presented.

4.1.1. Data Collection and Sample

As mentioned, we decided to focus on a category with high badge value, namely choice of higher educational institution. The survey was conducted in Oslo, Norway, thus we found it reasonable to choose Norwegian brands. We wanted to investigate how students at one specific educational institution react to positive information about a direct competitor versus positive information about an indirect competitor. The survey is based on three rather different educational institutions in Oslo. BI Norwegian Business School (BI) (where the survey was distributed), Oslo School of Management (OSM) (direct competitor), and the University of Oslo (UiO) (indirect competitor).

The necessary data was collected by physically asking students to take our survey. Stratified probability sampling was used, and 100 respondents were considered representative for the study. We handed out a compressed version of the survey link (by using www.bitly.com), to ease the typing for the respondents. In addition, we made use of the reciprocity construct, which refers to responding to a positive action with another positive action, i.e., by giving the respondents an incentive (candy), people tend to get frequently more nicer and cooperative, due to the feeling of a transaction occurring. This technique was used in order to reach the number of respondents needed in a timely manner. Our sample consisted only of bachelor students, as they are more comparable to students at the other institutions with similar bachelor degree options. In total we obtained 132 responses (n = 132). Of these 63.2% were female and 36.8% males, and 52.6% were in the age group 19-22. Further, most of the respondents were on the last year of their bachelor degree (52.6%), which was preferable as respondents with two years of

completed study have had the time to develop a relationship, and consequently an attitude and attachment toward BI.

Like in study 1, we used Qualtrics to design the questionnaire and collect the data needed. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. In the first part respondents were asked to indicate their love, liking, and attachment toward BI. In order to not reveal our intention with the survey, we asked the respondents to answer the same questions about another familiar Norwegian brand, Ruter, which was expected to evoke strong feelings from the respondents. Ruter is a service provider company for public transportation in Oslo and Akershus, including metro, train, tram, bus, and boat. For most people, public transportation can be characterized as a necessary evil, used by people without personal transportation vehicles to travel from point A to point B. In addition, people use this option to avoid traffic congestion and rush hour on their way to either work or school, therefore punctuality is crucial. However, technical problems and delays are not uncommon, consequently people view public transportation and Ruter as a necessary evil as other viable alternatives does not exist.

The second part presented our manipulation. The constructed stimuli were a fictitious newspaper article, indicating the benefits of attending other educational institutions. The article stated the following about the other institution, where respondents randomly received either information about OSM or UiO:

In short, the translated version alternately states that UiO or OSM has received positive reviews in a recent report, such as higher student satisfaction, increase in number of new applicants, 9/10 hired immediately after graduation, as well as positive recommendations from businesses.

In part three of the questionnaire, with the positive competitor information still in mind, the respondents was asked the same questions as before manipulation. In addition they were asked to indicate their degree of likelihood on four different statements (table 10), related to the expected change in the three variables, ranging from "highly unlikely" to "highly likely". Similar to study 1, the questionnaire ended with demographics, followed by a short text informing the respondents that the information given about OSM and UiO was fictitious.

4.1.2. Measures

We based the items used for our measurement scales on empirically validated scales from previous studies. Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) asked respondents to indicate a brand's heart share by assigning love points, relative to competing brands. The more points assigned, the more you love that brand (item 1). This scale was also used in study 1.

Using item 1, the respondents had to indicate their relative positivity/negativity and love/hate towards BI by using a continuous rating scale. This measurement scale allows the respondents to rate BI by placing the cursor at a specific position on the line, that runs from one extreme (strongly negative and hate) to the other extreme (strongly positive and love). By using this technique, the respondents can choose the exact position that best describe their opinion (Malhotra 2010). Further, we applied and adapted two questions from Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012), items 2 and 3.

Item	Question
Item 1	Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to BI Norwegian Business School, relative to all other brands in the category?
Item 2	Original: Overall, how much do you love "brand X?" Adapted: Overall, how much do you like BI?
Item 3	Original: Describe the extent to which you feel love toward "brand X." Adapted: Describe the extent to which you feel attached toward BI.

Table 9: Overview if items used in study 2 questionnaire

The measures were adapted to better fit common Norwegian expressions, as well as to investigate if there is a difference between love, liking, and attachment. Further, the respondents were asked to answer these questions by using seven response categories i.e., 7 point likert scale. In total, the four questions was asked both before and after manipulation, in order to explore the differences between the group exposed to manipulation about OSM and the group exposed to manipulation about UiO. As mentioned, we also added four statements after the manipulation, in order to investigate if the manipulation had any influence on their response to these statements.

Statement	Question
Statement 1	If you were to choose place of study one more time, what is the likelihood that you would choose BI?
Statement 2	If the student fee increased with 10%, what is the likelihood that you would choose BI?
Statement 3	If BI was not within close proximity of you, what is the likelihood that you would choose BI?
Statement 4	What is the likelihood that you will continue your education at BI?

Table 10: Statements after manipulation

4.1.3. Results

Before analyzing our data, unfinished responses were excluded from the dataset, leaving us with 114 valid respondents (n = 114). Further we found it appropriate to combine two of our variables. The respondents were asked to answer the following question "*Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to BI Norwegian Business School, relative to all other brands in the category?*" This question was asked twice, both in terms of degree of positivity/negativity and degree of love/hate. We wanted to determine if the two questions were measuring the same underlying construct, namely the term labeled "brand love." Thus, we conducted a test for internal consistency, using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to DeVellis (2003), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale should be above .7. Combining the degree of positivity/negativity and love/hate before manipulation and positivity/negativity and love/hate after manipulation reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .856 and .849 respectively. Values above .8 are preferable, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability for the scales.

Students at BI was asked to participate in a survey designed to measure their change in the following three variables, brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment scores, after being exposed to positive information about a direct competitor (OSM) and an indirect competitor (UiO). Their brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment scores were measured before the manipulation (time 1), and after the manipulation (time 2). In other words, is there a significant change in brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment scores before and after manipulation?

In order to assess which manipulation that contributed to this result, we divided the dataset, one for respondents exposed to positive information about the direct competitor (OSM) and the other for respondents exposed to positive information about the indirect competitor (UiO). A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare mean scores at time 1 and time 2. Drawing upon our conceptual model, the three variables should change differently according to manipulation received. For respondents exposed to manipulation concerning OSM, there was a significant effect for time on brand attachment. From the descriptive statistics output box, an increase in the mean value from time 1 to time 2 indicates the

proposed direction according to our hypothesis (figure 9). Wilk's Lambda = .92, F $(1,60)$ = 5.110, p = .027, partial eta squared = .078. The p value is less than .05, which suggests that there was a significant change with a moderate effect size in brand attachment scores across the two time periods for respondents exposed to manipulation concerning OSM. Thus, the result support H_{4a} as positive information about a direct competitor stimulates a bolstering effect on brand attachment towards BI i.e., an increase in attachment scores.
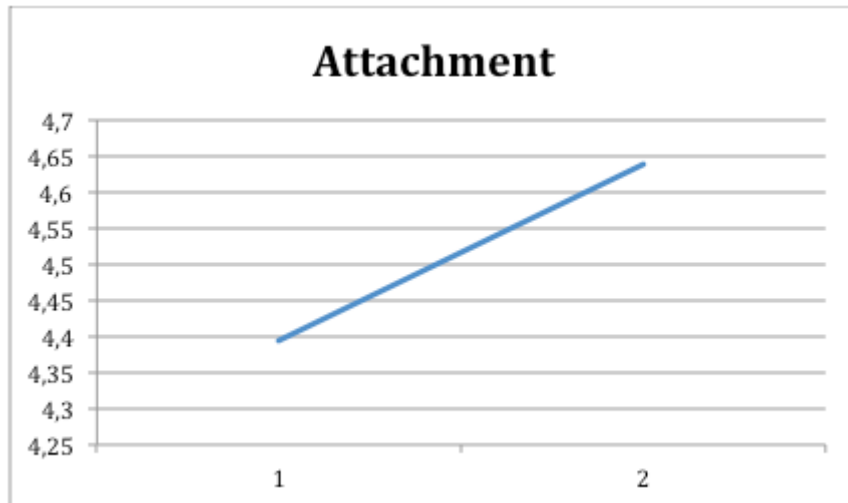

Figure 9: Change in attachment scores toward BI

The other two variables, brand love and brand liking, had no significant change before and after manipulation, meaning no support for H_{2a} and $H_{3a.}$ Recall the distinction between brand attitude and brand attachment mentioned earlier in this research. It is evident that our result confirms previous theory on brand attachment, as students at BI are willing to defend and preserve the relationship toward BI against other alternatives, indicated by bolstered attachment scores. In terms of respondents exposed to manipulation concerning UiO, there was no statistically significant change across the three variables, in support of $H_{2b,}$ $H_{3b,}$ and H_{4b}. These results indicate that respondents are indifferent to positive information about an indirect competitor, as the information does not challenge their brand.

4.1.4. Additional Analysis

We also found it interesting to conduct additional analysis in order examine the joint effect of two independent variables. That way we can test the interaction

effect between our three variables (brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment) and university manipulation (OSM or UiO) on our dependent variables (figure 10). A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to determine the impact of the three variables at time 1 and university manipulation on the four statements at time 2. To ease the reading, we divided the results according to our three initial variables. In our case, the presence of an interaction effect is the interesting result we wish to obtain, as it may have important implications when interpreting the results. If an interaction effect is obtained and it is significant, we can conclude that the respondents scores on brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment and consequently their response on our four questions after manipulation is dependent on the type of manipulation the respondent receives.

Brand Love

There was a statistically significant interaction effect between brand love and university manipulation on statement 1, $F_{(19,40)} = 2.175$, $p = .019$, partial eta squared = .508, indicating a large effect size. On statement 2, the interaction effect between brand love and university manipulation showed a weak statistically significance $F_{(19,40)} = 1.73$, $p = .071$, partial eta squared = .452 (large effect size). While the interaction effect between brand love and university manipulation did not reach statistical significance on statement 3, there was a statistically significant interaction effect for brand love and university manipulation on statement 4, $F_{(19,40)} = 1.91$, $p = .042$, partial eta squared = .475 (large effect size). In three out of four possible interaction effects, we reached a statistical significance (one being weak). Thus, the effect of brand love on statement 1, 2, and 4 depends on the type of manipulation the respondent receives.

Brand Liking

As opposed to our first variable, an interaction effect between brand liking and university manipulation was only obtained on one out of the four statements. There was a statistically significant interaction effect between brand liking and university manipulation on statement 3, $F_{(4,103)} = 2.55$, $p = .044$, partial eta squared = .090 (moderate to large effect size). Thus, the effect of brand liking on statement 3 depends on the type of manipulation the respondent receives.

Brand Attachment

On none of the four statements did we reach a statistical significant interaction effect between brand attachment and university manipulation. As mentioned earlier, brand attachment differs from brand love and brand liking, which can be considered as brand attitudes, which might explain why no interaction effect was obtained.

4.2.4. Discussion

It was expected that positive information concerning UiO (indirect competitor) did not yield any statistically significant result, thus implying that respondents are indifferent to information not comparable to their brand (BI). UiO does not impose an immediate threat to BI and is therefore not considered by the respondents as a competitor worthy of reevaluating their initial scores on the three variables. A statistically significant result would imply that the respondents experienced doubt after being exposed to the positive information, even from an indirect competitor.

On the other hand, positive information concerning OSM (direct competitor) was expected to yield a statistically significant change in the scores on the three variables i.e., brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment was expected to increase after manipulation, thus indicating a bolstering effect. In our case, BI and OSM represent common features in terms of educational offering. Chernev (2001) argues that these common features can have a significant impact on consumers' preferences and that this impact is determined by the strength of the consumers initial brand preference. As the respondents attend BI, they value the same features more if it belongs to BI than if it belongs to OSM. In our analysis, the expected result was only obtained in one of the three variables, namely brand attachment. One possible explanation could be the degree of perceived threat the manipulation represents. The respondents may have thought that the information provided was not strong enough to trigger any emotional change with regards to brand love and brand liking.

Further, the three variables can be divided in terms of brand attitudes (brand love and brand liking) and brand attachment. In other words, brand attachment changes

significantly when exposed to positive information concerning a direct competitor, whereas brand attitudes do not. As mentioned initially, brand attachment is developed over time, whereas attitudes can be more short-term. This is consistent with our result. When choosing higher education you commit yourself to that particular school, creating an attachment toward the brand (recall that most of the respondents were on their last year of study). This result indicates that when faced with the option of focusing on creating favorable brand attitudes versus strong brand attachment, brand attachment is more stringent upon positive information concerning competitors, thus resisting other alternatives. Given the fact that consumers rarely get emotionally attached to a large number of brands, the attachment respondents indicated towards BI is advantageous, especially considering the ability to resist positive information concerning a direct competitor. Finally, we discovered that the effect of initial scores on brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment on our four statements depends on the type of manipulation received. However, only brand love and brand liking obtained interaction effects, on statement 1, 2, 4 and statement 3 respectively.

5. General Discussion

The present research identified and empirically tested an antecedent of brand hate. The primary focus of our research was to develop and contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of brand hate. First, study 1 was conducted to examine if love for a competing brand strengthens brand hate toward other brands in the same category. Our findings support our hypothesis in several of the chosen categories, but indicated a clear tendency that the results were more pronounced in categories with high badge value. Surprisingly, and in contrast to our hypothesis, we also discovered that in certain categories respondents either love or hate the category as a whole. Thus, the focus on differentiating between brands in certain categories may prove to be useless if consumers love or hate all brands in those categories. Drawing upon the results in study 1, we developed study 2 to examine how consumers react to positive information about a direct competitor and an indirect competitor of their preferred brand. Of the three variables included (brand love, brand liking, and brand attachment), only brand attachment was bolstered after being exposed to positive news about a direct competitor. However, brand attachment differs from brand love and brand liking, which might explain why those attitudes were not bolstered after the manipulation. When exposed to positive information about an indirect competitor, the three variables were not affected, thus indicating indifference to information not applicable to our respondents.

The following discussion is divided into three parts. First, we discuss the academic implications and how our research contributes to the limited theory around brand hate. Second, we highlight how our results prove to be important for brand and marketing managers. Third, we end our discussion with some limitations concerning our studies, as well as suggesting possible topics for further research.

5.1. Academic Implications

Through our initial literature review it became apparent that theory around brand hate have been limited, thus the present research contributes by filling significant gaps in existing theory. Even though theory around positive brand relationships is extensive and the evidence of how these relationships contributes to positive

advantages for brands is apparent, theory around negative brand relationships continues to be open for investigation. As mentioned, managing these negatives may be more important than focusing on building positive brand relationships (Fournier and Alvarez 2013), considering the contagion effect negative WOM can have (Norman, Luthans & Luthans 2005).

In study 1 we identified an antecedent of brand hate, namely that love for a competing brand strengthens brand hate for the direct competitor. Similar results have been indicated when investigating theory around oppositional loyalty (Muniz and Hamer 2011; Johnson and Rusbult 1989). We clearly demonstrated that the abovementioned antecedent is a possible cause of brand hate, thus contributing to the limited theory available regarding possible explanations of brand hate. However, the most interesting and surprising academic contribution is actually in contradiction to our proposed hypothesis. In some categories respondents actually express opposing views, both in support of the hypothesis and against the hypothesis. To illustrate, lets consider the discounted retailer category i.e., Walmart versus Target. When respondents indicated a high degree of love towards Walmart, the degree of hate towards Target increased as expected, but surprisingly, the degree of love towards Target also increased, which was not expected. This is also true in the consumer electronics category. As far as we know, consumers' indecisiveness in terms of the brand love-brand hate relationship has not been highlighted in past research, and the possible explanations to why this result was found demonstrate the need to investigate the dynamics of different brand relationships further. One possible explanation may be evaluation of brands on category level, as opposed to brand level evaluation. Using the previous example, people can either love or hate the discounted retailer category as a whole, as compared to distinguishing between brands in the same category. If the respondent indicates hate towards the discounted retailer category, both Walmart and Target is affected and vice versa. Another possible explanation is concerned with where the brands have positioned themselves on certain attributes, i.e., either different position on same attribute, different position on two attributes, or opposing score on same attribute. In the carbonated soft drink category, Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola have positioned themselves differently on the same attribute. Both companies offer the famous black cola, however each company has a distinct image on the same attribute. Coca-Cola focusing on

traditions and the classical aspects, as well as more recently to "open happiness," while Pepsi-Cola is targeting the young and free minded, encouraging them to "live for now." Thus, same soft drink, but different image to attract different buyers (again, also linked to image). In the consumer electronics category, specifically smart phones, Samsung and Apple have positioned themselves differently on two different attributes, e.g., design and operating system. Apple has always focused much on design, whereas Samsung has not. Samsung wants to provide the best and complex operating systems, while Apple is focusing on user friendliness, thus less complex products. Finally, brands can pursue opposing scores on the same attribute i.e., pro or against. With regards to political parties, Democrats and Republicans tries to differentiate themselves in terms of political standpoint by taking opposing views on questions which is known to cause a debate and potentially bring home many votes, such as pro choice versus pro life, collectivism versus individualism, higher taxes versus lower taxes etc.

In study 2 we explored how brand love, brand linking, and brand attachment would be affected when consumers were given positive information about a direct competitor (OSM) and an indirect competitor (UiO). Even though we did not find support for the notion that all three variables should be bolstered after being exposed to positive information about OSM, we found that attachment scores was increased after manipulation. This result shows that there is a remarkable difference between brand attachment and brand attitude, in support of previous research. Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) argue that it is possible to love a brand without feeling a close connection to it. It might be that one loves the looks, performance, or tastes of a product, without feeling an attachment to the brand e.g., love for Freia milk chocolate. In other words, consumers have an attitude towards all brands they encounter, yet they only become attached to a limited number of these brands.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Our results have practical relevance for brand managers confronted with the many difficulties of managing their brand, specifically haters of their brand. The study of the rather new phenomenon brand hate will hopefully provide new insight that will help managers predict behaviors from consumers who experience hate toward

their brand. Initially, study 1 provides managers with an insight as to what causes consumers to develop brand hate. This makes it easier for managers to create a suiting response (e.g., a recovery strategy), or maybe even change the mind of the haters. In today's society, expressing yourself through brands is getting more and more normal, e.g., Apple users are not like PC users. As strong positive brand attachment can change to strong brand dislike (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011), it is important that managers continue to improve and communicate product benefits to its consumers, and be aware of the continuous threat of competitors.

In study 1 we also obtained an unexpected result which was particularly evident in categories with low signaling value. This result is important for managers, especially in terms of marketing spending. There is no need to spend a considerable amount on trying to differentiate from other similar providers in the same category if consumers hate or love the category as a whole. In other words, if consumers hate the fast food category, they hate all providers in that category. Similarly, if consumers love the fast food category, they love all providers in that category and consequently switching between the offerings.

Results from study 2 shows that it is important for managers to differentiate between brand attitude and brand attachment, as it might be a predictor of consumer behavior. As indicated by our results, brand attachment makes consumers more protective of their brand, making it more important to focus attention on building strong brand attachment before favorable attitudes (love and liking). This is central for managers when it comes to e.g., consumers' responses to service failure and recovery. Recall the research by Hess, Ganesan, and Klein (2003) on service failure and how brand relationship strength had a positive impact. This is likely due to the assumption that relationship strength is closely connected to the duration of the relationship, and consequently the development of brand attachment.

The ripple effect of negative WOM about brands through social media is also a growing risk for managers. Luo, Wiles, and Raithel (2013) claim that social media give brand haters the opportunity for broadcasting their dislike, and research shows that negative WOM can influence neutral consumers greatly. This threat is

very real, considering the possible reach of e.g., negative eWOM. Anti-brand forums are a way for consumers to boycott and protest against companies. These sites have turned out to be major message distribution places and a powerful communication tool for oppositional consumers (Kucuk 2007).

Lastly, it is important for managers to know that brand hate is not necessarily a bad thing. As stated in an article from Joushua G2 (2008, 28): "*regardless of whether a brand has inspired great love or vehement hatred, it has at least elicited a definite response from consumers, meaning that not only are they aware of its existence but have strong feelings toward it, neither of which is necessarily a bad thing.*" However, we encourage managers to avoid the development of brand hate, as the possible downsides are larger than the benefits.

5.3. Limitations and further research

Considering that brand hate is a rather new phenomenon, more work is needed to determine and assess its importance in a marketing context. While our research contributes to theory, there are certain limitations that should be taken into account, which again suggests avenues for further research. In study 1 and 2 we investigated the relationship consumers have with brands, both in terms of positive and negative emotions. The findings are difficult to generalize given each consumer's personal experience with the different brands, which could decrease the validity of our results. Further, there are several other factors that are likely to influence the relationship between brand love and brand hate, e.g., Fournier 1998 suggests that consumers have stronger connections to brands they have grown up with i.e., brands used by the family. Further research should investigate how the relationship will be affected by such factors.

One limitation is the assumption that likes are much easier to communicate than dislikes (Dalli, Romani, and Gistri 2006). This assumption is likely to apply to love and hate as well. When the respondents are asked to indicate their hate toward a specific brand, it might be difficult to evaluate. Do I really hate this brand, or do I just not like it? Recall that hate is one of the most misused words, therefore it represent a limitation in our study. Nevertheless, we used empirically validated scales from previous studies in order to minimize the risk of measuring the wrong concept. When considering the measurement scales, the use of a

continuous rating scale could represent a limitation. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 0-100 how much they loved or hated the brand in question, where a value of 0 indicated strong hate and a value of 100 indicated strong love. Considering how we initially structured the difference between brand love and brand hate, a value of 50 would indicate indifference, which was not highlighted to the respondents. As many of the average scores obtained were around 50, we believe that the respondents did not comprehend that this implied indifference. If respondents were made aware that a value of 50 indicated indifference, we might have obtained higher scores of brand love and brand hate.

Another limitation is what we chose to investigate in both studies. Even though we carefully chose different categories to see if there was a difference between the results in terms of the proposed love-hate relationship, we might get different results when other categories are chosen or other brands within the categories. In both studies we chose categories that were likely to have the effect we wished to obtain, both based on theory and personal experiences, therefore the result might not be applied to all categories. Thus, a possible avenue for further research is to investigate if the love-hate relationship is applicable to all product categories or if it is category specific.

After obtaining the surprising results in study 1, where respondent indicated love or hate for both brands in the same category, we wanted to compare if this result also could be retrieved from the Norwegian market, by examining the 2014 results from the Norwegian Customer Barometer report. The Norwegian Customer Barometer (NCB) is a yearly report that measures an extensive list of Norwegian businesses on five different questions, four related to satisfaction and one related to loyalty. These scores are also divided according to industry, which makes is relevant to our research.

Let us consider how two categories used in study 1 are evaluated in the Norwegian market. The NCB report (2014) was conducted for the retailer category as a whole, but we only consider the three discounted options. The difference in scores between Rema 1000 and Kiwi is not remarkable, however Rimi is the obvious loser in this category, especially in terms of satisfaction (figure 11). Contrary to the result in this category in study 1, where the discounted

retailer category was either loved or hated as a whole, there is a clear difference between the options in the same category in Norway. In addition, Rimi is also the least preferred option when including all options in the retailer category. Therefore, the results obtained in study 1 may differ in different countries, but the topic is still in need of further research.
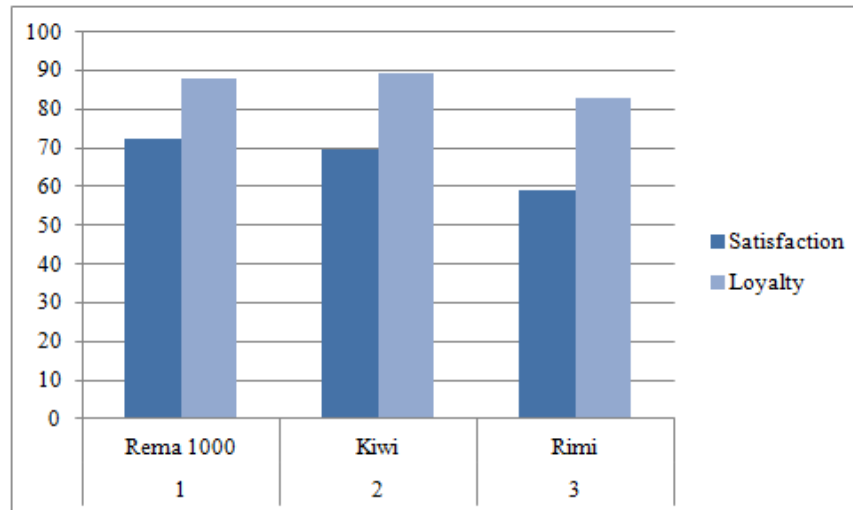
Figure 11: Discounted retailers score on satisfaction and loyalty (from the NBC report 2014)

In the other example, the fast food category, the brands in question are the same as in study 1. And similar to the results from this category in study 1, the scores do not differ a lot. Consumers are above average satisfied and loyal to the fast food category, but there is no brand that clearly differs from the other. When offerings become almost identical, the switching cost is removed, making the brand that is closest in proximity the preferred brand at that specific time. Therefore, categories that face this issue must refocus their marketing effort on something other than the actual offering.
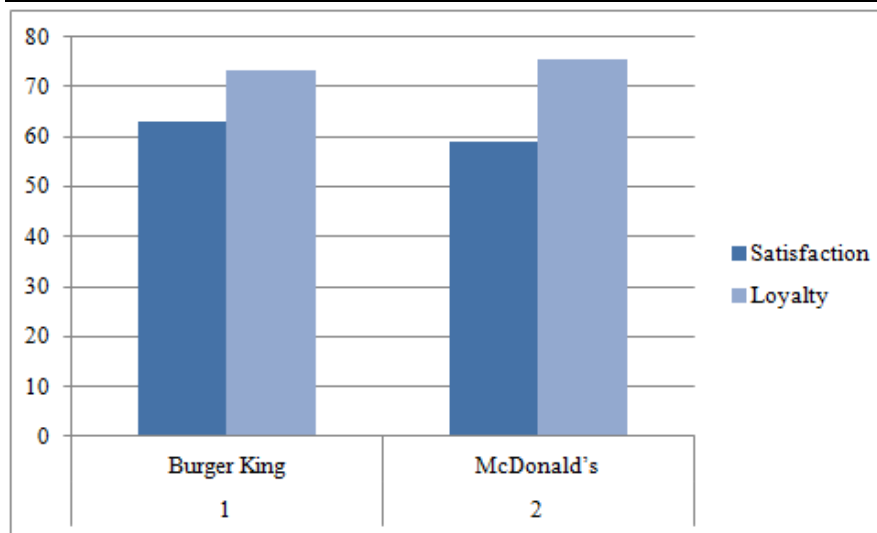
Figure 12: Fast food chains score on satisfaction and loyalty (from the NCB report 2014)

These examples stresses our main result from study 1, where the proposed love-hate relationship only was evident in categories with high badge and signaling value. To illustrate, the highest ranked companies and brands in the NCB report (2014) shows an overrepresentation of brands in the car category, which is a perfect example of a category with high signaling value as there is a significant difference between owners of e.g., a Toyota and a BMW; Japanese engineering versus German engineering, affordable versus exclusive, reliable versus exciting, to name a few.

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Appendix 1: Questonnaire Study 1

Informed Consent Form
Introduction

We are two students from BI Norwegian Business School finishing our MSc in Strategic Marketing Management. This questionnaire is a part of our Master Thesis. The study attempts to collect information concerning consumers perceptions about different brands.

Procedures

The questionnaire consists of several questions and will take approximately 10 minutes or less.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about brand perceptions.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones).

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact us on masterthesissmm2014@gmail.com

I have read and understood the above consent form, and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

○ Yes

○ No

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Pepsi-Cola, relative to all other brands in the carbonated soft drinks category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
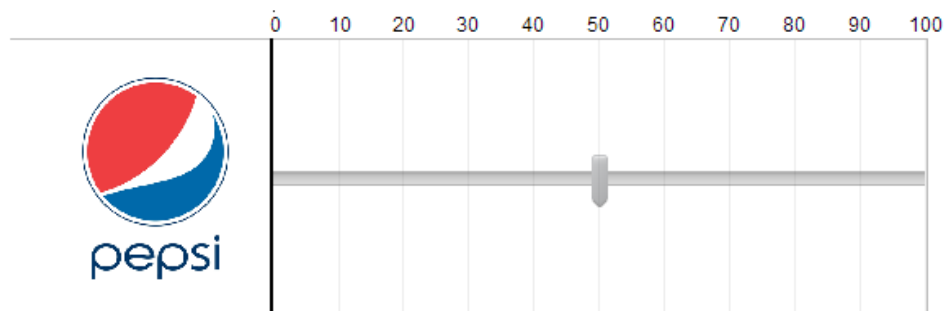
Overall, how much do you love Pepsi-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Pepsi-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Pepsi-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Pepsi-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Coca-Cola, relative to all other brands in the carbonated soft drinks category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
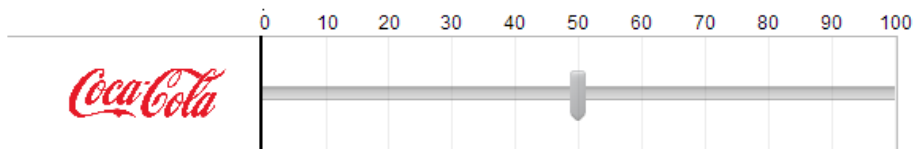
Overall, how much do you love Coca-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Coca-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Coca-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Coca-Cola?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Apple, relative to all other brands in the consumer electronics category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
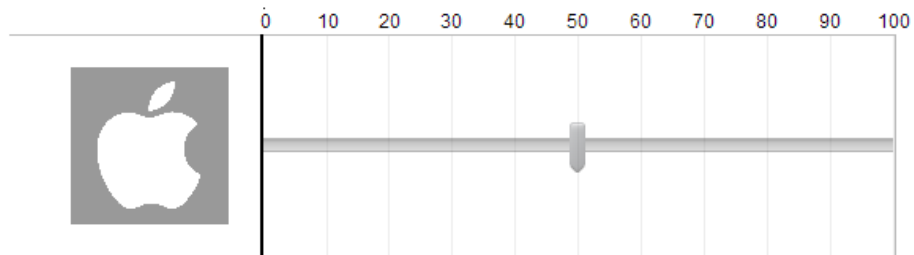
Overall, how much do you love Apple?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Apple?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Apple?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Apple?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Samsung, relative to all other brands in the consumer electronics category?
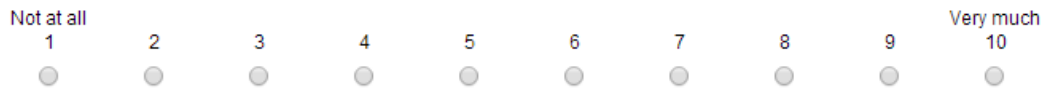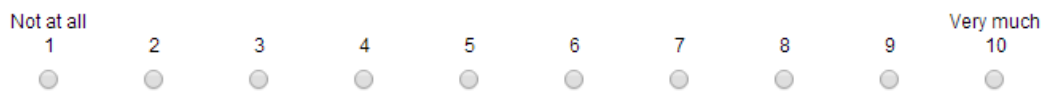
100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate

```
            0    10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90  100

  SAMSUNG
```
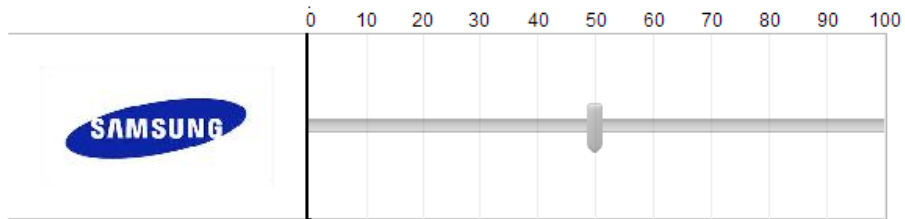
Overall, how much do you love Samsung?

Not at all   Very much
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Samsung?

Not at all   Very much
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Overall, how much do you hate Samsung?

Not at all   Very much
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Samsung?

Not at all   Very much
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to the Republican Party, relative to all other political parties in the U.S.?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate

```
            0    10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90  100

  GOP
```
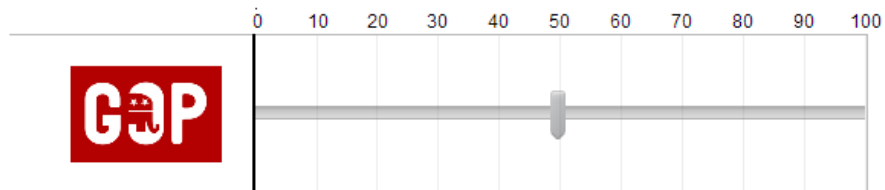
Overall, how much do you love The Republican Party?
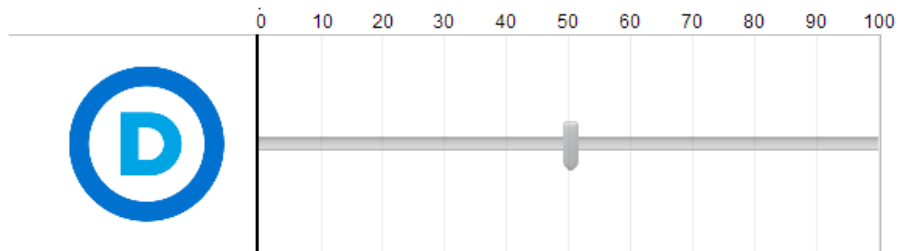
Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward The Republican Party?

Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Overall, how much do you hate The Republican Party?

Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward The Republican Party?

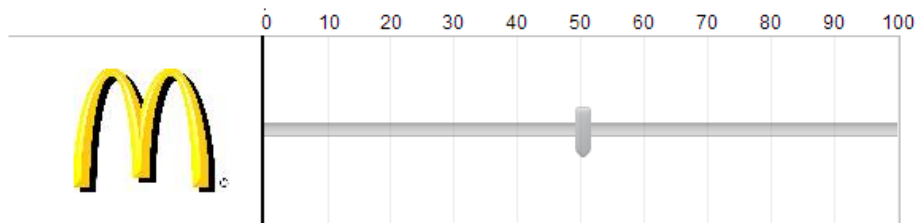Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to the Democratic Party, relative to all other political parties in the U.S.?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate

Overall, how much do you love The Democratic Party?

Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward The Democratic Party?

Not at all   Very much
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Overall, how much do you hate The Democratic Party?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward The Democratic Party?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to McDonald's, relative to all other brands in the fast food category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate

Overall, how much do you love McDonald's?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward McDonald's?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate McDonald's?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward McDonald's?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Burger King, relative to all other brands in the fast food category?
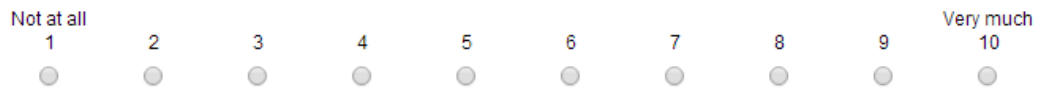
100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
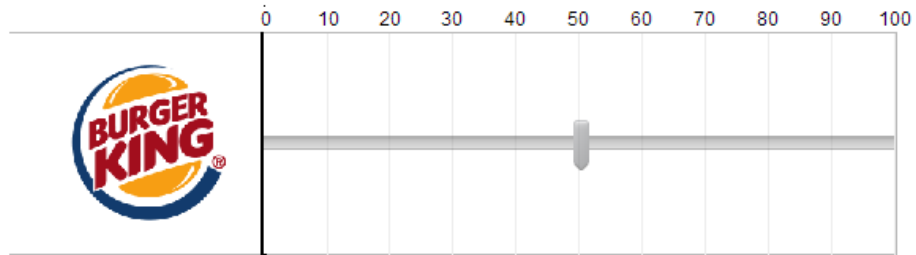
Overall, how much do you love Burger King?

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very much 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
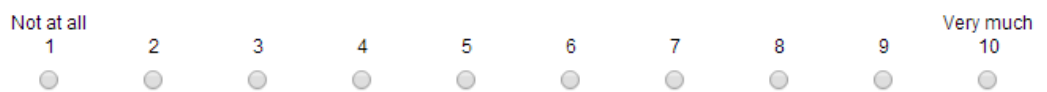
Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Burger King?

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very much 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Burger King?

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very much 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Burger King?

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very much 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Walmart, relative to all other brands in the retailer category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
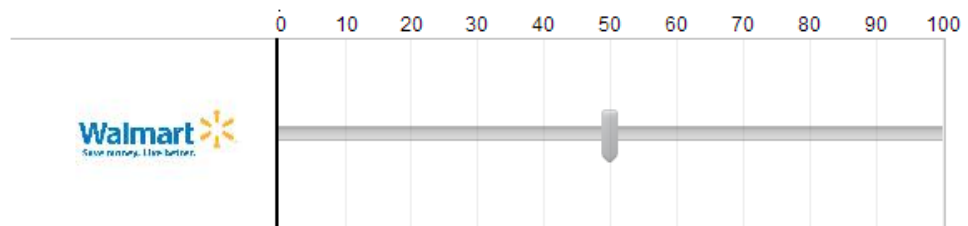
Overall, how much do you love Walmart?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Walmart?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Walmart?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Walmart?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Assuming that you have a total of 100 points available. How many would you assign to Target, relative to all other brands in the retailer category?

100 = highest degree of love
0 = highest degree of hate
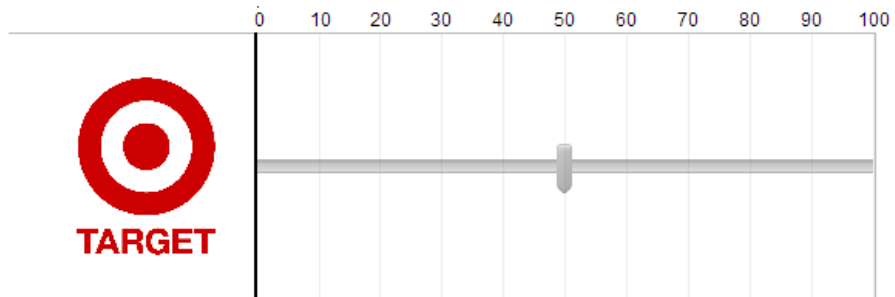
Overall, how much do you love Target?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel love toward Target?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how much do you hate Target?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Describe the extent to which you feel hate toward Target?

Not at all									Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The following statements concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. It is important that you answer as honestly as you can.

	Certainly, always false 1	Generally false 2	Somewhat false, but with exceptions 3	Somewhat true, but with exceptions 4	Generally true 5	Certainly, always true 6
In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Please press Certainly, always true (6) on this question	○	○	○	○	○	○
Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.	○	○	○	○	○	○
In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with.	○	○	○	○	○	○
My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes.	○	○	○	○	○	○
If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression.	○	○	○	○	○	○

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Less than High School

○ High School / GED

○ Some College

○ 2-year College Degree

○ 4-year College Degree

○ Masters Degree

○ Doctoral Degree

○ Professional Degree (JD, MD)

What is your current age?

○ Less than 16

○ 16 to 19

○ 20 to 24

○ 25 to 34

○ 35 to 44

○ 45 to 54

○ 55 to 64

○ 65 or over

Please find the code below. You will need to click next in order to submit you answer and receive your money.

Code: THX123

Appendix 2: New Variables

Variable Name	N	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Love_Pepsi_Cola	156	2	.984
Hate_Pepsi_Cola	156	2	.938
Love_Coca_Cola	156	2	.985
Hate_Coca_Cola	156	2	.916
Love_Apple	156	2	.988
Hate_Apple	156	2	.961
Love_Samsung	156	2	.984
Hate_Samsung	156	2	.902
Love_Republican_Party	156	2	.988
Hate_Republican_Party	156	2	.973
Love_Democratic_Party	156	2	.988
Hate_Democratic_Party	156	2	.970
Love_McDonald's	156	2	.983
Hate_McDonald's	156	2	.950
Love_Burger_King	156	2	.981
Hate_Burger_King	156	2	.939
Love_Walmart	156	2	.975
Hate_Walmart	156	2	.982
Love_Target	156	2	.958
Hate_Target	156	2	.900

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Study 2

Informert samtykke

Bakgrunn og formål
Vi er to studenter som studerer Strategisk Markedsføringsledelse ved Handelshøyskolen BI. Denne studien er en del av vår avsluttende masteroppgave. Vi ønsker å samle informasjon om to norske merkevarer.

Spørreskjemaet består av 22 spørsmål, og det vil ta ca. 7 minutter å gjennomføre.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?
Alle data innhentet fra deltakerne vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og vil kun bli rapportert i samlet formatet (ved å bare rapportere resultatene samlet og aldri individuelt).

Kompensasjon og fordeler ved deltakelse
Vi ønsker at alle som svarer på undersøkelsen skal få noe igjen for å delta. Vi tilbyr derfor alle som deltar muligheten til å vinne en CamelBak.

Frivillig deltakelse
Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, kan du kontakte oss ved å sende e-post til masterthesissmm2014@gmail.com

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien og ønsker av min egen frie vilje å delta.

○ Ja

○ Nei

Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til BI, i forhold til andre utdanningsinstitusjoner i Norge?

100 = Sterk positiv
0 = Sterk negativ
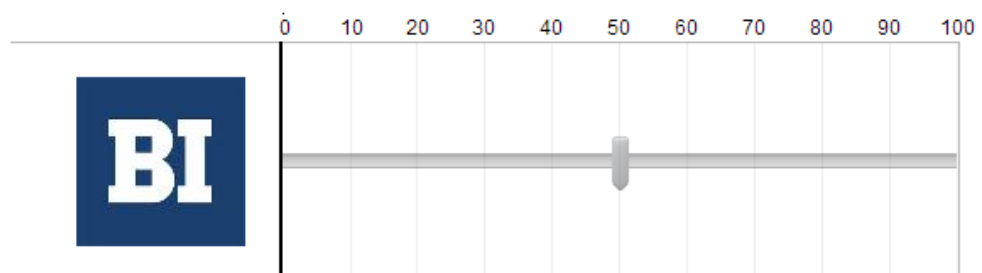
| | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |

Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til BI, i forhold til andre utdanningsinstitusjoner i Norge?
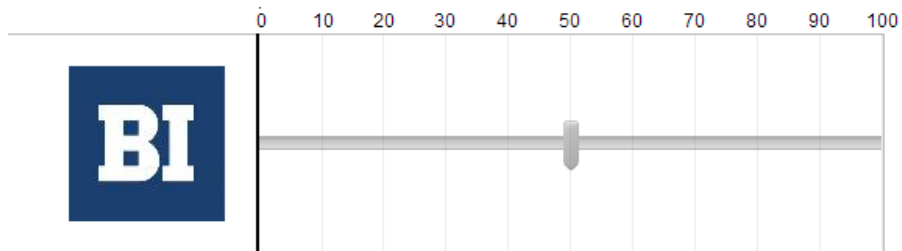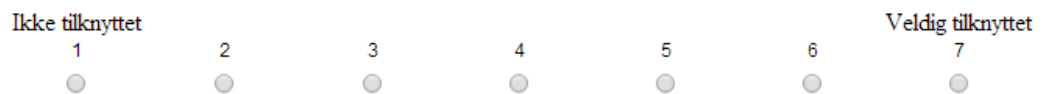
100 = Elsker
0 = Hater

Generelt, hvor godt liker du BI?

Svært dårlig						Svært godt
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Beskriv i hvilken grad du føler deg tilknyttet til BI

Ikke tilknyttet						Veldig tilknyttet
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

I hvilken grad er du fornøyd med valget av utdanningsinstitusjon?

Svært misfornøyd						Svært fornøyd
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hvor sannsynlig er det at du anbefaler BI til andre?

Svært usannsynlig						Svært sannsynlig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til Ruter, i forhold til andre transportmidler?

100 = Sterk positiv
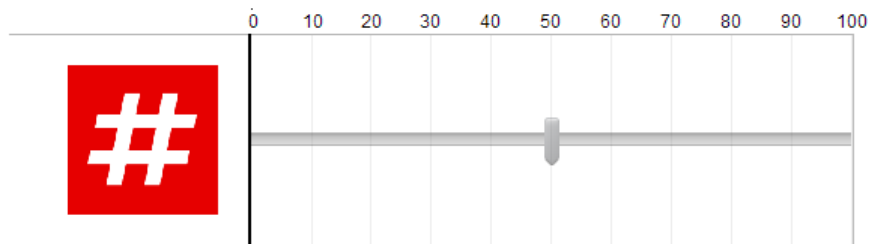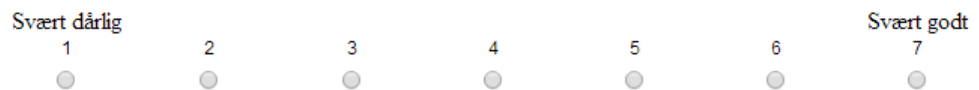**0 = Sterk negativ**
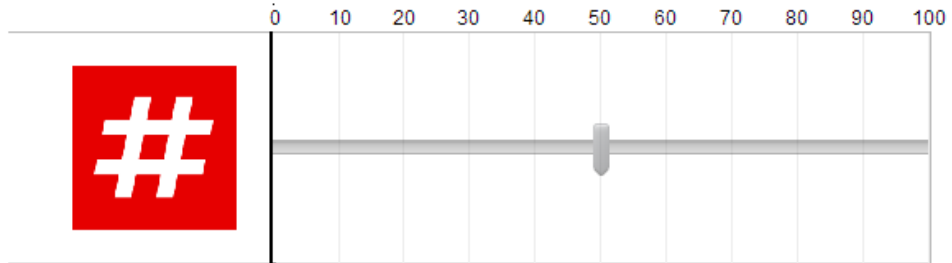
Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til Ruter, i forhold til andre transportmidler?
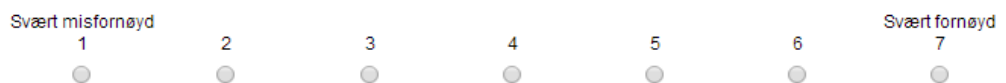
100 = Elsker
0 = Hater

Generelt, hvor godt liker du Ruter?

Svært dårlig						Svært godt
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Beskriv i hvilken grad du føler deg tilknyttet til Ruter

Ikke tilknyttet						Veldig tilknyttet
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

I hvilken grad er du fornøyd med Ruter?

Svært misfornøyd						Svært fornøyd
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hvor sannsynlig er det at du anbefaler Ruter til andre?

Svært usannsynlig						Svært sannsynlig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Vennligst les innholdet i denne avisartikkelen nøye.

Universitetet i Oslo i medvind!

Ny rapport avdekker store sprik i blant annet studenttilfredshet på høyskoler og universiteter i Norge.

Etter en stor landsomfattende spørreundersøkelse kommer UiO best ut på følgende punkt: Høyest studenttilfredshet blant bachelorstudenter, søkerøkning for tredje året på rad, 9/10 i jobb etter endt utdannelse, samt høyeste anbefaling fra næringslivet på grunn av faglig tyngde.

Vennligst les innholdet i denne avisartikkelen nøye.

Markedshøyskolen i medvind!

Ny rapport avdekker store sprik i blant annet studenttilfredshet på høyskoler og universiteter i Norge.

Etter en stor landsomfattende spørreundersøkelse kommer Markedshøyskolen best ut på følgende punkt: Høyest studenttilfredshet blant bachelorstudenter, søkerøkning for tredje året på rad, 9/10 i jobb etter endt utdannelse, samt høyeste anbefaling fra næringslivet på grunn av faglig tyngde.
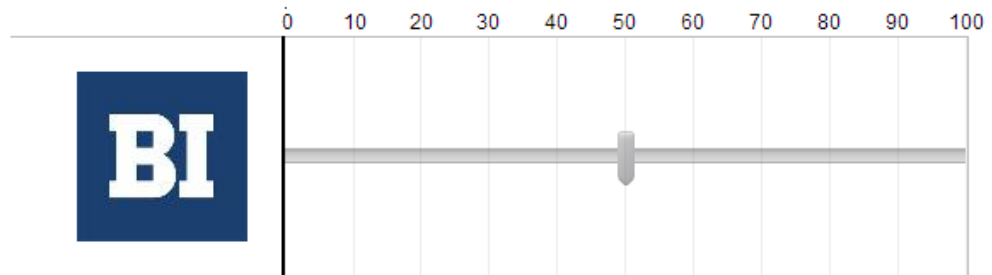
På bakgrunn av denne artikkelen, vennligst svar på følgende.

Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til BI, i forhold til andre utdanningsinstitusjoner i Norge?
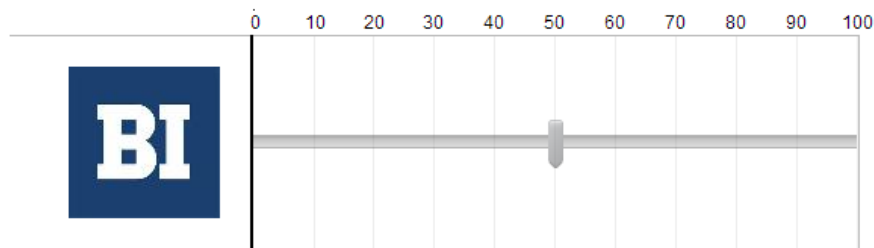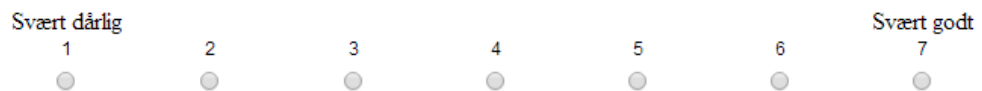
100 = Sterkt positiv
0 = Sterkt negativ

Forestill deg at du har 100 poeng tilgjengelig. Hvor mange poeng ville du gitt til BI, i forhold til andre utdanningsinstitusjoner i Norge?

100 = Elsker
0 = Hater

Generelt, hvor godt liker du BI?

Svært dårlig						Svært godt
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Beskriv i hvilken grad du føler deg tilknyttet til BI

Ikke tilknyttet						Veldig tilknyttet
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Dersom du nå skulle valgt utdanningsinstitusjon på nytt, hvor sannsynlig er det at du valgt det samme?

Svært usannsynlig 1	2	3	4	5	6	Svært sannsynlig 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Dersom studentavgiften økte med 10% (uavhengig av studieår), hvor sannsynlig er det at du fremdeles ville valgt BI som utdanningsinstitusjon?

Svært usannsynlig 1	2	3	4	5	6	Svært sannsynlig 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Dersom BI ikke var lokalisert i nærheten av deg, hvor sannsynlig er det at du ville valgt BI som utdanningsinstitusjon?

Svært usannsynlig 1	2	3	4	5	6	Svært sannsynlig 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hvor sannsynlig et det at du fortsetter din utdannelse ved BI etter endt bachelorgrad?

Svært usannsynlig	2	3	4	5	6	Svært sannsynlig 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hvilket bachelorprogram går du?

Bachelor of Business Administration ▼

Hvor langt er du kommet i utdanningsløpet?

○ 1. året

○ 2. året

○ 3. året

Vennligst oppgi kjønn

○ Mann

○ Kvinne

Vennligst oppgi alder

○ 19-22

○ 23-26

○ 26-34

○ 35 eller over

Alternativ A Alternativ B

Ved å delta i denne undersøkelsen har du mulighet til å vinne en CamelBak.

Vennligst oppgi et av de to alternativene.

○ Alternativ A

○ Alternativ B

Vennligst oppgi din e-post adresse dersom du ønsker å være med i trekiningen:

Takk for din deltakelse i denne studien. Vinneren vil bli kontaktet per e-post.

Til slutt vil vi informere om at all informasjon angående studiesteder i denne undersøkelsen er fiktive.

Vennligst trykk neste for å fullføre.

Preliminary Thesis Report

What causes brand hate and is there a link between brand hate

and anti-consumption behavior?

Hand-in date:

15.01.2014

Campus:

BI Oslo

Examination code and name:

GRA 19003, Preliminary Master Thesis

Programme:

Master of Science in Strategic Marketing Management

Table of Contents

Introduction

Our thesis topic was influenced by a specific article in GRA 4145 Brand Management, fall 2012. Some consumers build very strong and intensive connections with brands, positive or negative. Certain brands can even be characterized as polarizing, i.e. having both haters and lovers of the brand. One example is McDonald's, which people have either a love or hate relationship towards, indicated by 33% lovers and 29% haters. Amazon on the other hand has 56% lovers and 3% haters, making it the least polarizing brand according to YouGov Brandindex (Lou, Wiles, and Raithel 2013). Positive customer brand connections such as "Brand Love" labeled by Batra et al. (2012), and other related constructs, has received much attention in the marketing field, which is understandable as such connections tend to be associated with positive word of mouth (WOM), brand loyalty, increased willingness to pay a price premium, and forgiveness of brand failures. Arguing that research on brand love needs to be built on an understanding of how consumers actually experience this phenomenon, Batra et al. conducted two studies that uncovered the elements of the brand love prototype, as well as seven underlying brand love factors, i.e., components that were most important for brand love to be strong. Those components were passion-driven behaviors, self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, overall attitude valence, and attitude strength 2: certainty/confidence. Further, arguing that existing literature does not adequately distinguish between love as an emotion (short-term) and love as a relationship (long-term), they use the term "brand love" to refer to a consumer–brand relationship that corresponds with the brand love prototype revealed by the studies and use the terms "brand love emotion" or "love emotion" to refer to the specific affective state called love.

On the contrary, negative customer brand connections, which might be labeled "Brand Hate", have received less attention throughout the years. This triggered our interest in this topic, as brand hate can have many unwanted consequences for companies in general. More specifically, we got interested in the possible effects of brand hate on anti-consumption behavior. After considering many possible research questions related to brand hate, we decided to investigate further what causes brand hate and if there exist an actual difference between related constructs already researched (such as brand dislike and brand avoidance), as well as if brand

hate has a direct effect on anti-consumption behavior. In other words, our thesis has two main objectives: *(1) investigate what causes brand hate, and (2) explore the possible link between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior.* Certainly, other questions will arise in connection with our research questions, such as what different forms of brand hate exists? Is it related to the brand itself, or other factors? Do people act according to this hatred? Is it the opposite of brand love? Is it actual hate, or only strong negative emotions? etc. These questions also need to be investigated in order to best answer as many aspects of our research question as possible.

Theoretical Background

As mentioned, prior research is limited in terms of looking at the negative aspect of consumer emotions and relationships toward brands, and there are, to the best of our knowledge, none that focus on the consequences of brand hate in particular. The following literature review will examine related constructs of brand hate, as well as explore how prior studies have approached this rather new phenomenon.

Romani, Silvia, and Dalli (2012) conducted a research that focuses on negative emotions related to the intangible aspects of brands and their behavioral effects. The authors seek to identify a full range of negative emotions most frequently experienced in a brand-related context. In their research they derive the negative emotions toward brand (NEB) scale. This scale proves to consist of six brand-related negative emotions: anger, discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness, and worry. The authors wish to compare the NEB scale with the Consumption Emotions Set (CES) scale which was introduced by Marsha Richins in 1997 (Romani, Silvia, and Dalli 2012). They argue that the CES scale is limited in its usefulness when it comes to the study of negative emotions toward brands. They conduct several studies where they identify the six negative emotions, and compare the NEB scale with the CES scale. Results show that the NEB scale is superior to the CES scale in representing the variance of the relevant outcomes of switching from one brand to another, as well as negative WOM. Further, the authors test how the NEB scale can be used to predict consumer behavior. Their findings show that sadness and discontent has no effects on consumers negative behavioral responses, worry is expected to lead to brand switching, anger will likely lead to complaining, dislike is likely to lead to negative WOM and brand

switching, and embarrassment is likely to lead to complaining. In our research, we want to explore specifically how brand hate affects anti-consumption behavior. That is, do the consumers stop buying the brand due to feelings of brand hate?

Another interesting article related to our thesis topic is Lee, Motion, and Conroy's (2008) article about anti-consumption and brand avoidance. They explore why people avoid certain brands and what motivates brand avoidance, a form of anti-consumption. Brand avoidance is defined as the incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand, despite having the financial ability to purchase these brands. The authors also argue that less research focus on situations where consumers reject specific brands, arguing that knowing what consumers do not want is just as valuable as knowing what they want. Further, they investigate previous extant literature in the fields of dissatisfaction, undesired self and self-concept incongruity, organizational disidentification, boycotting and consumer resistance. The findings revealed three main categories of brand avoidance: (1) Experiential avoidance, such as unmet expectations, added inconvenience due to poor performance and unpleasant brand environment, (2) Identity avoidance, such as a brand that represents an undesired self, a negative reference group, a lack of authenticity, or the loss of individuality, and (3) Moral avoidance, such as resistance of dominating forces, a societal focus beyond the needs of the individual, and the belief that it is a moral duty to avoid certain brands. They conclude with tactics as to how to manage brand avoidance by creating barriers. An interesting topic that emerged from this article is the concept of incurable avoidance, i.e., when feelings of hatred towards the brand may simply be too intense to fix. Therefore, we believe that different forms of brand hate might exist, both as a short-term emotion and the more long-term negative relationship. This will be investigated further in our research.

According to Dalli, Romani and Gistri (2006), in order to best understand consumption behavior, both positive and negative aspects are important to consider. The authors define brand dislike as the negative judgment expressed by the consumer and/or implied in the choice not to buy. Their intention was to summarize the fragmented literature in this field, which can be considered as the "dark side" of consumer preferences, as well as describe what brand dislike means from the customers' perspective, with focus on thoughts, feelings, and activities

evoked when asked to reflect on disliked brands. After reviewing prior literature within a unitary frame, the authors developed a continuum of brand dislike factors, ranging from a collectivistic perspective where consumers use dislike as a resistance practice, to an individualistic perspective where consumers use dislike as refusal of inadequate partner-brands. Further, they developed three levels of brand dislike, related to the product itself, the users of the product, and the company that develops the product. The first dislike factor, the product brand level, involves elements such as exchange unfairness between the product and the consumer, as well as relationship troubles related to price, quality, and performance. The second dislike factor, the user brand level, is represented as something strictly related to the creation and management of self concept, e.g. someone who they do not want to be associated with. The third dislike factor, the corporate brand level, is related to ideological reasons, such as unfair behavior and abuses. One thing the authors did not come across in their data is that sometimes consumers express very negative opinions about brands, but they still buy and use the product. This might be due to brand enslavement, which is defined as negative feeling toward a brand, but where the consumer persists in the relationship due to circumstances, e.g., the absence of alternatives. When considering brand love, Park, Eisingerich, and Park (2013) argue that it is possible to love a brand without feeling a close connection to it. It might be that one loves the looks, performance, or taste of a product, without feeling an attachment to the brand. This might also be applied for brand hate, e.g., H&M who has been criticized for the use of child labor and more recently needing to halt the production of angora products after PETA revealed "live plucking", a common form of animal abuse (Harrison 2013). Even with this public negative review, people do not stop buying clothes from H&M. This makes us question if brand hate automatically implies anti-consumption behavior, or if other explanations exists.

An article from Joshua G2 (2008, p. 28) suggest that being disliked is not necessarily a bad thing: "*regardless of whether a brand has inspired great love or vehement hatred, it has at least elicited a definite response from consumers, meaning that not only are they aware of its existence but have strong feelings toward it, neither of which is necessarily a bad thing.*" In the article the author make the example of Ryanair and how many people fly with them even though

they communicate hatred toward the airline. Lou, Wiles, and Raithel (2013) also argues that being hated can be a good thing, and that some companies have boosted sales by increasing the number of haters. These authors also makes the example of Ryanair, and explain how all the "negative" actions the company does put them in headlines in media, thus emphasizing the actions the company has taken to be able to offer extremely low fares. We want to research if such behaviors can be explained by what causes brand hate in consumers' minds.

People tend to hate brands that originate from large successful corporations, due to monopolistic tendencies, e.g., Walmart and Microsoft. As each of these brands has reached a peak of success, the brands have experienced new levels of scrutiny that tests their resiliency and its brand citizenship. It is not enough anymore to meet the standards of moral and ethical actions defined by their customers, as people and organizations that might not even be customers look past what is within the law, while at the same time demanding a more morally acceptable policy (Taylor 2012). The struggle for authenticity is very much present today, as people ask for a deeper integration between the values associated with the brand and the actions of the company, e.g., Unilever's Dove line which used models more connected to the "actual self," thus favoring a more authentic approach to branding (Malär 2011). Since mediocre brands are not worth the trouble of attacking, the most successful brands find a whole new battle that must be fought when reaching the top (Taylor 2012). This is linked to research done by Prakash Nedungadi (1990). In his article "Recall and Consumer Consideration Sets: Influencing Choice without Altering Brand Evaluations", he talks about priming. A brand is primed, or activated, by a direct or an indirect reference to the brand name, e.g., McDonald's is indirectly primed through Burger King ("I think of McDonald's when I see the Burger King sign"). Further, he emphasizes the importance to note that activation from priming of one brand will spread to other related brands in the network. Brand priming could indirectly facilitate retrieval and consideration of other brands in the same category as the primed brand. It can also be negative to be the major brand in a category, e.g., if the press wants to write something negative about fast food, they probably would use McDonald's as an example. From our research we hope to confirm the tendencies that the more successful the brand and its position compared to related competitors is, the larger likelihood of expressed brand hate from consumers exists.

Further, research indicates that the more self-relevant a consumer-brand relationship is the more likely anti-brand behaviors are to occur after the brand relationship ends (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011). This may be due to the fact that consumers with a strong relationship to a brand often are harder critics than consumers with no particular relationship with the brand (Grégoire and Fisher 2008). Consumer with no particular or a neutral relationship with the brand is more likely to avoid it (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011). Consistent with Johnson, Matear, and Thomson (2011) research, Park, Eisingerich, and Park's (2013) research suggests that when there exist strong dislike toward a brand, the willingness to perform anti-brand actions increases. Johnson, Matear, and Thomson (2011, p. 113) propose that the reason for this anti-brand behavior is "*the experience of loss and harm to a person's self-concept, not the critical incident or lack thereof.*" This relates to our predictions about how the relationship between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior might be moderated by the length of the brand relationship.

Hickman and Lawrence (2010) investigate the negative effects sponsorships can have. The research is built on theories from Social Identity Theory (SIT) which states that group members will support other members in that group and deviate from out of group members. Thus, members will have higher perceptions for the brands sponsoring their team than the brands sponsoring the rival's teams. Given that consumers have a variety of services and product to choose from, the author argue that eliminating a sponsor brand from the consideration set will not impose a great cost for consumers. The authors refer to the "halo effect" as the benefit effective sponsorship can get from motivating fans to transfer loyalty to their teams sponsor. The dark side of the "halo effect," where consumers evaluate the rivaling teams sponsor more negatively and have lower purchase intentions, is termed the "pitchfork effect." They find that what motivates fans to favor their team's sponsor may also drive them to avoid rival team's sponsors. Arguably, the prerequisite to hate something is to love something else. People will not act on brand hate unless there exist a direct competitor or an underlying hostility towards a brand. Thus, it depends on what causes the feeling of brand hate in the minds of the consumers.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical background and our objectives, we developed the following conceptual framework (Figure 1). The model shows that the relationship between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior might be moderated by several factors. There are of course many other moderators that might have an effect on this relationship, such as prior experience with the brand, personality type, industry category etc. However, due to the scope of our research we decided to focus on the duration of relationship with the brand, age, and gender.
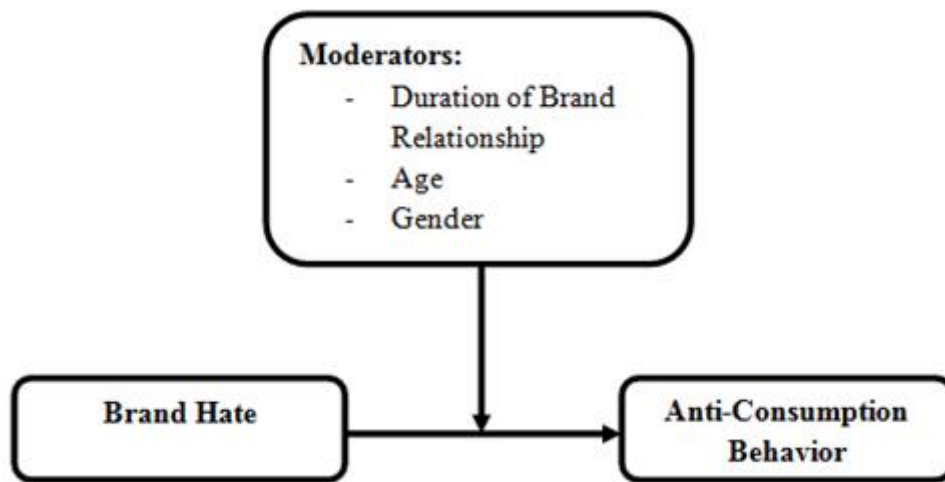

Figure 1: Proposed framework linking brand hate to anti-consumption behavior

Based on this framework the construction of the following hypotheses was developed:

H1: Brand hate has a positive effect on anti-consumption behavior

H2a: Long-term duration of brand relationship strengthens the positive effect between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior

H2b: Short-term duration of brand relationship weakens the positive effect between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior

>*H3a: Younger people strengthens the positive effect between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior*

>*H3b: Older people weakens the positive effect between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior*

>*H4a: Females has a stronger positive effect on the link between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior*

>*H4b: Males has a weaker positive effect on the link between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior*

Methodology

In order to best answer our research question and make inferences about populations based upon data drawn from samples (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2012), we will make use of survey research. Even though our literature review has given us a background and indication of how brand hate can be defined, we need to establish actual consumers' perception of brand hate and how they experience it, in order to ensure that the research is reliable and valid. We will conduct a pre-study online, based on written self-reports from a representative sample, to detect the elements and factors of brand hate. The respondents will be given one of two versions of a survey. Either the opportunity to write down one brand they love and one brand they hate, then provide a description of the reasons for their choice. Or be told to consider a brand they hate and rate the extent of their agreement from a pre-made list of adjectives that best describes the selected brand, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). That way we will get different input considering what brand hate entails.

The results found in the pre-study will be used when conducting study 1. Here, we intend to conduct a survey in order to determine what causes customers to feel brand hate. The sampling method we plan to use is simple random probability sampling. Thus, each person has an equal probability to be included in the sample. Further, we will conduct a second study investigating the relationship between brand hate (independent variable) and anti-consumption behavior (dependent variable). In study 2 we will make use of a cross-sectional design, which is a type

of research design involving the collection of information from any given sample of population elements only once (Malhotra 2010, p 108). Both surveys will be distributed online through a standardized questionnaire. Even though this is a low cost method with high geographic flexibility and speed, the response rate is low compared to interviewer completed surveys. Therefore, in order to maximize response rate we will communicate positive incentives, such as rewards of monetary value, as well as keeping the survey as short and concise as possible. In order to identify and eliminate potential problems, a pretest of both questionnaires on a small sample of respondents is necessary (Malhotra 2010). The purpose is to improve question wording, reduce the risk of bias, arrangement of questions, instructions etc. When conducting the surveys we have to make sure our sample is representative and drawn from the same population. Generally, a relatively small sample (a few hundred) will be enough to represent millions of people. Before starting the research, the population we want to draw conclusions from must be determined. Given that many of the world's biggest and most famous brands originates from the U.S. we see it as most interesting for our research. Also, we see a tendency that the most famous brands receive the highest frequency of negative emotions. The use of probability sampling in both surveys is important given that we want our results to be generalisable (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2012).

Thesis Progression Plan

In order to work most efficiently with our thesis, as well as giving room for unexpected troubles, we have developed a progression plan. Changes will of course occur as time passes, but this plan represents our overall goals. Even with a deadline in September, we aim at finishing most of the paper before the summer break. This way we will have the opportunity to distance ourselves from the thesis for a short period, then reviewing it with "fresh" eyes.

Activity	Deadline
Preliminary Thesis Submission	January 15th
Adjustments after feedback from preliminary and creation of pre-study	February
Study 1: Pre test of questionnaire and distribution of final survey	March/April
Study 2: Pre test of questionnaire and distribution of final survey	March/April
Methodology: How was the research done?	May
Data Analysis	May/June
Results and Discussion: What did we find out?	June/July
Reviewing Phase	August
Final Thesis Submission	September 1st

Limitation and Further Research

Our research will also be subject to limitations that may in turn lead to further research. In our research we conduct a pre-study in order to enhance the understanding of what is perceived as brand hate. However, it is difficult to generalize given each consumer's personal experience with the brand, and it could decrease the validity of the results. In addition, there might be several factors that moderate the relationship between brand hate and anti-consumption behavior as mentioned above. This should be researched further. Another subject for further research is to investigate what creates a change in the consumer-brand relationship. What makes people go from "loving" a brand to "hating" a brand? This is connected to looking at how brand hate evolves over time. Does it pass? Does it get worse? Is it possible to change the consumers mind from hating to loving the brand? Another limitation is the assumption that likes are much easier to communicate than dislikes (Dalli, Romani, and Gistri 2006). We believe that this assumption applies to love and hate as well. When the respondents are asked

to consider a brand they hate, it might be difficult to choose. Do I really hate this brand, or do I just not like it?

Managerial Implication

Our results will have important implications for marketing managers. The study of the rather new phenomenon brand hate will hopefully provide new insight that will help managers predict behaviors from consumers which feels hate towards a brand. When managers know and understand the underlying reasons for consumers brand hate, it will be easier to create a suiting response (e.g., a recovery strategy), or maybe even change the mind of the haters. Also, in today's society, expressing yourself through brands is getting more normal, e.g., Apple users are not like PC users. As strong brand attachment can change to strong brand dislike (Johnson, Matear, and Thomson 2011), it is important that managers continue to improve and communicate their products/services benefits to its consumers.

The ripple effect of negative WOM about brands through social media is also a growing risk for managers. Luo, Wiles, and Raithel (2013) claim that social media give brand haters the opportunity for broadcasting their dislike, and research shows that negative WOM can influence neutral consumers greatly. This threat is very real, considering the possible reach of e.g., negative eWOM. Anti-brand forums are a way for customers to boycott and protest against companies. These sites have turned out to be major message distribution place and a powerful communication tool for oppositional consumers (Kucuk 2007).

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