WHY CONSUMERS AVOID BRANDS: THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT FACTORS AND BRAND HATE

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Abstract

Brands give consumers meaning to their lives. Marketing researchers have customarily underlined the positive aspects of consumption. Extensive work has been done by researchers in positive responses to brands. Marketing research has often focused on the positive attitudes towards brands, while negative evaluations of brands were neglected. The extant literature does not have a far reaching, and parsimonious understanding of anti-consumption and its related topics, such as brand hate and brand avoidance and different factors that leads to anti consumption. So, the aim of this study was to examine the impact of product levels factors (perceived deception, negative past experience, ideological incompatibility, undesired self-congruence and social influence) on brand avoidance. The study used quantitative approach. The data is obtained from 125 passenger car users of Ernakulam city. Statistical analysis was conducted. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate, discover in depth exploration of the specific types of ant consumption, brand hate, and brand avoidance and different product level factors that leads towards brand hate and ultimately towards brand avoidance. In doing so the main aim is to contribute more complete, integrative, and detailed understanding of the area.

Keywords: Brand avoidance, Brand hate, Ideological Incompatibility, Undesired Self-congruence

1. INTRODUCTION

Until today, extensive research has been conducted on the many positive aspects of branding and brand equity (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009a). Scholars have widely examined why consumers choose certain brands, how companies can increase brand loyalty, and how individuals express themselves and build their identities through the brands and products they use (Aaker, 1999; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000). However, what is becoming increasingly interesting—and still relatively under-researched—is the area of anti-consumption (Cherrier, 2009), particularly brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). According to Lee et al. (2009a), some consumers deliberately avoid certain brands due to negative associations, and studying these negative responses is as important as studying positive associations. Every day, customers purchase a variety of products and services. With more than ten billion brands available globally, consumers have numerous competitive choices. To simplify their decision-making process, one brand may be preferred over another. Consumers' feelings toward brands vary—while some brands evoke positive attitudes, others may provoke dislike or even strong negative emotions. Brands often serve as a means for consumers to express themselves and create meaning in their lives.

De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley define a brand as a "marketing tool that interconnects and communicates a set of values." It is widely accepted that a positive relationship between brands and customers is a powerful tool for building an organisation's reputation and profitability (Fournier, Breazeale & Fetscherin, 2012; Knittel et al., 2016). Positive brand experiences typically lead to brand satisfaction and, ultimately, brand loyalty (Ha & Perks, 2005).Brand hate represents the most intense and extreme negative emotion consumers may feel toward a brand. Despite its importance, it has been largely ignored or overlooked by researchers. Both brand avoidance and brand hate reflect the intention to deliberately stay away from a brand or product. Brand avoidance occurs when consumers intentionally reject a brand (Lee et al., 2009). Often, financial constraints are not the reason behind the rejection; instead, negative past experiences, misleading advertisements, poor product performance, negative reference groups, social influence, and perceived low product quality contribute to such avoidance. These factors collectively fall under the broad domain of **anti-consumption**.

Although the topics of anti-consumption, brand avoidance, and brand hate are gaining attention in the marketing field, existing studies have explored brand avoidance only in a general sense. Limited research has examined these concepts in specific industries or product categories. This study addresses that gap by focusing on durable goods in the automobile industry, specifically small and hatchback passenger cars.With globalization and liberalization, competition among automobile companies in India has intensified. Automobiles, once considered a luxury, have now become an essential part of everyday life. Customers' perceptions have shifted—yesterday's luxuries are today's necessities. For marketers, it is crucial to understand the factors that motivate consumers *not* to choose certain brands—the drivers of brand avoidance.

India is expected to become the world's third-largest passenger-vehicle market by 2021. As of 2019, India was the fourth-largest

automobile market globally, surpassing Germany in sales. It took seven years for India to grow from producing three million to four million vehicles annually, but reaching the five-million mark is expected within five years. This growth is driven by rapid economic development, ongoing urbanisation, a rising consuming class, and supportive government policies. The automobile sector currently contributes more than 7% to India's GDP, and the Automotive Mission Plan 2016–26 aims to increase this contribution to 12%.Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate and explore the various forms of anti-consumption, identify the product-level factors influencing consumers' attitudes toward different car brands, and understand how these factors lead to brand hate and ultimately brand avoidance.

2.1 Perceived Deception

Perceived deception refers to the consumer's feeling of being misled after exposure to an advertisement. Aditya defines deceptive advertising as *any message that persuades customers to make decisions they otherwise would not make, leading them to purchase a product that is not suitable for them*. Deceptive advertising involves the deliberate use of false or misleading statements to influence consumer behavior, often creating inaccurate beliefs about a product or service. Several companies employ such tactics to boost sales, resulting in consumer distrust and negative evaluations. According to Katarina Gubiniova (2017), customers' perception and evaluation of marketing communication significantly shape their responses to advertisements. Prior research (Knittel et al., 2016) reveals that both current and past advertisements can evoke animosity among audiences, leading to advertising and brand avoidance. Four major factors contribute to advertising avoidance: **content, celebrity endorser, music, and individual responses**. Confusing or provocative content—such as violence, nudity, or taboo themes—may draw attention initially but often leads to negative emotional reactions and brand rejection. Celebrity endorsers, though effective in increasing brand recognition, may transfer their personal image (positive or negative) to the brand; thus, dislike toward a celebrity can lead to avoidance of the advertised product. Similarly, music in advertisements can generate strong emotional responses, either enhancing or diminishing brand appeal (Apaolaza-Ibáñez et al., 2010). Individual subjective reactions also play a crucial role, as audiences often describe disliked advertisements as "annoying," "stupid," or "senseless" (Knittel et al., 2016). Based on these insights, the present study proposes the following hypothesis. *The scale used to measure Perceived Deception in advertising was adapted from established studies in prior literature. Items developed by Wang et al. (2012) were included, such as "Advertisements use deceptive tactics to convince consumers," "I think the reality is different from what is mentioned in the ads of the brand," "I don't like the content and celebrities," etc. These items capture consumers' perceptions of misleading claims, exaggerated promises, and manipulative advertising strategies. Overall, the scale reflects the extent to which consumers believe that the brand's advertisements are untrustworthy or deceptive.*

H01: Perceived Deception has no significant effect on Brand Hate.

2.2 Undesired Self-Congruence

Undesired self-congruence is a psychological construct that explains why consumers avoid certain brands. It occurs when a brand is perceived as inconsistent with a consumer's self-concept, leading to negative emotions and avoidance behavior (Lee et al., 2009b; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). Consumers tend to select products that reinforce or enhance their self-image, while avoiding those that convey undesirable traits or values, as these may threaten their personal or social identity (Lee et al., 2009a).Brand avoidance may arise from associations with negative reference groups, lack of authenticity, or over-commercialization. For example, consumers may reject brands linked to status-oriented groups they do not identify with, or brands perceived as culturally inauthentic or excessively commercialized (Holt, 2002; Beverland, 2006; Lee et al., 2009a). Such misalignment between the brand image and the consumer's self-concept reduces perceived congruence and fosters brand dislike.Research also shows that anti-consumption and identity formation are closely linked. Cherrier (2009) highlights that consumers may resist certain brands to construct identities such as "hero" or "project" identities, using avoidance as a strategy to express personal values. Similarly, Rucker and Galinsky (2009) note that perceived power or status influences brand desirability, as consumers seek products that enhance their social image, while avoiding brands that fail to reflect their desired identity.The concept of the social self-further emphasizes the role of identity in brand evaluation. According to James (1992) and Baumeister & Leary (1995), individuals maintain multiple social selves across different social contexts, and threats to any of these selves can generate discomfort. Brands that conflict with any version of a consumer's social self can trigger avoidance, reinforcing the importance of aligning brand image with consumer identity.*The scale for measuring Undesired Self-Congruence was adapted from Lee et al. (2009) and includes items such as "The products of this brand do not reflect who I am," "The products of Brand X do not fit my personality," "Brand X lacks uniqueness compared to its competitors," and "This brand symbolizes the kind of person I would never want to be," etc. These items capture the degree to which consumers perceive a mismatch between their self-concept and a brand's image. Consumers are likely to avoid brands that fail to align with their identity, symbolize undesirable traits, or lack distinctiveness. Overall, this scale reflects how identity incongruence contributes to brand dislike and avoidance.*

H02: Undesired Self-Congruence has no significant effect on Brand Hate.

2.3 Ideological Incompatibility

Ideological incompatibility refers to the avoidance of brands based on a consumer's moral, political, or socio-economic beliefs.

According to Lee et al. (2009), moral issues influence brand avoidance when consumers perceive a brand's practices or values as conflicting with their own. Moral avoidance includes sub-themes such as **anti-hegemony**—resisting monopolistic or irresponsible corporate behavior—and **country effects**, where consumers reject brands associated with countries or political philosophies they oppose. Portwood-Stacer (2012) explains that moral anti-consumption arises from consumers' judgments of right and wrong, motivating them to act responsibly and avoid brands that engage in unethical practices, such as exploiting natural resources or employing child labor.

Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz (2001) distinguish between economic and ethical boycotts, noting that consumers may resist products due to discriminatory pricing or socially irresponsible corporate behavior. Similarly, Salvatori (2007) emphasizes that morally objectionable practices can evoke extreme negative feelings toward a brand, potentially leading to **brand hate**. Anti-hegemony, as discussed by Lee et al. (2009b), may result from monopoly resistance, corporate irresponsibility, or exploitative labor practices (Holt, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Cromie & Ewing, 2009).

Country-of-origin (COO) effects further influence ideological incompatibility. Consumers may avoid brands strongly linked to countries perceived to produce substandard goods or whose political and social values conflict with their own (Batra et al., 2000; Elliott & Cameron, 1994; Hong & Wyer, 1990; Janda & Rao, 1998). Political consumerism, as noted by Sandikci & Ekici (2009), occurs when individuals base purchasing decisions on attitudes toward societal justice and political values, sometimes leading to boycotts—defined as a deliberate reduction or avoidance of consumption for ethical or political reasons (Friedman, 1985; Fournier, 1998b; Izberk-Bilgin, 2010).In summary, ideological incompatibility demonstrates that consumers consider moral, political, and socio-economic factors when evaluating brands. Unethical corporate behavior, monopolistic practices, or adverse country associations can trigger brand avoidance and anti-consumption behaviors. Based on this literature, the present study examines the following hypothesis. The scale for measuring *Ideological Incompatibility* was adapted from Lee et al. (2009) and includes items such as "The Brand X acts unethically," "I prefer to use a domestic brand rather than a foreign brand," "The Brand X violates moral standards," and "I don't like the country Brand X comes from," etc. These items capture consumers' perceptions of ethical, moral, and country-of-origin concerns that influence brand avoidance. Consumers are likely to avoid brands that engage in unethical practices, violate moral standards, or are associated with countries they disapprove of. Overall, this scale reflects how ideological and moral incompatibility contributes to anti-consumption behavior and brand rejection.

H03: Ideological Incompatibility has no significant effect on Brand Hate.

2.4 Social Influence

Social influence refers to the extent to which consumers perceive that their peers—such as family and friends—expect them to use a particular brand (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Research suggests that individuals who are more concerned with social evaluation are more likely to avoid brands that might be disapproved of within their social environment (Kim et al., 2014). Berger and Heath (2007) note that consumers selectively assimilate into reference groups that enhance their identity, while avoiding products or behaviors associated with groups, they consider too large or undesirable. Turner (1991) further emphasizes the importance of reference groups in shaping attitudes, highlighting the distinction between positive reference groups, which consumers identify with, and negative or dissociative reference groups, which consumers actively avoid (Lee et al., 2009; White & Dahl, 2007).

Consumers' brand avoidance is strongly influenced by both offline and online social interactions. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and messaging platforms like WhatsApp enable peer-to-peer communication and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which shape attitudes toward brands (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004; Lim, Sia, Lee, & Benbasat, 2006; Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011) suggest that peers act as powerful socialization agents, affecting receptivity to social network advertising, while Hunter-Jones (2014) categorizes socialization agents into traditional (family, peers, school, media), professional (marketing/communication entities), and virtual (Internet and social media) groups. Social media, in particular, facilitates online consumer socialization, allowing consumers to share knowledge, attitudes, and experiences, thereby influencing brand avoidance through peer influence and e-WOM.

In summary, social influence—including both direct peer pressure and online socialization—plays a critical role in consumers' brand avoidance behaviors. Based on this literature, the study examines the corresponding hypothesis related to the impact of social influence on brand avoidance.

The scale for measuring Social Influence was adapted from existing literature (Sohn, 2014; Wang et al., 2012) and includes items such as "I frequently gather information from my friends and family before I buy," "Reference groups influence the brand I prefer," "Opinion leaders play an important role in the brands I choose," and "I completely trust peer groups," etc. These items capture the extent to which consumers are influenced by peers, family, and opinion leaders in their brand-related decisions. Consumers are likely to align their brand choices with the preferences of socially significant groups and trusted sources. Overall, this scale reflects how social influence contributes to brand evaluation and potential brand avoidance.

H04: Social Influence has no significant effect on Brand Hate.

2.5 Negative Past Experience

Experiential avoidance arises from three main factors: poor product performance, inconvenience during the acquisition process,

and a negative store environment (Lee et al., 2009b). These factors often stem from a negative first-hand experience with the brand (Lee et al., 2009a).

Branding involves making promises and adding value to customers, which in turn shapes customer expectations (Berry, 2000; Balmer & Gray, 2003). When brand promises align with customer expectations, satisfaction occurs, leading to repeat purchases. Conversely, dissatisfaction arises when expectations are not met, and negative experiences may lead to brand avoidance.

If the actual product experience does not match customer expectations, it can be perceived as poor brand performance. For example, if a consumer experiences product failure or faces excessive effort in resolving issues through a service center, the hassle and time lost can result in avoidance behavior (Knittel et al., 2016). After such disappointing experiences, individuals may avoid the brand in the future.

Several critical circumstances during service encounters can trigger customer switching behavior, including inconvenience, pricing issues, core service failures, service encounter failures, poor employee responses, ethical problems, and attraction by competitors (Keaveney, 1995). These circumstances are key drivers of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a).

Finally, an unpleasant store environment can also contribute to experiential avoidance. Non-interpersonal factors, such as store stimuli, ambience, and social environment, can lead customers to avoid a store or brand (Lee et al., 2009b; Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder & Lueg, 2005). For instance, a dirty or noisy store environment may result in avoidance.

Negative past experience was measured using items adapted from Lee et al. (2009) and Salvatori (2007). Respondents indicated their agreement with statements such as: *"The performance of products from Brand X is poor," "The brand's products are inconvenient," "I don't like the store environment of the brand,"* and *"It was a hassle interacting with Brand X salespeople."* All items were rated on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate a greater negative past experience with the brand.

H05: Negative Past Experience has no significant effect on Brand Hate.

2.6 Brand Hate

According to Weingarten (2006), hate requires both a subject and an object and can camouflage different feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. Rempel & Burris (2005) describe hate as a motive aimed at diminishing the well-being of the object, while Ben-Ze'ev (2000) defines it as a long-term attitude requiring evaluation of the object as inherently dangerous. Sternberg's (1986, 2003) triangular theory of hate proposes three dimensions: disgust, anger/fear, and devaluation/diminution, which Zeki & Romaya (2008) later used to develop the passionate hate scale. However, these theories primarily address interpersonal hate, not consumer-brand relationships.

While brand love has received significant attention, research on brand hate remains limited (Grégoire et al., 2009, 2010; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Brand hate is more extreme than simple dislike and represents an intense, stable, and enduring negative emotion toward a brand (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000; Rempel & Burris, 2005; Weingarten, 2006; Bryson, Atwal, & Dreissig, 2010). Its intensity is influenced by factors such as duration, peak of the emotion, and strength of behavioral tendencies (Sonnemans & Frijda, 1994; Ben-Ze'ev, 2000).

Brand hate can manifest in behaviors such as voicing negative feelings, boycotting products, or sabotaging the brand, and is often triggered by unmet expectations, negative experiences, or deceptive advertising (Salvatori, 2007; Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009). In this study, brand hate is defined as "an intense negative emotional affect toward the brand" (Bryson, Atwal, & Hulten, 2013).

*Brand hate was measured using items adapted from Zeki & Romaya (2008) and other relevant literature. Respondents indicated their agreement with statements such as: "This brand doesn't deserve any consideration," "I don't want anything to do with Brand X and am dissatisfied with its products," "This brand makes me upset," and "Any time I spend with this brand's products or services is a waste of time." All items were rated on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate a stronger negative emotional attachment or brand hate.*

H06: Brand Hate has no significant effect on Brand Avoidance

2.7 Brand Avoidance

Brand avoidance is defined as a phenomenon in which consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand, even when they have the financial means and ability to purchase it (Lee et al., 2009a, p. 422). Lee et al. (2009a) identified four main categories of brand avoidance: experiential, identity, moral, and deficit-value, which was later expanded to include advertising-related avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016). Negative advertising content—such as themes, music, images, or endorsers—can trigger unfavorable consumer reactions, leading to brand avoidance (Louie et al., 2001; Spry et al., 2011; Sabri & Obermiller, 2012; Lantos & Craton, 2012).

Consumers may also avoid brands due to negative associations or meanings they do not want to represent (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Englis & Solomon, 1997), dissatisfaction (Bagozzi et al., 1999), or other negative emotions and behaviors. Brand avoidance can influence actual buying behavior, and some consumers may actively participate in anti-brand communities to reinforce their negative beliefs (Kucuk, 2008, 2010; Ostrom & Ward, 2001). These communities, often composed of experts or symbolic haters,

have grown in influence with the advent of the internet, allowing consumers to co-create brand meaning while expressing their rejection.

Brand avoidance was measured using items adapted from Lee et al. (2009). Respondents indicated their agreement with statements such as: "I reject the products and services of this brand," "I avoid buying the brand's products or using its services," and "I spread negative word-of-mouth about Brand X." All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate a stronger tendency toward brand avoidance.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Branding has gained significant importance in both marketing academia and practice. While numerous studies have focused on the positive aspects of branding and the favourable behaviours of consumers toward products, the rapidly changing global economic environment demands that businesses continuously adapt and modify their strategies to remain competitive. As markets evolve, understanding not only why consumers choose certain brands but also why they reject others becomes essential. This study addresses the growing academic and managerial interest in **anti-consumption**, particularly **brand avoidance** and **brand hate**. Understanding these negative consumer behaviours can help managers and marketers identify the key factors that cause consumers to avoid specific brands and develop strategies to minimise such avoidance. Based on this need, the study raises the following research questions:

What are the factors influencing brand hate and brand avoidance?

How can brand hate and brand avoidance be measured?

Does brand hate mediate the relationship between product-level factors and brand avoidance?

Drawing from these research questions, the study aims to investigate the impact of selected product-level factors on brand hate and how this, in turn, leads to the avoidance of different brands of small and hatchback passenger cars.

4.OBJECTIVES
The study *"A Study on Brand Avoidance Due to Product-Level Factors: Mediating Role of Brand Hate"* is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To identify and explore the product-level factors that influence brand avoidance.
- To measure the constructs of brand hate and brand avoidance.
- To examine the mediating role of brand hate between product-level factors and brand avoidance.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The present study examines the impact of product-level factors on brand avoidance and the mediating role of brand hate with specific reference to small and hatchback segment passenger cars. The study includes five independent variables, one mediating variable, and one dependent variable.

The population of the study comprises customers who use small and hatchback passenger cars in Ernakulam district. Samples were selected using convenience sampling, and only those respondents who owned and used cars were included. Data was collected using a purposive sampling approach to ensure relevance to the study topic.A total of 200 Google Form questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents. Out of these, 150 responses were received, and after eliminating incomplete or incorrect forms, 125 valid questionnaires were used for the final analysis. Respondents belonged to different age groups, ensuring adequate representation.

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire prepared in Google Forms. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Secondary data was obtained from books, published journals, research articles, reports, and reputable websites to support the conceptual framework. The collected data was statistically processed, classified, tabulated, and analysed using various statistical tools such as percentages, mean, mode, and standard deviation. To test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between variables, correlation and regression analysis were employed. All statistical computations and analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The reliability analysis confirmed that all variables achieved values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency

6.RESULT OF ANALYSIS
6.1 Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62.4
	Female	37.6
Age	Below 25	27.2
	25–35	37.6

	35–45	30.4
	Above 45	4.8
Employment Status	Students	22.4
	Private Sector	51.2
	Public Sector	24.8
	Others	1.6
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	7.2
	Graduate	33.6
	Postgraduate	33.6
	Diploma/Certificate	25.6
Period of Car Usage	Below 1 year	14.4
	1–2 years	38.4
	3–4 years	32
	4–5 years	12.8
	More than 5 years	2.4
Preferred Car Brands	Tata	22.4
	Toyota	20
	Volkswagen	15.2
Car Purchase Budget	₹10–20 lakhs	42.4
	₹5–10 lakhs	38.4
	₹20–40 lakhs	10.4
	Below ₹5 lakhs	7.2
Brand Avoidance	Ford	32
	Chevrolet	20
	Volkswagen	17.6

The demographic profile of the respondents shows that the sample is predominantly male (62.4%), with females accounting for 37.6%. In terms of age, the majority fall within the 25–35 age group (37.6%), followed by 35–45 years (30.4%), indicating that most participants are young to middle-aged adults actively engaged in automobile purchase decisions. Employment status reveals that more than half of the respondents (51.2%) work in the private sector, while 24.8% are from the public sector and 22.4% are students, reflecting a diverse yet professionally oriented sample. Educational qualifications further indicate that the respondents are well-educated, with graduates and postgraduates together forming 67.2% of the sample. Regarding car usage, most respondents have been using their vehicles for 1–2 years (38.4%), followed by 3–4 years (32%), suggesting that a large portion are relatively new car owners. In terms of brand preference, Tata emerges as the most preferred car brand (22.4%), followed by Toyota (20%) and Volkswagen (15.2%), highlighting trust in safety, reliability, and performance. The preferred budget category for car purchases is ₹10–20 lakhs (42.4%), showing a strong inclination toward mid-range vehicles, while 38.4% prefer cars priced between ₹5–10 lakhs. With regard to brand avoidance, Ford is the most avoided brand (32%), likely due to its exit from the Indian market and service-related concerns, followed by Chevrolet (20%) and Volkswagen (17.6%). Overall, the findings suggest that brand preference and brand avoidance are strongly influenced by consumer demographics, prior experience, and market perceptions.

6.2 Measures of Variables

Variable	Acronym	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Perceived Deception	PD	3.5387	0.94545
Undesired Self Congruence	US	3.746	0.71348
Ideological Incompatibility	ID	3.644	0.81274
Social Influence	SI	3.91	0.70953
Negative Past Experience	NP	3.92	0.68141
Brand Hate	BH	3.668	0.70031
Brand Avoidance	BA	3.8747	0.81306
Source: Primary Data			

The descriptive statistics show notable differences in the mean scores of the study variables. Negative Past Experience (NP) recorded the highest mean value (3.9200), indicating that respondents strongly agree that their past negative encounters with the brand influence their perceptions. This is followed closely by Social Influence (SI) with a mean of 3.9100, suggesting that peer opinions and social pressure significantly affect participants' attitudes. Brand Avoidance (BA) also shows a relatively high mean

(3.8747), reflecting a strong tendency among respondents to avoid the brand.

On the other hand, Perceived Deception (PD) has the lowest mean score (3.5387), implying that respondents perceive comparatively lower levels of deceptive practices by the brand. Regarding variability, Negative Past Experience (NP) shows the lowest standard deviation (0.68141), meaning responses for this variable were more consistent. This is followed by Social Influence (SI) with a standard deviation of 0.70953. Overall, the results indicate that past experiences and social influence play a stronger and more consistent role in shaping consumer attitudes compared to other variables such as perceived deception or ideological incompatibility.

6.3 Correlation analysis

Variable	PD	US	ID	SI	NP	BH	BA
Perceived Deception (PD)	1						
Undesired Self Congruence (US)	0.205*	1					
Ideological Incompatibility (ID)	0.212*	0.603**	1				
Social Influence (SI)	0.206*	0.289**	0.440**	1			
Negative Past Experience (NP)	0.222**	0.440**	0.322**	0.521**	1		
Brand Hate (BH)	0.230**	0.333**	0.532**	0.458**	0.386**	1	
Brand Avoidance (BA)	0.421**	0.430**	0.565**	0.566**	0.566**	0.611**	1

The correlation analysis indicates that all independent variables—Perceived Deception (PD), Undesired Self-Congruence (US), Ideological Incompatibility (ID), Social Influence (SI), and Negative Past Experience (NP)—have positive and significant relationships with the dependent variable, Brand Avoidance (BA). Among these, Social Influence (SI), Negative Past Experience (NP), and Ideological Incompatibility (ID) show relatively strong correlations with BA (r = 0.566**, 0.566**, and 0.565**, respectively), suggesting that peer influence, prior negative experiences, and ideological misalignment strongly contribute to brand avoidance. The mediating variable, Brand Hate (BH), also exhibits strong positive correlations with both the independent variables and BA (r = 0.611** with BA), indicating that it may play a significant mediating role in the relationship between product-level factors and brand avoidance. Perceived Deception (PD) has the lowest correlation with BA (r = 0.421**), suggesting it has a moderate impact compared to other factors. Overall, the results confirm that negative experiences, social influence, and ideological incompatibility are key drivers of brand avoidance, with brand hate intensifying this effect.

6.4 Regression
1.Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.694	0.482	0.476	0.41704	1.71

The R² value of 0.482 indicates that 48.2% of the variance in **Brand Hate (BH)** is explained by the independent variables (**Perceived Deception (PD), Undesired Self-Congruence (US), Ideological Incompatibility (ID), Social Influence (SI), Negative Past Experience (NP)**). The Durbin-Watson value of 1.710 confirms that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals, satisfying the assumption of independence of observations.

2.ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	506.032	5	101.206	6.169	0.000**
Residual	3371.934	119	29.578		
Total	3877.967	124			

a.**Predictors : (Constant), PD, US, ID, SI, NP mediating**

Variable: BH **denotes significant at 1 percent level. ANOVA table showing the regression model fit presented in table shows that the model is statistically significant at 1 percent significance level (F=6.169).

3.Coefficients of regression analysis

Independent Variable	Acronym	Standardized Beta (β)	Significance (p)
Perceived Deception	PD	0.164	0.017*
Undesired Self-Congruence	US	0.241	0.001**
Ideological Incompatibility	ID	0.193	0.036*
Social Influence	SI	0.363	0.000**
Negative Past Experience	NP	0.401	0.000**

**Denotes significance at 1 percent level *Denotes significance at 5 percent level

The regression analysis reveals that all five independent variables—Perceived Deception (PD), Undesired Self-Congruence (US), Ideological Incompatibility (ID), Social Influence (SI), and Negative Past Experience (NP)—positively and significantly influence Brand Hate, which in turn affects Brand Avoidance. Among these, Negative Past Experience (β = 0.401, $p < 0.01$) emerges as the strongest predictor, indicating that prior dissatisfaction or negative encounters with a brand are the most critical drivers of brand hate. Social Influence (β = 0.363, $p < 0.01$) also has a substantial effect, highlighting the role of peers, family, and social networks in shaping consumers' negative attitudes toward brands. Undesired Self-Congruence (β = 0.241, $p < 0.01$) shows that a brand misaligned with a consumer's self-image significantly increases brand hate, while Ideological Incompatibility (β = 0.193, $p < 0.05$) and Perceived Deception (β = 0.164, $p < 0.05$) indicate that conflicts with personal values and perceived misleading advertising also contribute to negative consumer perceptions. Overall, the findings suggest that both personal experiences and social as well as psychological factors play a crucial role in driving brand hate and subsequent brand avoidance.

6.5 Regression Analysis of Brand Hate and Brand Avoidance

1. Model Summary					
Model	**R**	**R²**	**Adjusted R²**	**Std. Error of Estimate**	**Durbin–Watson**
1	0.673	0.452	0.416	0.41367	2.059
2. ANOVA					
ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	25.509	1	25.509	13.327	0.000**
Residual	45.554	119	0.383		
Total	71.063	120			
3. Coefficients of Regression Analysis					
Coefficients	Item Acronym	Standardized Beta (β)	Sig. (P value)		
Brand Hate	BH	0.475	0.000**		

The regression analysis between Brand Hate (BH) and Brand Avoidance (BA) reveals a strong and statistically significant relationship. The model summary shows an R² value of 0.452, indicating that 45.2% of the variance in Brand Avoidance is explained by Brand Hate, while the adjusted R² of 0.416 confirms a stable model fit. The Durbin–Watson statistic of 2.059 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5–2.5, demonstrating that there is no autocorrelation and the observations are independent. The ANOVA test (F = 13.327, $p < 0.01$) further confirms that the regression model is highly significant. The standardized beta coefficient for Brand Hate is

0.475 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that Brand Hate has a positive and significant influence on Brand Avoidance. This means that as Brand Hate increases, consumers' tendency to avoid the brand also increases. Since the effect is statistically significant at the 1% level, the null hypothesis (H06) is rejected, establishing that Brand Hate significantly predicts Brand Avoidance.

7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that multiple psychological, experiential, and social factors jointly shape consumers' negative attitudes toward automobile brands, ultimately leading to brand avoidance. The results show that Negative Past Experience, Social Influence, Undesired Self-Congruence, Ideological Incompatibility, and Perceived Deception significantly contribute to the formation of Brand Hate, which then acts as a powerful driver of Brand Avoidance.

Among the predictors, Negative Past Experience emerged as the strongest determinant of Brand Hate (β = 0.401). This highlights that consumers' direct interactions—such as product failures, poor service, or unresolved complaints—play a dominant role in generating strong negative emotions. Social Influence (β = 0.363) also showed a substantial impact, suggesting that family, peer groups, and social networks significantly shape negative brand perceptions, especially in a category like automobiles, where purchase decisions are highly visible and socially discussed. The results further reveal that Undesired Self-Congruence (β = 0.241) meaningfully contributes to Brand Hate, indicating that when a brand does not align with a consumer's identity or self-image, it leads to emotional rejection. Ideological Incompatibility (β = 0.193) and Perceived Deception (β = 0.164) also significantly influence Brand Hate, confirming that value conflicts and misleading brand actions reduce trust and intensify negative emotions. Correlation findings reinforce this, showing strong associations between Social Influence, Negative Past Experience, Ideological Incompatibility, and both Brand Hate and Brand Avoidance. This indicates that Brand Hate does not operate in isolation but is part of a broader network of negative cognitive and emotional reactions. Importantly, the regression results establish that Brand Hate is a significant predictor of Brand Avoidance (β = 0.475, $p < 0.01$), explaining 45.2% of the variance in avoidance behaviour. This demonstrates that once consumers develop strong dislike or hostility toward a brand, they actively distance themselves from it—by discontinuing purchases, discouraging others, or switching to competitors. Overall, the study confirms that Brand Hate

functions as a mediating emotional mechanism linking negative brand-related experiences and perceptions to consumers' avoidance behaviour. The findings highlight the need for automobile brands to address consumer grievances promptly, maintain transparent communication, align brand values with consumer expectations, and monitor the influence of social narratives. Failure to do so may escalate dissatisfaction into strong negative emotions, ultimately resulting in long-term brand avoidance.

8.CONCLUSION

The study reveals that brand avoidance among passenger car users is strongly shaped by consumers' experiences, perceptions, and social surroundings. **Negative past experiences** emerged as the most influential factor, indicating that poor product performance, unmet expectations, and unpleasant service encounters significantly push customers away from a brand. **Social influence** also plays a major role, as opinions from family, friends, and peer groups often shape consumers' decisions. In addition, **undesired self-congruence**—when the brand does not align with a consumer's identity—further drives avoidance behavior. Although less influential, **perceived deception** in advertising and **ideological incompatibility** still contribute to negative attitudes toward brands. The study also confirms that **Brand Hate** intensifies these effects and acts as a strong mediator; when consumers develop strong negative feelings toward a brand, they are more likely to reject it entirely. Overall, the findings show that brand avoidance is influenced by a combination of emotional reactions, performance-related issues, and social pressures. For companies, this highlights the importance of delivering consistent product quality, maintaining transparent communication, creating ethical brand practices, and addressing customer complaints promptly. Strengthening customer trust and ensuring positive experiences can effectively reduce brand avoidance and improve long-term loyalty.

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