Review

"The Dark Side of the Brand" and Brand Hate: A Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract: The present study aimed to analyze the current state of the art regarding brand hate with the main intention of identifying possible gaps to be explored in future studies. Brand hate can be described as a set of negative emotions on the part of consumers concerning a certain brand, whose implications involve a reduction in the profitability of companies, as well as of their market shares. From the research carried out in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, 90 publications related to the theme were identified, of which 25 were selected and read in full. The analyzed literature points out that research on the subject has focused almost exclusively on the development of the phenomenon and its consequences from the perspective of consumer behavior. Therefore, the emphasis has been on identifying its direct antecedents, on the effects of its mediators in a set of behaviors such as complaints, negative word of mouth, protests, sponsorship reduction and assignment, brand change, and wishes for revenge, among others. Few studies have been dedicated to understanding the direct effects of brand hate on consumer behavior, its evolution over time in different industries and contexts, who its mediators are, and how the phenomenon is perceived and managed from the perspective of the companies involved in this phenomenon, providing opportunities for future research.

Keywords: brand hate; consumer behavior; research opportunities; negative emotions; consumer relationship; narrative-oriented literature review

1. Introduction

One of the first attempts to understand the relationship of consumers with a given brand was made by Fournier (1998). Since then, several investigations have been carried out to deepen the theoretical and practical implications of this phenomenon, especially on specific topics such as brand trust, brand loyalty (Lau and Lee 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001; Yi and Jeon 2003), brand commitment (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2002; Coulter et al. 2003; Burmann and Zeplin 2005; Fullerton 2005), and most recently brand love and brand hate. All of these phenomena are equally important fields of research for modern marketing, as marketing has gradually changed its focus from a purely transactional

perspective to a more relational one (Pels et al. 2000; O'Malley 2014), and it is evident that brand love has received more attention from researchers (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010; Batra et al. 2012; Ismail and Spinelli 2012; Albert and Merunka 2013; Rauschnabel and Ahuvia 2014; Wallace et al. 2014) than brand hate. Three components define hate, namely, the negation of intimacy—disgust, passion—anger/fear, and commitment—devaluation/diminution (Zhang and Laroche 2020).

Specifically, the first research that dealt with constructs related to what would come to be known as brand hate was carried out by Kucuk (2008), in the seminal article "Negativity Double Jeopardy", attesting to the emergence of a new phenomenon in which the most valuable brands tended to receive more negative attention than the less valuable brands, through the emergence of anti-brand or anti-consumption websites. After almost 13 years, many investigations followed with important contributions to the understanding of this phenomenon. According to Zhang and Laroche (2020), and regarding interpersonal hate, there are two schools of thought in terms of brand hate definition. One school, holding a more traditional interpretation of hate, believes that hate is a primary emotion associated with extreme dislike, aggressive impulses, individual emotional rejection, and group hatred (e.g., Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1973). Another school of thought, a more widely accepted interpretation of hate among psychology and marketing scholars, believes that hate is comprised of several dimensions, namely, the negation of intimacy, passion, and commitment (Sternberg 2003). From a consumer–brand relationship perspective, Romani et al. (2012) conclude the feeling of hate as an extreme form of dislike for the brand. Bryson et al. (2013, p. 395) define brand hate as "an intense negative emotional affect towards the brand". Kucuk (2019, p. 432) defines brand hate as "consumer detachment and aversion from a brand and its value systems as a result of constantly happening brand injustices that leads to intense and deeply held negative consumer emotions". Accordingly, and given the relevance of brand hate, especially for the potential negative impacts resulting from it, such as the decrease in profitability and market share caused by retaliation against a certain brand due to the development of negative emotions on the part of consumers (Tuhin 2019), the present investigation has as its main objective the analysis of the current state of the art regarding brand hate with the main intention of identifying possible gaps to be explored in future studies. Table 1 summarizes several studies of brand hate type and key findings. The present research is justified by presenting an analysis of the main studies carried out on the theme, providing an in-depth, critical, and more objective understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Considering the rationale of the investigation, this theoretical review is useful for identifying existent theoretical gaps, revealing the extent to which the theories developed so far are insufficient, thus justifying further research (Randolph 2009; Booth et al. 2016).

The study of brand management is very relevant for decision makers and final consumers (i.e., the areas of purchase decision, behavioral intentions, satisfaction, recommendation, and loyalty in general). More and more companies are using brand management as a differentiating element and to achieve competitive advantage (Vieira and Sousa 2020). Consumers trust brands and are willing to pay more for their preferred brands.

This research is a hybrid type of literature review, in that it uses an integrated framework for identifying possibilities for future research on brand hate through a narrative-oriented literature review (Paul and Criado 2020). Negative emotions can have a powerful impact on consumers' purchase decisions. Companies may face negative consequences such as consumer avoidance, negative word of mouth, and brand boycotts due to consumers' negative sentiments if no actions are taken (Wu et al. 2018). Hate, as an important underlying emotion, recently began to attract marketing scholars' attention (Hegner et al. 2017). More specifically, such as Paul et al. (2017), the Theory, Context, Methods (TCM) framework is used in a narrative-based review of brand hate to establish a research agenda. In addition to this brief introduction, this research is structured in six other sections. The next section deals with the methodology used to achieve the established objectives. After the methodology section, the main results about the analyzed literature are presented, as

well as its discussion, as the core of the present investigation, and, last but not least, the conclusions and references used are presented.

Table 1. Several studies of brand hate type and key findings.

Author	Brand Hate Type	Key Findings
Hegner et al. (2017)	Attitudinal and behavioral brand hate	- Negative past experience, symbolic incongruity, and ideological incompatibility cause brand hate. - Brand hate can have outcomes including brand avoidance, negative WOM, and brand retaliation.
Kucuk (2018)	Attitudinal and behavioral brand hate	- Brand hate comprises cold, cool, and hot brand hate. - Antecedents include company-related and consumer-related reasons. - Brand hate consequences include consumer complaints and boycott.
Fetscherin (2019)	Cool hate, hot hate, simmering hate, burning hate, and boiling hate	- Three components of brand hate: anger, contempt, and disgust. - Consequences include brand switching, private complaining, public complaining, brand retaliation, and brand revenge.
Zhang and Laroche (2020)	A multidimensional construct	- Brand hate is different from other negative consumer–brand interactions such as brand retaliation, brand revenge, and brand sabotage: brand hate is a negative passion encompassing a full spectrum of emotions, that is, anger, sadness, and fear emotions.
Farhat and Chaney (2021)	Destination brand hate	- Authors add to the brand hate literature by identifying the specificities of tourism. - The destination-related antecedents include the domestic and foreign policy of the destination and the feeling of insecurity toward the destination.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

2. Methodology

A literature review involves the selection and "critical description of the contemporary and relevant body of relevant published material" (Remenyi 2017, p. 124) on a specific topic that contains information, ideas, data, and evidence that present a certain point of view to achieve a goal or express a view on the nature of a given subject and as it may be investigated (Hart 2018). The literature review "is an essential part of any programme of academic research and frames the context of the research" (Remenyi 2017, p. 124). It is about "engaging with what others have written" (Bryman and Bell 2015, p. 100). Moreover, the usefulness of a literature review is based on the fact that there is a possibility of creating a solid basis for the advancement of knowledge, facilitating the development of theories, and the identification of new niches for investigation (Webster and Watson 2002). Within this premise, the present investigation constitutes a review of the literature about brand hate and, as such, seeks to analyze the current state of the art on the subject with the primary intention of identifying possible gaps to be explored in future investigations. In this sense, it can be considered as a systematic review, as it uses rigorous criteria to identify, critically evaluate, and synthesize all available literature on a given subject (Fink 2019). More strictly speaking, it is a hybrid type of literature review, in that it uses an integrated framework for identifying possibilities for future research on brand hate through a narrative-oriented literature review (Paul and Criado 2020). Hate, a very significant

emotion, has increasingly attracted marketing scholar's attention (Grégoire et al. 2009; Hegner et al. 2017; Zarantonello et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2018). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), for instance, made a contrast between the notions of brand hate and brand love and defined brand hate as the degree of passionate emotional attachment that someone has for certain brands (Rodrigues et al. 2023; Peixoto et al. 2023).

The methodological design used in the present research follows several studies (Paul et al. 2017; Loureiro et al. 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021a, 2021b; Rodrigues et al. 2023) about the systematic procedures for literature review, specifically concerning the paper selection for the analysis and application of the TCM framework in a narrative-based review to establish a research agenda related to brand hate.

The databases used for the selection of relevant literature were Scopus and Web of Science, selected for their relevance in terms of scientific publications, being the most widely used databases by the different fields of study for a literature search (Guz and Rushchitsky 2009; Snyder 2019).

In Scopus, the search and location of information resources in the literature were operationalized by inserting the Boolean operator "brand hate", applied to the title, abstract, and keywords, while the query in Web of Science was performed with the same Boolean operator depending on the topic, as described in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Queries used to collect the papers about brand hate.

Query
Scopus (TITLE-ABS-KEY("Brand hate"))
Web of Science TS = ("Brand hate")

We extracted 41 articles from journals indexed in the Web of Science and 49 articles indexed in the Scopus database (the summary of the article selection process can be seen in Figure 1), making a total of 90 investigations published during the period from 2016 to 2021, a period in which the research area began to gain body and interest from researchers, especially after the investigations conducted by Kucuk (2018) (please see Figures 2 and 3). After reading the 90 titles extracted from the two databases, 49 titles were obtained after combining the databases and eliminating duplicate titles. From reading the 49 titles of selected articles, 22 articles were excluded based on reading the titles and abstracts, using as the criterion for exclusion the exclusive focus on brand hate as the object of research, resulting in a total of 27 articles for full-text analysis. From the full-text analysis, 2 articles were excluded as they were not directly related to brand hate, so 25 articles were identified for the final analysis.

In addition, information for critically writing the literature review was extracted in a qualitative way through meta-synthesis, characterized as a non-statistical technique often used to integrate, evaluate, and interpret the results of multiple studies (Cronin et al. 2008), allowing a greater understanding of the object investigated (Cooper and Schindler 2014).

Next, to clarify the structure inherent in current research on brand hate, as well as the relationships that exist between its main elements to explain possible research opportunities, the TCM framework was applied, as used by other investigations (Paul et al. 2017; Loureiro et al. 2020b) with correlated aims.

Complementarily, Table 3 shows the journals that are on the ABS list, as well as their classifications (i.e., the Chartered Association of Business Schools (ABS) regularly produces a guide to academic journals published within the Business and Management field). Accordingly, of the total 25 articles selected for analysis, 16 or 64% of the articles are quality-assured, with ratings ranging from publications with recognized but modest standards (1) to original and well-executed publications being highly regarded (3) (CABS 2021).
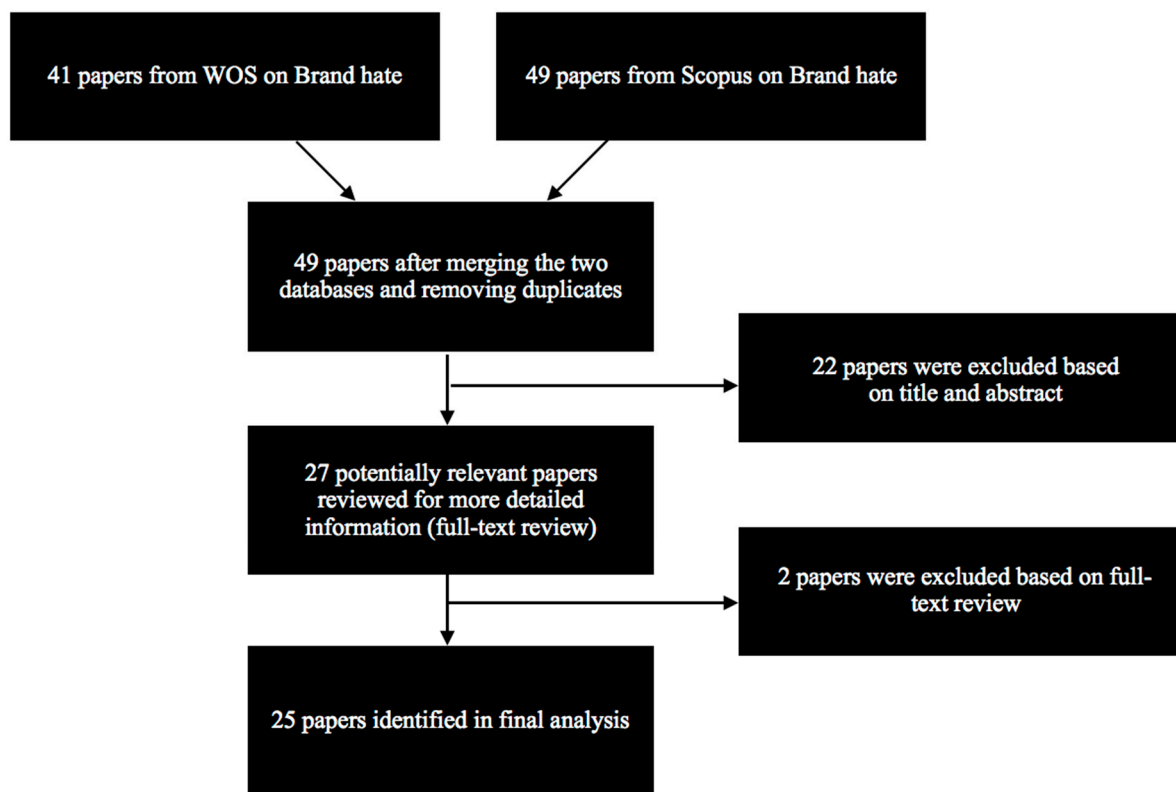
Figure 1. Screening process for selecting the final papers for analysis. Adapted from Loureiro et al. (2019, 2020a, 2021a, 2021b).

Table 3. Papers from journals listed and ranked in ABS.

N°	Name of the Journal	ABS Classification	Citation Count (2016–2019)	N° of Papers
1	*Journal of Business Research*	3	18.010	1
2	*International Journal of Hospitality Management*	3	4.829	1
3	*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service*	2	2.149	1
4	*Journal of Brand Management*	2	719	2
5	*Journal of Strategic Marketing*	2	587	1
6	*Strategic Change*	2	403	2
7	*British Food Journal*	1	2.741	2
8	*Journal of Product and Brand Management*	1	1.094	5
9	*Journal of Consumer Marketing*	1	713	1
Total of papers: **16** (64% of the 25 papers)				

## 3. Overview of Scientific Production and Methodology Concerning Brand Hate

Figure 2 shows the evolution of scientific production on brand hate over time. It is possible to see that this is a relatively recent field of study, whose publications start in 2010, remaining little researched until 2016, the year in which a vertiginous interest in the subject begins, reaching a peak of over 15 investigations in 2020.
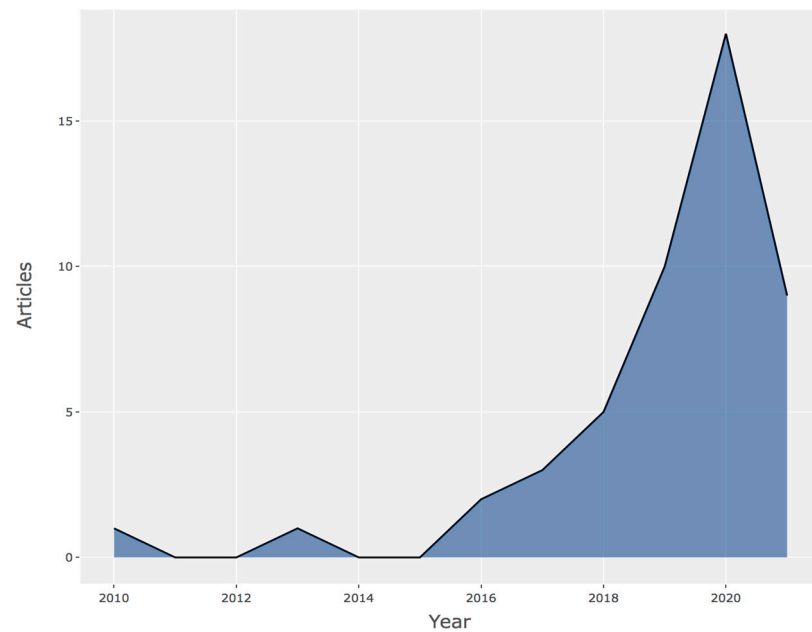
Figure 2. Scientific production evolution concerning brand hate over the years (2010–2021). (Obtained through R Studio software (https://www.r-studio.com/, accessed on 26 October 2023) and Package Bibliometrix (https://www.bibliometrix.org/home/, accessed on 26 October 2023).).

Figure 3 presents the Historical Direct Citations Network concerning brand hate over the years (2010–2021). From this figure, it is possible to notice the main papers of the field and how the subject has evolved over time, in the function of the direct citations. In addition, the results point out two big concentrations of papers during 2019 and 2020, which in turn came from Kucuk (2018).
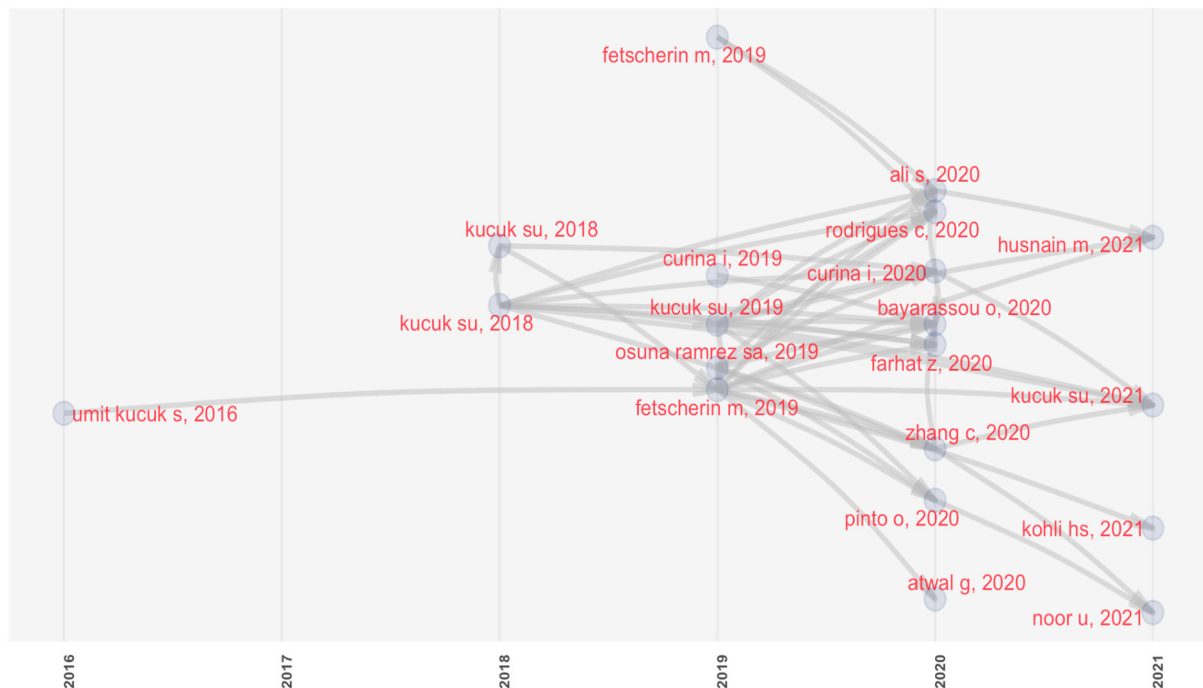
Figure 3. Historical Direct Citation Network concerning brand hate over the years (2010–2021). (Obtained through Studio software and Package Bibliometrix.)

Figure 4 presents the main methods applied in brand hate investigations, considering the period between 2016 and 2021. It appears that structural equation modeling has been the most applied method, followed by interviews and regression analysis, which ultimately is related to the concern in identifying the main antecedents and consequences of brand hate, as verified later in this research.
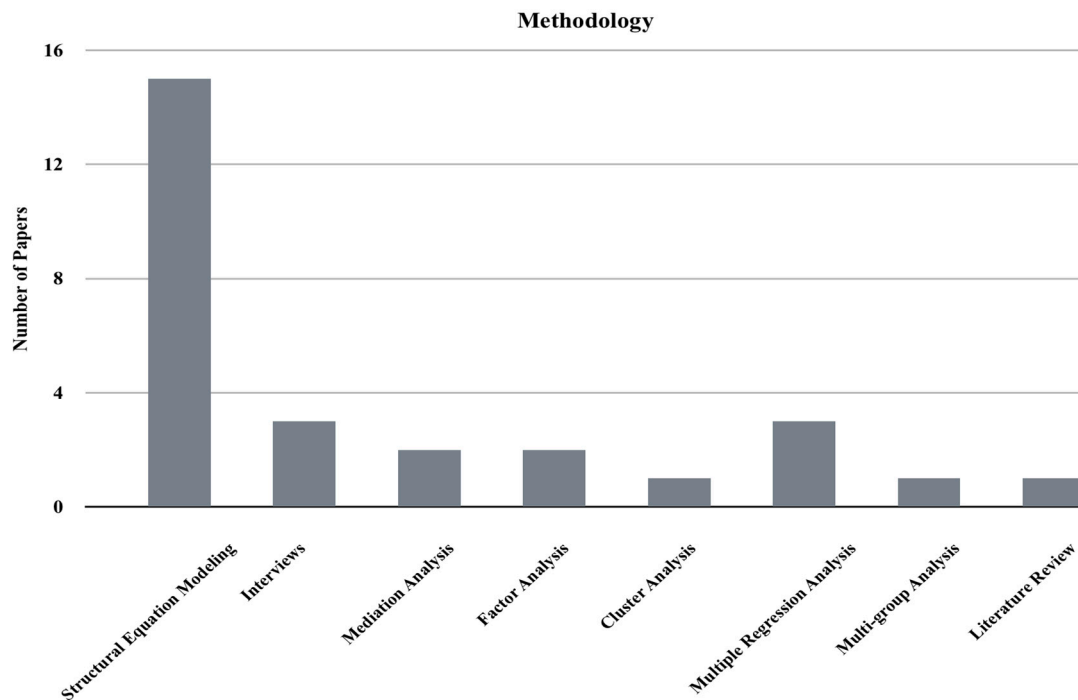
Figure 4. Main methods identified concerning brand hate researchers over the years (2016–2021).

4. Brand Hate: A Meta-Synthesis Perspective

4.1. Brand Hate Measurement and Categorization

When evaluating the responses of individuals on anti-brand sites (Facebook, n = 165, and M-Turk, n = 465) to empirically test a brand hate model as a multilayer construct, Kucuk (2019) found evidence through factor analysis that brand hate is a multifaceted phenomenon. In particular, the results found point to the existence of two groups of brand hate behaviors, namely, true haters and regular haters. Accordingly, the author points out that while the first group tends to perceive a brand as an individual or a person, expressing stronger reactions, the second tends to perceive a certain brand as an object, behaving moderately. Additionally, the author presents a categorization for brand hate, namely: cold brand hate, which involves the behavior of silently ignoring and moving away from a brand; cool brand hate, which is characterized by feelings of revolt and disgust with the brand; and hot brand hate, which comprises more intense and extreme behaviors such as hate and aggressiveness toward a brand.

Complementarily to the categorization presented by Kucuk (2019), another classification of brand hate behaviors and types can be found in Curina et al. (2019), who analyzed and classified the behavior of 616 individuals through non-hierarchical cluster analysis. After the analysis, the authors found four different clusters: consumers with bad influences; indifferent consumers; indulgent consumers, and radical consumers. According to the results found, the authors pointed out that consumer sensitivity is strongly affected by the economic segments in which the brands are inserted, so that the different levels of brand hate go from low/intermediate in the accessories and clothing sectors (consumers indifferent and indulgent) to high in the technology sector (consumers as bad influencers), reaching a maximum level in the food segment (radical consumers).

In addition to the studies mentioned, Platania et al. (2020) investigated 422 individuals to verify the psychometric properties of the brand hate Reduced Scale in the Italian context, as an aid to structural equation modeling. Using measures such as the Avoidance Scale, made up of items such as Experiential Avoidance, Identity Avoidance, and Moral Avoidance, and the Direct and Indirect Revenge Scale, made up of items such as Rejection Behavior, Negative word-of-mouth, Online Complaints, and Market Aggression, the authors found evidence that the brand hate Reduced Scale in the Italian context confirms some structures of the original scale developed by Hegner et al. (2017). Additionally, the authors found evidence that there is a strong and positive correlation between the brand hate Reduced Scale, especially Moral Avoidance and negative word-of-mouth behavior.

4.2. Aspects Related to Brand Hate's Antecedents, Moderators, and Responses

Hegner et al. (2017) when examining the possible antecedents and responses resulting from brand hate, using a sample of 224 German consumers, found evidence by structural equation modeling that indicates that brand hate has antecedents, in an increasing form of influence: ideological incompatibility, followed by symbolic incongruities, and finally, past negative experiences. In terms of behavioral responses as a result of brand hate, the authors identified that negative word-of-mouth behavior is similarly influenced by the three determinants of brand hate, that brand retaliation is mainly influenced by past negative experiences, and that brand avoidance is influenced by symbolic incongruity.

In a complementary way to Hegner et al. (2017), and having as an object of study the food industry, specifically a sample of 358 consumers of foreign restaurants in Pakistan, Islam et al. (2018) found empirical evidence by structural equation modeling that self-image and product attributes are important antecedents of brand hate. In this sense, the authors point out that inconsistencies between the image that consumers have of themselves and the brand, as well as between the expected and the real performance of a product, lead to brand hate by consumers of foreign restaurants in Pakistan.

In the same sense, Hashim and Kasana (2019) investigating the antecedents of brand hate in the fast-food segment in Pakistan, through a sample of 250 consumers, found empirical evidence using multiple regression analysis that brand hate in this segment is directly influenced by rumors about a brand, poverty in the quality of the relationship with a brand, past negative experiences, symbolic incongruity, and ideological incompatibility. However, unlike Islam et al. (2018) and Hegner et al. (2017), the authors identified that rumors and poverty in the quality of the relationship with the brand are the variables that have the greatest impact on brand hate.

Again, in the food industry, Bryson and Atwal (2019) investigated the antecedents and consequences of the brand hate of French business school students regarding the Starbucks brand. Using a mixed method of data collection, involving a survey of 324 students followed by 14 semi-structured interviews, the authors found evidence that consumers have different levels or feelings for brand hate, which is consequently expressed in different ways. Moreover, the authors showed that brand hate's antecedents against Starbucks were related to aspects of market stature and cultural dominance, at a level categorized as "Cold brand hate"; with negative stereotypes and symbolic identity, at a level called "Warm brand hate"; and with irresponsible behavior, at a higher level named "Hot brand hate". In terms of consumer reactions based on brand hate, the authors identified "Soft brand hate" reactions that involve behaviors such as brand distancing and dissatisfaction (Cold brand hate and Warm brand hate) and "Hard brand hate" reactions, which imply feelings such as anger and aggressive responses, leading to complaints and protest behaviors.

Changing context, by investigating the antecedents of brand hate concerning luxury brands by analyzing the perception of 281 French consumers of luxury brands, using structural equation modeling, Bryson et al. (2021) found evidence that the predictors of brand hate for luxury brands are (I) negative stereotypes of people who use the brands, (II) brand dissatisfaction, and (III) negative word of mouth.

To assess how the personality traits assessed through the Big Five influence brand hate, Kucuk (2019), from a sample of 253 consumers, found evidence through multiple regressions that conscientiousness influences brand hate's behavior in several ways. Specifically, consumers who perceive themselves as trustworthy tend to have a high level of brand hate when something does not happen as expected about a brand. The results point out that the "careless" personality trait also influences brand hate. Additionally, intending to broaden the understanding of brand hate about other personality traits, specifically with the Agency–Community personality traits theory, using the same respondents as in the previous study, Kucuk (2019) found evidence that consumers who have personality traits such as self-confidence and competitive behavior tend to feel more hate for a brand than others. Furthermore, the author found a negative relationship between self-confidence and brand hate, indicating that the less self-confident consumers are, the greater the chance that they would prefer to move away from the brand they hate, expressing to a lesser degree their feelings of hate. In this sense, personality traits such as self-confidence and competitiveness can be used by companies as signals to identify brand hate behaviors.

In another study by Kucuk (2018) on the role of corporate social responsibility and complaints about product and service failures as possible antecedents of brand hate at a macrolevel, a sample of 57 North American brands provided evidence through multiple regressions that the complaints caused due to product and service failures have a direct impact on brand hate, whereas corporate social responsibility has a partial positive influence when combined with complaints about product and service failures.

Unlike what was found by Kucuk (2018) that complaints directly influence brand hate, Curina et al. (2020) investigated brand hate developed by consumers who bought and used the services of a brand they hated in a cross-channel setting (online and offline environments), in a sample of 265 consumers. They found empirical evidence by structural equation modeling that brand hate is an important moderator of offline negative word-of-mouth behavior, online complaints, and non-repurchase intention. Additionally, the authors identified that online complaints and offline negative word of mouth have an important mediating effect between brand hate and non-repurchase behavior. Specifically, brand hate has a significant indirect effect on non-repurchase behavior through online complaints and offline negative word of mouth, so online complaints lead to offline negative word-of-mouth behavior, which in turn positively influences non-repurchase behavior.

4.3. Aspects Related to Brand Hate's Antecedents, Mediators, and Responses

To investigate the nature, antecedents, and results of brand hate in consumer behavior through two studies in France and Italy, which included samples of 353 in the first study and 838 in the second, Zarantonello et al. (2016) developed and validated a conceptual model through structural equation modeling that points out that brand hate is composed of two main components (active and passive brand hate) and that it is significantly related to a series of behaviors such as complaints, negative word of mouth, protests, and sponsorship reduction/assignment. Additionally, the authors identified that corporate behaviors perceived as immoral tend to result in high levels of all investigated brand hate behaviors such as complaints, negative word of mouth, protests, and a reduction in sponsorship or sponsorship assignments, whereas negative consumption experiences lead to behaviors such as brand hate complaints, negative word of mouth, and protests, while negative perceptions about the brand only lead to a reduction in sponsorship or sponsorship assignment behavior.

In turn, Joshi and Yadav (2020) when investigating brand hate's antecedents, as well as its influence on online negative word-of-mouth behavior, when analyzing a sample of 374 Indian students who reported their experiences on cosmetic brands, found empirical evidence through the application of structural equation modeling that past negative experiences and subjective norms are important antecedents of brand hate. Additionally, the authors identified that past negative experiences have a strong and direct influence on online negative word-of-mouth behavior and that it is not necessary for consumers to have

previously developed some hate for the brand to express themselves negatively about the brand online.

In a complementary way to the results identified by Joshi and Yadav (2020), by examining which emotional components of brand hate and their variations across different levels of brand hate, through a sample of 1398 American consumers, using in-depth interviews and structural equation modeling, Zhang and Laroche (2020) found empirical evidence that brand hate is a multidimensional construct composed of emotions related to anger, sadness, and fear. Furthermore, the authors identified that a strong brand hate feeling can be determined by the intense integration between anger, sadness, and fear, while a moderate brand hate feeling is determined mainly by the feeling of anger. In this sense, when examining these sub-dimensions of brand hate, the authors found that negative word-of-mouth behaviors are caused by different emotions at different brand hate levels. While sadness-related emotions have a moderate brand hate impact on negative word-of-mouth behaviors (Pantano 2021), including complaints and reduced sponsorship, anger-related emotions cause strong brand hate and negative word-of-mouth behaviors leading to protests.

However, the results found by Zhang and Laroche (2020) differ from those of Fetscherin (2019) in that when analyzing the relationship between the theory of interpersonal relations of hate of Sternberg (2003) with relationships with a brand, in a sample of 712 American consumers in two studies, found evidence using structural equation modeling that brand hate is a multidimensional construct made up of three key emotions such as disgust, contempt, and anger, which combined are responsible for the emergence of five types of brand hate with specific responses. In this sense, the author identified that "cool hate" leads to brand change behavior, that "simmering hate" leads to private complaint behavior, that "burning hate" leads to public complaint behavior and desire for revenge, that "boiling hate" leads to brand retaliation behavior, and that "hot hate" leads to financial sacrifice behavior to harm a brand.

Another investigation that aimed to assess the possible connections between the constraint of consuming a brand and brand hate, carried out by Sarkar et al. (2020) in a sample of 339 consumers of an Indian car brand, provided empirical evidence through structural equation modeling that the constraint over the use of a brand and brand hate are largely related through consumers' perceptions concerning social and personal self-expression. In this sense, the authors identified that the negative social self-expression of a brand positively affects the constraint caused by the use of the brand, which in turn will positively influence brand hate. Additionally, the authors showed that embarrassment by the use of the brand is an important mediator of the relationship between a brand's negative social self-expression and brand hate, that consumers' susceptibility to social influences is a positive moderator in the relationship between the negative social self-expression of a brand and the embarrassment about the use of the brand, and that the personal self-expression of a brand is a moderator that negatively affects the relationship between the embarrassment about the use of the brand and brand hate. This indicates that the personal self-expression of a brand cannot be the reason behind the embarrassment by the use of the brand, considering that it constitutes a negative public and not private emotion.

Still in the context of analyzing a specific brand, Rodrigues et al. (2020) when investigating the role of the brand in brand hate, especially through an anti-Apple community composed of 254 individuals, using structural equation modeling, found evidence that brand hate linked to the brand has as antecedents the symbolic incongruence, ideological incompatibility, past negative experiences, and brand inauthenticity, which in turn give rise to dichotomous responses related to negative emotional issues (negative brand engagement) and behavioral issues, such as brand aversion, negative word of mouth, and willingness to punish the brand. In addition, the authors point out that, unlike brand love, brand hate does not occur at a single point in time but rather in a transition of feelings caused by a particular event such as brand use and that consumers who are passionate about the brand have greater brand tolerance.

In the same sense, Bayarassou et al. (2020) when investigating negative brand personality traits, such as the deceptive character of a brand, in conjunction with consumers' personality traits, especially narcissism, using structural equation modeling with a sample of 448 French consumers, found empirical evidence that brand betrayal has a mediating effect between the deceptive character of a brand and brand hate. Adding to this, the authors also pointed out that active brand hate leads to revenge behavior, which is influenced by narcissism, while passive brand hate leads to avoidance behavior.

Another important finding made by Ali et al. (2020) when investigating the influences of dissatisfaction and narcissism as antecedent mediating and moderating variables of brand hate in the mobile phone market in Pakistan, specifically in a sample consisting of 606 consumers, using structural equation modeling as a statistical technique, lies in the fact that the consumers' perceptions of the quality of the services provided (e.g., price, quality of calls and services) are an important predictor of consumer dissatisfaction, which in turn has a significant mediation role in brand hate. Finally, the authors identified that narcissism plays a strong role in moderating the relationship between dissatisfaction and brand hate in the market for mobile phone consumers in Pakistan.

In the same context, in assessing the antecedents and consequences of brand hate in the telecommunications sector in Portugal, Pinto and Brandão (2020), using survey-based data with 636 Portuguese consumers, found empirical evidence that past negative experiences and symbolic incongruence influence brand avoidance and brand retaliation behaviors. In addition, the authors also point out that brand hate has a mediating effect between (I) negative experiences, brand avoidance, negative word of mouth, and brand retaliation, as well as between (II) symbolic incongruence, brand avoidance, negative word of mouth, and brand retaliation.

4.4. Other Investigations Related to Brand Hate

Zarantonello et al. (2018) when exploring how the feeling of brand hate develops over time, intending to identify brand hate's trajectories and how they are related to brand hate's antecedents and responses, investigated through interviews with 54 participants who lived in Europe their feelings about a certain brand at three different points in time (past, present, and future). From the analysis carried out, the authors identified five trajectories that represent the evolution of negative feelings about the brand, called "Negative all the way", "Down-Up", "Downward slope flattens", "Roller coaster", and "Steady decrease". Additionally, the authors identified that the "Down-Up", "Downward slope flattens", and "Steady decrease" trajectories are mainly influenced by past negative experiences with a given product or service, resulting in both positive and negative responses, such as repetition purchases, even with a certain level of dissatisfaction, and complaints. On the other hand, the "Negative all the way" trajectory is closely associated with wrong corporate behaviors such as being unethical, immoral, antisocial, or demonstrating illegal behavior by a company, always resulting in negative responses from consumers. Finally, the authors identified that inconsistencies between the brand image and the perceived image of consumers lead to the "Roller coaster" trajectory, where, although characterized by the exclusion of the use of the brand, there is a desire for reconciliation on the part of consumers in the future.

Furthermore, Hashim and Ahmed (2018) when investigating the mediating effect of apology, compensation, and explanation strategies between brand hate and brand recovery, essentially due to the brand hate developed through negative past experiences, in a sample of 250 fast-food consumers in Pakistan, found evidence and empirical results through multigroup analysis with the aid of SmartPLS that all interventions had a significant impact on the relationship between brand hate and the desire for reconciliation with the brand, except for the explanation, which individually had no significant impact to minimize or maximize brand hate effects. In addition, the authors point out that the combination of apology, compensation, and explanation strategies is decisive for the desire to reconcile with a brand after consumers have had a negative experience with the brand.

Another investigation carried out by Banerjee and Goel (2020) using a sample composed of 415 Indian voters, analyzed with the aid of structural equation modeling, provided evidence that the main antecedents of political brand hate are unmet expectations, ideological incompatibility, and symbolic incongruence, in order of importance. Other findings made by the authors relate to the fact that the intensity of hate for a party has a direct influence on brand hate, that brand hate has a significant positive impact on the avoidance of a political brand, that brand hate has a negative influence on retaliatory behavior, indicating that in the case of the political market brand hate leads only to avoidance, that intense brand hate has a positive impact on extremist behaviors, leading voters to engage in anti-brand activities, and, finally, that the involvement of political products is a significant mediator of the relationship between unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, ideological incompatibility, and brand hate.

Husnain et al. (2020) when investigating the relationship between similar competing offers and brand equity mediated by brand hate, using structural equation modeling on a sample of 338 Pakistani consumers, found empirical evidence that brand hate has a mediating role between similar competing offers and brand equity. Adding to this, the authors further point out that narcissistic personality is a mediator between similar competing offers and brand hate and that there is an indirect mediation effect between similar competing offers and brand hate only when individuals require narcissistic personality traits.

In the hospitality industry, Sarkar et al. (2021), when evaluating Indian consumers' undesirable responses to service failure, employing experimental studies, based on mediation analysis, and a self-reported survey, analyzed by exploratory factor analysis, found empirical evidence that severe service failure is a significant predictor of brand retaliation, whose effect is sequentially mediated by dissatisfaction and brand hate. Adding to this, the authors point out that other consumer perceptions of behavior influence the mitigation of the adverse effect of service failure on dissatisfaction, and the same is true for relational consumers.

Kucuk (2021), through a literature review, presents an overview of the antecedents and consequences of brand hate so far, without, however, pointing out paths for future investigations. In this sense, the author points out that the antecedents of brand hate can be broadly categorized as stemming from consumers' disappointment with a particular brand, especially regarding flaws in a product or service. In addition, the author points out that the consequences may vary from passive attitudes, such as avoidance behavior, to more active behaviors such as approach behavior, which involves complaints and protests, reaching an extreme, such as attack behavior, in which actions of retaliation and punishment to a brand predominate.

5. Discussion

5.1. General Findings

The research carried out on brand hate so far has focused on its antecedents, moderators, and mediators, as well as on the behavioral responses arising from this phenomenon, using mostly quantitative studies. However, although brand hate moderators have been investigated and identified more frequently in the analyzed literature (Hegner et al. 2017; Islam et al. 2018; Kucuk 2018, 2019; Hashim and Kasana 2019; Banerjee and Goel 2020; Joshi and Yadav 2020; Zhang and Laroche 2020; Bryson et al. 2021), the same is not true of brand hate mediators (Ali et al. 2020; Bayarassou et al. 2020; Sarkar et al. 2020), constituting an opportunity for future investigations.

On the other hand, although less expressively than in the moderation between antecedents and brand hate, the mediating or intervening effect of brand hate in behavioral responses has received greater attention in the analyzed literature (Zarantonello et al. 2016; Hashim and Ahmed 2018; Fetscherin 2019; Bayarassou et al. 2020; Husnain et al. 2020; Pinto and Brandão 2020; Rodrigues et al. 2020; Günaydin and Yıldız 2021; Sarkar et al. 2021) than its direct moderating effects (Curina et al. 2019), which can be explained in large part by the prevalence of studies based on structural equation modeling, which assumes brand

hate as a mediator of behavioral intentions. In this sense, this gap represents a possibility for further investigations on the moderating effects on consumer behavior, through other techniques that moderate the direct effect between brand hate and the possible behaviors resulting from it, such as regressions based on the methods of ordinary least squares (OLS) or maximum likelihood estimation.

Additionally, through the analyzed literature, it is possible to notice that few research studies have been dedicated to validating scales for the evaluation of brand hate in different contexts (Platania et al. 2020). This is important in order to understand the development and evolution of brand hate over time (Zarantonello et al. 2018), in different industries, so the research has focused on the food industry (Hegner et al. 2017; Islam et al. 2018; Bryson and Atwal 2019; Hashim and Kasana 2019), as well as evaluating brand hate from the perspective of companies and not consumers, setting up possible new opportunities for the development of research in this area.

5.2. Future Directions—Theory

Regarding theory, the research conducted so far focuses on the general theory of consumer behavior, in that it is concerned with determining the antecedents and consequences of brand hate from the perspective of consumers. However, it is possible to see that there is an incipient integration with psychology, especially through the relationship between brand hate and consumers' personality traits and perceptions, as identified in several research studies (Kucuk 2019; Bayarassou et al. 2020; Husnain et al. 2020; Sarkar et al. 2021; Rodrigues et al. 2023).

In terms of new research opportunities concerning theory and other fields of research, the body of knowledge of brand hate can have implications in areas of knowledge such as economics, sociology, psychology, and marketing in general. Accordingly, new research opportunities can arise in considering the following issues:

(I)   Brand hate and economics: What are the costs associated with brand hate? What is the relationship between product/service attributes from different industries and brand hate?

(II)   Brand hate and society: How does brand hate appear in terms of generations X, Y, and Z? What is the cultural influence of brand hate? Are brand hate levels the same as regards age and gender?

(III) Brand hate and consumer purchasing behavior: What is the relationship between the types of purchasing behavior and brand hate?

(IV)   Brand hate and brand management: What is the impact of brand hate on the market value of a brand? What is the relationship between brand hate and brand image? Which components of a brand most influence brand hate?

(V)   Brand hate and communication: What is the influence of the levels of information about a given brand on brand hate? What is the role of fake news in the development of brand hate? Is there a variation in brand hate in light of new positive information about a hated brand?

In addition, ethnocentrism, a concept linked to the culture of groups, or countries, was defined by Drever (1952, p. 86; quoted in Hofstede 2001, p. 17) as an "exaggerated tendency to think the characteristics of one's own group or race superior to those of other groups or races". For example, the Japanese score high on ethnocentrism (Barros et al. 2006), and so this may explain why this nation has such a long history of violence between clans (one may read brands), where much slaughtering and hatred of neighbors took place, for centuries. On the other side of the spectrum, one may find Portugal, a low-masculinity country (Hofstede 2001), a peaceful nation where it is safe to live and move around. The Portuguese may be less prone to brand hatred for this reason than the Japanese. Furthermore, however, certain other characteristics may be under-researched in the literature, such as the propensity to hate a brand due solely to its being inaccessible. Portugal is a low-salary country (Pereira 2007), with salaries three times lower than in Western Europe, and this means, for example, that certain elite or premium-grade products

may not be accessible to Portuguese citizens—such as Apple products and services. This may mean that Apple may be a target of brand hate by Portuguese citizens. Japan, on the other hand, a richer country, would not hate Apple products for this same reason. Finally, China, whose regime has been criticized by South Korea, thus forbade Samsung products from being sold in China. Hence, the average Chinese citizen may feel some hatred toward Samsung, in this case, for political reasons. Thus, some future avenues of research linked to brand hate may be ethnocentrism, salary level, and political ideology.

5.3. Future Directions—Context

As far as context is concerned, the research conducted so far on brand hate has focused on the food industry (Hegner et al. 2017; Islam et al. 2018; Bryson and Atwal 2019; Hashim and Kasana 2019), although there are some investigations in the telecommunications (Ali et al. 2020; Pinto and Brandão 2020), hospitality (Sarkar et al. 2021), automotive (Sarkar et al. 2020), political (Banerjee and Goel 2020), and luxury brand (Bryson et al. 2021) segments.

In this sense, new studies can be carried out in different contexts, from other industries to other organizations, nationally and internationally, where the main purpose is to assess brand hate, as well as to know the different mediators between determinants and brand hate, besides the moderation between brand hate and consumers' behavioral responses, adding new ways of measuring and classifying different brand hate behaviors over time and in different industries.

In this sequence, new research opportunities may arise, on one hand, applied to sectors already studied, since there are still few studies, such as the telecommunications, hospitality, car, and luxury brand industries, extending the studies to other brands/companies of these industries and other cultures, countries where companies operate their activities, introducing new research methodologies, and, on the other hand, applied to sectors and industries not yet studied, such as retail, electronics, health, sports, and even educational institutions.

These studies will contribute to generating solid scientific knowledge in the area of brand hate, allowing a deeper understanding of this theme, its antecedents, and respective mediators, in different industries and distinct contexts, allowing, besides the enrichment of academia, for contributing to the expansion of knowledge on the subject, to help companies in the perception of this feeling by consumers and thus design strategies to mitigate this feeling of hate, leading to the opposite, positive feeling by these consumers, that if not studied, there would be no opportunity to attract them to the brand/company.

5.4. Future Directions—Methodology

After the analysis performed, it is possible to see that structural equation modeling has been the most applied method (Zarantonello et al. 2016; Hegner et al. 2017; Islam et al. 2018; Fetscherin 2019; Ali et al. 2020; Banerjee and Goel 2020; Bayarassou et al. 2020; Curina et al. 2020; Husnain et al. 2020; Joshi and Yadav 2020; Platania et al. 2020; Rodrigues et al. 2020; Sarkar et al. 2020; Zhang and Laroche 2020; Bryson et al. 2021; Paruthi et al. 2023), followed by interviews (Zarantonello et al. 2018; Bryson and Atwal 2019; Joshi and Yadav 2020) and multiple regression analysis (Kucuk 2018, 2019; Hashim and Kasana 2019), which ultimately relates to the concern in identifying the main antecedents and consequences of brand hate.

New investigations about brand hate may come from the evaluation of new mediators between their antecedents and brand hate, as well as from the moderation between brand hate and the behavioral responses of consumers, adding new ways of measurement and classification of different brand hate behaviors over time and in different industries, as made evident above.

On the other hand, due to the prevalence of quantitative methods, new research opportunities can arise from the application of qualitative approaches. In this sense, qualitative methodologies may play an important role in brand hate research. Much has

been done by behavioral economists, such as Dan Ariely, in trying to uncover meanings in day-to-day life, and regarding brand hate, this is also possible. A focus group could be especially powerful if the right mix of experts is brought together (purposive sample) and if they are well-moderated by an experienced moderator. Hatred is a strong motivator and may be found to be linked to several different sources (previous bad experiences with a brand, inaccessibility of a product, and political and religious motivations, among others). Additionally, identifying interesting and relevant people, who feel brand hate as opposed to brand love, to interview could also further the area of research. Specifying how people feel toward a particular brand may be useful in the uncovering of what led to certain sentiments. To date, not much qualitative research has been performed regarding brand hate, and much could be gained, as we mentioned above, in using more subjective and intuitive methods of research that "explore the social world" (Mason 2002, p. 1), in an in-depth, rich, and perhaps more complex manner (Mason 2002).

6. Conclusions

The present research had as its main objective the analysis of the current state of the art about brand hate with the main intention of identifying possible gaps to be explored in future investigations. In general, 25 studies on the occurrence of the phenomenon involving consumers in countries such as the United States, France, Italy, Pakistan, India, Germany, and Portugal were analyzed.

It appears from the analyzed literature that research on the subject has concentrated almost exclusively on the development of the phenomenon and its consequences from the perspective of consumer behavior so that the emphasis has been on identifying the direct antecedents of brand hate, as well as its mediating effects on a set of behaviors such as complaints, negative word of mouth, protests, reduced sponsorship, brand change, and revenge wishes, among others.

Regarding limitations, the authors recognize that the manuscript could include greater depth in the analysis (last 10 years) and, thus, obtain a higher quality in the conclusions presented. However, considering that the studies are developed very dynamically, future studies should make it possible to overcome this limitation. Another limitation includes the very small number of articles analyzed (only 25 papers, according to Table 3), as well as the very limited criteria filter for selecting the relevant articles (the Boolean operator "brand hate"; applied to the title, abstract, and keywords).

6.1. Theoretical Implications

An important finding refers to the fact that few studies have been dedicated to understanding what the direct effects of brand hate are on consumer behavior, its evolution over time in different industries and contexts, who its mediators are, and how the phenomenon is perceived and managed from the perspective of the companies involved in this phenomenon, hence providing opportunities for future investigations. In addition, new research opportunities, as discussed in item 5 of this work, in terms of new research opportunities, may be related to the theory, the context, and the methodologies. In relation to theory, it was concluded that there is room for further linkage with psychology, especially through the relationship between brand hatred and consumers' personality characteristics and perceptions, as identified in several investigations (Kucuk 2019; Bayarassou et al. 2020; Husnain et al. 2020; Sarkar et al. 2021; Bazi et al. 2023). Furthermore, introducing in future studies the concept of ethnocentrism, linked to the culture of groups, or countries, proposed by Drever (1952) and Hofstede (2001) may be a research path that allows explaining cultural differences in the development or not of brand hate, as well as explaining the cultural and national characteristics that contribute to the development of this negative feeling. In terms of new research opportunities concerning theory and other fields of research, the body of knowledge of brand hate may have implications in fields of knowledge such as economics, sociology, psychology, and marketing in general, for example.

6.2. Practical Implications

Regarding the context, new studies can be carried out in different contexts, from other industries to other organizations, nationally and internationally, where the main purpose is to assess brand hatred, as well as to know the different mediators between determinants and brand hatred, besides the moderation between brand hatred and consumers' behavioral responses. In this sequence, new research opportunities may arise, on the one hand, applied to the sectors already studied, since there are still few studies, extending the studies to other brands/companies in these industries and also to other cultures/countries where companies operate their activities, introducing new research methodologies, such as qualitative methodologies, with special emphasis on the focus group technique, provided that it brings together the right experts and if they are well-moderated by an experienced moderator. Specifying how people feel about a particular brand can be helpful in discovering what led to certain feelings. To date, not much qualitative research on brand hatred has been conducted, and much could be gained, as we mentioned above, in using more subjective and intuitive research methods that "explore the social world" (Mason 2002, p. 1) in an in-depth, rich, and perhaps more complex way (Mason 2002). On the other hand, new research can be applied to sectors and industries not yet studied, such as the retail sector, electronics, health, sports, and even educational institutions.

The results presented herein provide an important practical contribution to tracing an overview of the current research on brand hate, as well as opportunities for future investigations. Researchers interested in the subject may thus identify relevant variables and their relationships, to develop a greater familiarity with the topic, assisting them in the process of planning new investigations. In particular, researchers will be better enabled to avoid fruitless or repeated research approaches since they will be able to distinguish between what has and what has not been done, in terms of research, and hence what is still necessary for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

6.3. Future Steps

This research is also important for companies as it provides a conceptual framework for the theme and presents new research paths, allowing a deeper understanding of the theme, alerting to the importance of understanding this feeling, by consumers to brands, and thus designing strategies to mitigate this feeling of hatred.

In view of the fact that brand hate is a recent area of research, having received attention by researchers only during the last 5 years, the present research has the limitations of the small number of investigations performed.

Future work could include more Boolean operators other than "brand hate" such as terms referring to the aversion of brands or "brand aversion", or to more negative associations to the brand (rather than to brand love or brand attraction), as indeed we have discussed herein. Alternatively, the search could include the full text of the articles, rather than only the title, abstract, and keywords. By thus opening up the research, more articles should hence be included in the analysis.

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