

# Exploring the Implications of Social Media Usage on Negative Consumers' Emotion and Behavior

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**Abstract**—Social media have emerged as powerful platforms in addressing the issue of consumer and brand connection. A miscellaneous of benefits have been obtained from social media by the brand. Nevertheless, the topical approach of the research identifies the gloomy view of social media usage. This research provides a framework for assessing the impact of the use of social media on consumers' emotions and behavior. The findings disclose that consumer use of social media that post negative publicity about the brand causes customer brand hate and consequently negative word of mouth and also avoids brand. In a similar vein, negative word of mouth is found to act as a driver in escalating consumers' avoidance toward a particular brand. By employing the theory of disidentification, the framework and findings of this research are the outcomes of attentive theory-based research; hence this authorizes to serve managerial suggestions derived from the theory and on rigorous empirical analyses.

**Keywords**—disidentification theory, brand hate, negative word of mouth, brand avoidance

## I. INTRODUCTION

The social media platform more and more plays a vital role in today's society, such as in business, politics, and economic areas. This platform, e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, is the popular online activities with a high level of user engagement. The fascinating facet of social media is its widespread utilization and world-wide impact. Therefore, social media is a primary realm of interest for marketing scholars and practitioners. To date, more marketers are using social media to enlarge consumer awareness of their products and services, which in turn will achieve their target market. When interaction between consumers and marketers through social media has been successful, it has predicted that marketers will have a strong return in the coming years. As the idea that the consumers demonstrate their personal image through the brands consumption is raised in the marketing literature [1], social media with a high engagement with their user image can be as powerful resource for promoting brands.

Regenerating the comprehension of the significant role of social media for marketing function is an ever-increasing

insight for marketing scholar and marketer [2]. The issue of social media role in a marketing scope has received considerable critical attention, particularly in consumer emotion arena. Notwithstanding the enormous advantages that social media provides for social media user and brand [3], the dark side of social media is emerging. In social media, with its technological structure and ideological, negative opinions about products or companies are created and published by thousands or more of social media users within hours. Thus, bad news in social media will make consumers forms a negative behavior spread easily and instantly. Since social media can also be interpreted as a form of collective wisdom, researchers are calling for a comprehensive assessment of the powerful role of social media not only in positive emotion but also in negative emotions and behavior towards a brand.

The basic premise of the theory of disidentification is that consumers may alter their self-conception by disidentifying with people or something which are perceived as incompatible with their values. The disidentifying action could be express in rejection or make their self-different from certain object. Brands and or the parent company moral misconducts induce hateful feelings and eventually encourage consumers to commit anti-brand behaviors [4]. Consequently, issues such as brand hate, the potential and the consequential of negative emotion toward a brand, have begun to obtain more attention [5]. The negative information receives more attention from customers than neutral or positive information [6]; thus, dissatisfaction in service-related experiences, corporate social irresponsibility, and adverse organizational actions frequently stand out in the consumer's mind, which urges negative word-of-mouth, (hereinafter, NWOM). Another form of consumer negative emotion is avoidance behavior. This behavior is the reflection of the opposite of positive responses; that is, a desire to leave a brand or no intention to repurchase. Therefore, brand avoidance is multi-dimensional constructs and myriad causes contributed to avoiding specific brands may emerge.

Most of previous research investigate the positive consumer-brand relationship that manifest through brand connection [7], brand trust [8], brand love [9], brand engagement [10], brand loyalty [11], and brand commitment [12]. On the other hand, lack of research discuss the negative

emotion and behavior towards brand which need further exploration. Despite the high eminence of social media, the drawback of social media usage on consumer emotion and behavior is under research. Consequently, this research focuses on the notion of negative emotion and behavior of consumers in order to address the existing research gap. Specifically, this research effort, therefore, examines the impact of social media use on consumers' negative emotions and behavior empirically and comprehensively explains them.

Our research makes a number of fundamental contributions. Our introduction of social media usage as a trigger to the negative consumers' emotions toward a brand provides a scarce and unique standpoint in understanding the roadmap of the processes this such relationship. This research has therefore broadened existing literature by proposing a theoretical framework that explores and discusses the impact of social media use on consumer emotions and behavior towards a brand. This research extends the applicability of the disidentification theory on social media usage context. We also show the mediating role of brand hate in social media usage and consumers' negative behavior relationships. Overall, this current research devotes to the theoretical comprehension of the social media usage phenomenon by assessing remarkable psychological mechanisms that promote adverse consumer reactions toward brands.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Social Media and Brand Hate

Social media usage regarded as the particular consumption of digital media that serves a mechanism for the users to connect, communicate, and interact with each other through social networking sites to obtain some purposes. In this study, brand hate is conceived as a sense of hatred as an emotion that describes consumer emotions towards brands [4]. This consumer feeling is beyond dislike to a specific brand.

Currently, social media become a tool for consumers to share and discuss brand-related content progressively [13]. Thus, the current establishment in social media has revamped consumer-brand trust engagement into consumer-consumer trust relationship where consumers take identical brand preferences predisposed by the suggestion of other consumers [14]. On the other hand, the mass social media usage also has drawbacks; it could amplify negative brand-related communication. For example, social media may evoke anti-brand communities which emerge among consumers who read a boycott call for a particular brand on social media [15]. Also, the facility to share and comment on social media invigorates the consumer interaction by spreading negative brand-related communication [15]. Currently, researchers emphasize the role of social media in opposition brands [16]. Provocative posts and comments shape a different interpretation of the brand meaning, in turn, lead to brand hate. Specifically, when consumers are having an abundance of negative information concerning a specific brand through social media, it will develop strong motivation for consumers to make a decision to

hate a particular brand. Therefore, in the light of available literature, this study tests the following hypothesis:

H1. The higher the use of social media, the higher is the brand hate.

### B. The Effects of Brand Hate

Hate is linked with the desire to diminish or devalue the other object [17] and also to revenge [18]. In broad terms, NWOM can be defined as the promulgation of disparagement, disapproval, or distaste concerning a corporation's irresponsible actions [19]. In psychology study, one substantial theme is that hate activates an individual to plays specific behaviors as buffer strategies to cope with it such as NWOM. The aim of consumers who engage NWOM is to warn their relatives of their negative experiences with the brand. The consumer who commits NWOM activity is mainly to show dissatisfaction out of anger and condemn the offending brand.

Unlike NWOM that shows a more active reaction to corporate wrongdoing, brand avoidance is passive oppositional brand behavior. Brand avoidance is simply regarded as a consumer's action, whereby deliberately decide to keep away from a brand [20]. In the meantime, brand avoidance with regard to the customers' attempt to minimize the interactions with a brand [18].

According to disidentification theory, brand hate as an opposition behavior regarding a brand; is perceived as a precursor for NWOM [5,21]. As regards the continuum of consumer and brand connections, the relationship between brand hatred and brand avoidance is one of the plausible links [18]. When customers feel hate toward a brand, the consumer tend to keep away from the brand as far as they can. Therefore, this research proposes that brand hate is perceived as a pertinent induction for NWOM and brand avoidance behavior through these following hypotheses:

H2. The higher the brand hate, the higher is the NWOM.

H3. The higher the brand hate, the higher is the brand avoidance.

### C. NWOM and Brand Avoidance

Expressing NWOM facilitates a consumer to show their refusal of the symbolic aspects of a particular brand publicly. When consumers participate in NWOM action, they want to alert others consumers about their desolate experience with the brand, so that induce other consumers to commit brand avoidance. The consumer shows their need to withdraw themselves from any interactions with a brand. By avoiding a particular brand, the consumer claims that the characteristics of the brand are not reflective of their own image [20]. The consumer will stay away from a particular brand by not consuming the brand or switching to a competitor. In brand-related contexts, NWOM behavior as a way of demonstrating disapproval to a particular brand, which promotes brand avoidance as a tool for rejecting a brand. The following hypothesis is therefore suggested:

H4. The higher the NWOM, the higher is the brand avoidance.

*D. Mediating Effects of Brand Hate*

The role of usage of social media thought as a precursor to consumers' emotion and behavior toward brand has received escalating attention recently (see, e.g., [22,23]). Concomitant with the theoretical arguments provided in previous hypotheses, it is proposed that the impact of social media usage on NWOM and brand avoidance is, at best, indirect. As considered earlier, it is asserted that social media usage would first stimulate hate toward a specific brand that incongruent with consumer's self-image and these hate toward brand would build consumers' NWOM and brand avoidance. In short, the use of social media that devalues a brand resulting in the hatred of the brand, NWOM and also brand avoidance. Acting as an influential emotion, brand hate plays an intervening role in social media usage and NWOM as well as social media usage and brand avoidance relationship. Reckon on the synthesis of these distinct causal propositions, the following twofold mediating hypotheses are proposed:

H5. Brand hate mediates the relationship between social media usage and NWOM.

H6. Brand hate mediates the relationship between social media usage and brand avoidance.

*E. Mediating Effects of NWOM*

Further, in the current study, NWOM is hypothesized to mediate the felt consumers' brand hate and consumer avoidance toward a brand. More specifically, the stronger the brand hate toward a particular brand, the stronger the NWOM, and exhibit more significant of consumer brand avoidance. In support of this line of reasoning, the following hypothesis is tested:

H7. NWOM mediates the relationship between brand hate and brand avoidance.

**III. METHODS**

*A. Questionnaire Design and Scale Operationalization*

A survey questionnaire designed from the prior research was employed to test the hypotheses. A back-translation technique, the most effective technique for the "development" of translation equivalence [24] and the most frequently applied translation approach, has been used to translate the contents of the scale items accurately.

This current research adopted and modified a multi-item scales to fit the research aim and context. The antecedent, social media usage was measured using the six-item scale from Hughes *et al.*'s study [25]. The scale measurement of brand hates is adapt from a six-item scale of Hegner, Fetscherin and Delzen's research [21]. The two outcomes, both NWOM and brand avoidance were measured using the three-item scale [19]

and [18]. All measures ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," relied on seven-point Likert scales.

*B. Research Setting, Sample Characteristics, Sampling, and Data Collection*

This study has taken an empirical look at the research framework in Indonesia. Indonesian people are highly motivated to use social media. The social media users in Indonesia increase sharply; social network users are expected to be approximately 125.38 million by 2022.

This study sets out two criteria for the sample. First, an active user of social media over the last two years. This criteria is used to elaborate on the impact of the use of social media on the response of consumers. Second, the minimum age of the respondent is 18 years. In this age, consumers are relatively acting as the decision-maker for their own purchase. In order to focus on a sample with particular characteristics that will be better able to assist with the relevant research, the present research uses judgment sampling. A pilot test was conducted after the questionnaire was designed. This study invited thirty consumers from Indonesia who meet the research criteria. A questionnaire was distributed to the participants and they were asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire.

Based on the response, the inaccurate items, ambiguous statements, and the inappropriate format have been modified. After being revised, the questionnaire was disseminated to the participants, and we tried to manage the survey as privately as possible. We eventually collected 212 questionnaires that could be used. Post hoc power analysis recommended a statistical power of more than 0.80, implying a satisfactory sample size. The profile of the participants is shown in Table 1.

TABLE I. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Occupation	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Male	125	41.0	Government Employee	40	18.9
Female	87	59.0	Private Employee	35	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>	Entrepreneur	32	15.1
Age	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Student	58	27.4
≤ 20	6	2.8	Housewives	31	14.6
20-29	111	52.4	Other	16	7.5
30-39	64	30.2	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>
40-49	25	11.8	Income/month (IDR)	Freq.	Percentage (%)
≥ 50	6	2.8	< 1.500.000	78	36.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>	1.500.000 – 3.000.000	46	21.7
Education	Freq.	Percentage (%)	3.000.001 – 4.500.000	32	15.1
Junior high and below	0	0	> 4.500.000	56	26.4
Senior high school	10	4.7	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>
College or university	137	64.6	*Indonesian Rupiah (IDR), The exchange rate at 1 U.S. dollar = 13.698.6301 IDR		
Postgraduate	65	30.7			
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>			

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Partial least squares (PLS) were employed to test the accuracy of the measurement, the structural model, and also the hypotheses. This application is suitable for highly complex predictive models [26], it mainly achieves high levels of statistical power and makes practically no assumptions about the underlying data, for example, regarding data distributions [27].

A. Evaluation of the Measurement Models

The accuracy statistics of research scales are presented in Table II and Table III. The measures' reliability and constructs validity of the variables were examined. Outer loads of the indicator shown in Table II are all values greater than 0.5, ensuring indicator reliability. The range of composite reliability (CR) values for each construct is from 0.897 and 0.980, as shown in Table II, denoting that the proposed construct has a good degree of internal consistency. The PLS method also assessed the convergent and discriminant validity with average variance extracted [AVE]. Table II shows all factor loadings, all of which are above 0.5, are therefore statistically significant at the 0.05 level and represent a satisfactory convergent validity of the constructs [28]. As shown in Table III, the square root of the AVE (the diagonal values) was higher than the correlations between the construct and the other constructs in the model.

This analysis result indicates the discriminant validity of the constructs has a good result [29]. The communality and redundancy Q-square indices must be greater than zero for the model to have predictive relevance [30]. In this current research, the resulting Q2 value is 0.923 (Table IV), which is higher than zero, showing that the exogenous constructs have predictive relevance for the endogenous construct under consideration.

TABLE II. CONSTRUCT MEASURES

Construct	Measures	Loading
Social Media Usage AVE = 0.594 CR = 0.897 $\alpha$ = 0.866	SMU_1	0.756
	SMU_2	0.795
	SMU_3	0.828
	SMU_4	0.720
	SMU_5	0.692
	SMU_6	0.825
Brand Hate AVE = 0.815 CR = 0.963 $\alpha$ = 0.954	BH_1	0.864
	BH_2	0.914
	BH_3	0.899
	BH_4	0.929
	BH_5	0.917
	BH_6	0.891
Negative Word of Mouth AVE = 0.880 CR = 0.957 $\alpha$ = 0.932	NWOM_1	0.959
	NWOM_2	0.927
	NWOM_3	0.928
Brand Avoidance AVE = 0.943 CR = 0.980 $\alpha$ = 0.970	BA_1	0.966
	BA_2	0.969
	BA_3	0.978

Notes: CR: Composite Reliability

TABLE III. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CORRELATIONS AND, AVERAGE VARIANCES EXTRACTED (AVE)

Construct	Brand Avoidance	Brand Hate	NWOM	Social Media Usage
Brand Avoidance	0.943			
Brand Hate	0.881	0.815		
NWOM	0.776	0.745	0.880	
Social Media Usage	0.136	0.187	0.191	0.590
Mean	13.750	29.226	10.632	34.297
SD	5.819	10.089	5.416	5.670
CR	0.980	0.963	0.957	0.896

Note: Values on the diagonal are the square root of AVE

TABLE IV. RESULTS OF PARTIAL LEAST SQUARES PATH ANALYSIS

Hypothesis		Path coefficients / t-value		Results
H1. SMU-BH		0.194/2.789		Supported *
H2. BH-NWOM		0.737/20.921		Supported *
H3. BH-BA		0.689/11.829		Supported *
H4. NWOM-BA		0.258/4.248		Supported *
Mediating Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Supported *
H5. SMU-BH-NWOM	0.062/1.316	0.143*	0.205	Supported *
H6. SMU-BH-BA	-0.040/1.302	0.134*	0.094	Supported *
H7. BH-NWOM-BA	0.689/11.829	0.190*	0.879	Supported *
Model fit statistics	Predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) = 0.92258305 (92.23%)			

Notes: \* $p < 0.05$

The proposed hypothesis and the results of analysis result are shown in Figure 1.

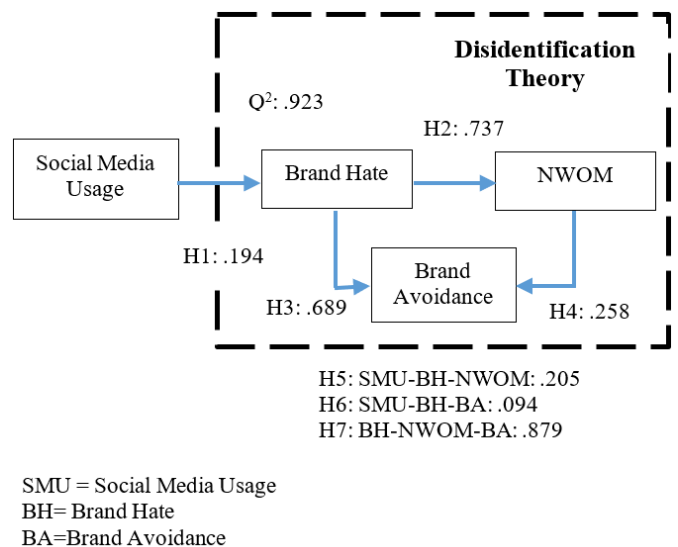


Fig. 1. Proposed hypotheses and analysis results.

### B. Structural Model, Direct and Indirect Effect Evaluation

The survey confirmed all seven hypotheses. The findings shows that the effects of social media usage on brand hate (H1:  $\beta = 0.194, p < 0.05$ ), brand hate on NWOM (H2:  $\beta = 0.737, p < 0.05$ ), brand hate on brand avoidance (H3:  $\beta = 0.689, p < 0.05$ ), and NWOM on brand avoidance (H4:  $\beta = 0.258, p < 0.05$ ) are all positive and significant (Table IV). This research also assures the positive significant mediation effects of brand hate between the usage of social media and NWOM, also between social media usage and brand avoidance. Further, NWOM was found to have a significant positive impact as a mediation variable between brand hate and brand avoidance as the data analysis results confirmed (H5, H6, and H7, Table IV).

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

### A. Conclusion

The notion of consumers' emotions and behavior toward a brand has taken a center phase in modern society. Applying the disidentification theory, this study explores the implications of the use of social media in the consumers' negative emotions and behavior domain. The findings reveal that the use of social media has a positive relationship with the felt of hatred towards a brand. Also, brand hate is found to act a significant role in escalating consumers' NWOM and brand avoidance. In addition, it has been found that NWOM has a positive effect on brand avoidance. The usage of social media positively affects brand hate, and eventually, NWOM and brand avoidance. Finally, the effect of brand hate on NWOM culminated on brand avoidance. Hence, the results present evidence of the predictive power of social media usage on brand avoidance through the intervening mechanism of brand hate and NWOM.

### B. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This current research contributes to the existing research literature. This study proposes a unique standpoint to understand consumers' negative emotions and behavior toward a brand from the perspective of the usage of social media. Though research on the disidentification theory application is obtaining prevalent in consumer behavior studies, the driver of this behavior associated with social media usage is inadequate. In light of this, the current study promotes the theory on consumer's negative emotion by employing social media usage by the consumers.

Also, this study has substantial practical implications. These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how powerful of social media for brand attitude and behavior. Results indicate that consumers who use social media intensively and deliver disreputable posts about a brand, are predisposed to engage in negative emotion and behavior towards a brand. As brands are created in the consumer's mind, marketing managers are struggling to build consumer preferences over their brands. Meanwhile, the negative emotions and behavior of consumers have been overlooked. Overruling these negative emotions on the part of the consumer may cause undesirable brand, which could, in

turn, cause a variety of serious effects. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that compared to brand avoidance, brand hatred appears to be more influential determinant in driving NWOM. Marketers can, therefore, try to reduce the negative consequences of bad news of the brand by hibernating their social media activity in the crowd of consumer hatred, rather than giving a clarification that could make the situation worse.

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