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THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMER BRAND HATE

A CASE STUDY OF ANTI-BRANDING WEBSITES IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY

by

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Abstract

Title: The Consequences of Consumer Brand Hate: A Case Study of Anti-branding Websites in the Airline Industry

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Keywords: Brand Hate, Anti-branding, Airline Industry, Consumer Brand Relationship (CBR), Consumer Complaint Behavior, Brand Avoidance, Consumer Dissatisfaction, Customer Service Quality.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to draw further understanding and investigate the hate relationship between a particular company and consumers and to develop theory in this area of study that has grown in relevance.

Originality/Value: This study is the first to examine multiple anti-branding websites that operate in the same global industry, namely the airline industry. Moreover, it appears to be the first study examining a full range of emotions and words complainants use when expressing themselves, which has been lacking in previous research.

Methodology/Design/Approach: The research design chosen for this study outlines the use of a multi-case study by studying three airline companies that have to deal with anti-branding on the internet: <http://britishairwayssucks.org> (British Airways Anti-brand Website), <http://untied.com/> (United Airlines Anti-brand Website) and whyaircanadasucks.com (Air Canada's Anti-brand Website). A qualitative research study in the form of netnography was undertaken in order to build an understanding of the brand hate relationship between consumers and companies. Furthermore, the study uses inductive reasoning and grounded theory methodological approach.

Findings: Through our analysis we found two main motivations for consumers posting on an anti-branding website: 1) *Seeks Compensation:* This theme was comprised of consumers that were hoping to get a hold of the company and receive a refund that the consumer felt the company owed them. These posts were more objective, less aggressive, and were simply there to request compensation for their perceived losses. 2) *Never Use the Company Again:* These complainants were focused on negative word of mouth and were specifically there to share their story, warn others, and make the company pay for their actions. These posts were generally longer, more descriptive, and had a much more aggressive and hateful tone to them. These findings highlight that not all consumers may feel hateful toward the company and are more focused on compensation, but they still felt lead to the anti-branding website after receiving an unacceptable response from the company. Further to this, if companies did reach

out to these complainant's and satisfied their desires, the consumer brand relationship could be healed. For those complainants that do feel more hate, the conclusion can be drawn that these consumer relationships are now at the point where companies could not recover them through any sort of company efforts; therefore, companies should focus their efforts on addressing consumer complaints before they reach the point of brand hate or where consumers say they will never use the company again.

The study found that consumers' motivation to start communicating negatively on anti-branding websites was not because of one service issue, but due to multiple service issues that angered people, with customer service complaint as the most common issue. When reviewing the anti-branding website owners motivation for creating the site, all of three anti-branding site creators discussed how they felt mistreated by the airlines, which shows how many of the anti-branding sites were born from consumer frustrations and as way of acting out. The sites were created by individuals and were initially not supported by any outside influence. The analysis of the website owner's stories further reiterate that many of these situations are avoidable and that consumer anti-branding actions could be mitigated if companies act quickly.

Theoretical Implications: This research contributes to the research domain of brand hate and anti-branding and is built on existing theories on brand hate and emotional marketing, anti-branding and consumer complaint behavior. It contributes specifically to the landmark study conducted by Harrison-Walker (2001) about anti-branding sites as it builds upon her findings. Moreover, this study seems to be similar to literature about brand hate and emotional marketing; however, this study found that consumers use quite a range and different words to express their emotions. This highlights that consumers do not express their emotions as angry as much as previous research would suggest. What is more, the anti-branding websites in this study seemed to have less of a community characteristic where users discuss different issues with one another, which is different from previous research that highlighted the community related aspect of anti-branding sites.

Managerial Implications: Our findings further reiterate that companies should not ignore consumer complaints as many of the complainants posted on the anti-branding website after initially trying to contact the company. As many of the consumers had tried to contact the company previously, better company complaint management could lessen the amount of anti-branding activities against their company's brand. Further to this, better compensation request management could reduce the number of anti-branding posts. Based on the issues found in the analysis and to lessen the amount of anti-branding activities, we suggest that companies create a digital communication plan to handle consumer complaints. This would include four parts: 1) More phone customer service representatives who are properly trained to handle consumer complaints, 2) a digital complaint management system located on the company website that is user friendly and easy for consumers to quickly submit their complaint, 3) more social media staff that respond to consumer concerns and are given the authority to help consumers and respond quickly, and 4) one background or intranet system that organizes all complaints and allows staff to easily and quickly manage and handle complaints. Further to this, we suggest that companies put more resources into notifying consumers and providing information.

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1 Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to progress theory of consumer and brand relationships; specifically, the paper will explore the ever increasing hate relationship between consumers and brands and further investigate the phenomenon of anti-branding and brand hate.

Companies all over the world today are realizing that their brand and its strength is one of their most valuable assets (Keller, 2013). A brand is a “way of adding value and giving its product or service an individuality that sets it apart from the rest” (Roper & Fill, 2012, p.108); furthermore, a brand is the mental associations a person holds and the perceived added value the brand carries (Keller, 1998). The key to any brand and its strength, is the customer. Brand relevance and brand equity have continued to grow over time. Brand equity is the added financial cash flows created by the brand and according to Kapferer (2012), brands have this added value because “they have created assets in the mind and hearts of customers...” (Kapferer, 2012, p.7). Today, the brand equity value for the world’s top brands is staggering. According to Forbes World’s Most Valuable Brands list for 2015, all of the top 100 Brands have a brand worth in the billions, and Apple, the current number one, has a value of \$145.3 Billion US Dollars (Forbes, 2016). Simply put, a strong brand gives a company power and gives companies the ability to influence the market in different ways; additionally, strong brands create stability for future sales and allow for easier expansion into new markets (Kapferer, 2012). The advantages that a strong brand will gain over a weak brand allow it to work and perform in ways a weak brand never could.

With the growth in brand relevance, also comes the challenge of effective branding. To do this accordingly, marketers and managers have to understand in detail the consumer brand relationship, which is an always changing task. The market and consumer preferences constantly change and evolve over time. With new technology advances and the growth of social media and the internet, the power has shifted from companies to consumers (Labrecque et al., 2013; Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009) and communication about a brand now happens with or without the company's permission (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Because of this shift, understanding the consumer to brand relationship is more important today than ever before. The growth of social media and the internet has now given consumers direct access to any company and many consumers are using this power to talk negatively about a brand. Fournier and Alvarez (2013) wisely point out that negative brand relationships are even more common than positive relationships. As loving and strong brand communities build around a brand, so

do more anti-branding and activist communities build around a brand (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2006).

A large part of the human decision making process is emotional, and emotions play a key role in customer's selection and overall loyalty toward a brand (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Many brand experts have found that emotional connections in branding are key in building a strong and lasting positive relationship between company and consumer (Aaker, 1996; Gobé, 2001) thus; companies should focus on the emotional aspects of consumer decisions when building their brand strategy (Akgün, Koçoğlu and İmamoğlu, 2013). Many books and articles focus on the brand love side of the consumer brand relationship and look at what is involved in building these strong positive relationships (Fournier, Breazeale & Fetscherin, 2012; Huber, Meyer & Schmid, 2015; Albert & Merunka, 2013). While there is strong theory and research covering what causes people to fall in love with a brand, studies of the negative aspects are still limited and have often been neglected (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Avery & Fourier, 2011; Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015; Bailey, 2004; Romani et al., 2015). With the growth in anti-branding websites and brand hate on the internet (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009), this area should be studied more closely to add understanding to this area of the brand consumer relationship.

Anti-branding sites are websites dedicated to a position of hate or negativity toward a specific brand (Bailey, 2004; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). These sites are community orientated and allows consumers to build empowerment in a place with like-minded individuals; Further to this, the number of these brand hate sites is constantly growing (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). "Anti-brand websites are today's new form of boycott and protest, developed through consumer activism as a result of increasing consumer power with the advent of the internet" (Kucuk, 2008, p.210). Consumers today are no longer just passively receiving marketing messages, but are active in the co-creation of market value (Kucuk, 2008). Companies are struggling to keep their reputation as customers can discuss and talk openly on the internet about a brand (Awasthi, Sharma & Gulati, 2012). In this research study, we will focus on anti-branding websites specifically. There are other outlets where consumers express their anger toward companies, such as social media, blogs and consumer review websites, but anti-branding websites are unique in that they are positioning themselves in a way that is directly against a specific brand (Bailey, 2004; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Companies that have a strong brand are generally more likely to be targeted by anti-branding sites (Krishnamurthy and Kucuk, 2009; Brijesh, Rajesh and Urvashi, 2012). Further to this, "Brand strength is affected positively by advantages but negatively by disadvantages, such as varying forms of

anti-branding and anti-consumption activity” (Kucuk, 2008, p.209) and “brands are arguably more influential, valuable and complex than ever before but are also subject to greater levels of criticism, scrutiny and opposition” (Østergaard, Hermansen & Fitchett, 2015). So even though these brands might enjoy many of the advantages to having a strong brand, it also invites targeting from anti-branding sites and online activists (Kucuk, 2008).

Even though research is limited, there is some who have done research into the anti-branding phenomenon (Østergaard, Hermansen & Fitchett, 2015). Previous research focuses primarily on strong brands or industry leaders across multiple industries (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Kucuk, 2008; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Romani et. al., 2015) or they focus on a single case corporation (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010) without the ability to draw cross-company comparisons. This research paper will aim to draw conclusions of a particular global industry by focusing on the airline industry and anti-branding websites of airline companies. According to Dolinsky (1994) organizations that provide services are more likely to be targeted with complaints since services are highly variable and heterogeneous. Moreover, “such variation is likely to give rise to more perceived problems and, hence, more customer complaints” (Dolinsky, 1994, p. 27). The airline industry has become more competitive and consumers’ expectations have been steadily on the rise (Chen & Hu, 2013). The demand for improved service quality is continuously increasing; however, if the expected quality is lower than expected it will lead to customer complaints (Francis, Humphreys, & Fry, 2003; Kim, Kim & Lee, 2011; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985).

The purpose of this study, is to draw further understanding and investigate the hate relationship between a particular company and consumers and to develop theory in this area of study that has grown in relevance. Further to this, the study will provide understanding of the following:

RQ 1) What motivates consumers to post on an anti-branding website?

1a) What do they hope to achieve?

RQ 2) What motivates consumers to communicate negatively about a brand?

2a) What actually happened that motivated them to reach out and publicly write on an anti-branding site?

RQ 3) What motivates someone to start an anti-branding website?

Using an inductive reasoning and grounded theory methodological approach, the study will examine consumer complaints of three anti-branding sites in the airline industry; <http://britishairwayssucks.org> (British Airways Anti-brand Website), <http://untied.com/> (United Airlines Anti-brand Website) and whyaircanadasucks.com (Air Canada's Anti-brand Website). This provides specific research into anti-branding websites and is the first to examine the language used by complainants of multiple case companies that operate globally but in the same industry. Using netnography as a collection method, the data will be examined to build an understanding of the brand hate relationship between consumers and companies. To begin, a literature review covering the relevant areas of study was done to fully understand and assess the gaps in previous research and build a theoretical approach for the study.

2 Literature Review

This section provides a thorough literature review on consumer-brand relationships, digitalization in the airline industry, brand hate and anti-branding. Moreover, we looked at service quality dimensions within the airline industry as well as customer dissatisfaction, complaint behavior and brand avoidance in order to fulfill the research purpose of the study.

2.1 Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBR)

In order to better understand the love/hate relationship dynamic, a thorough theoretical review on consumer-brand relationship (CBR) has been conducted.

Traditionally, literature has not consider the commonalities between brand management and relationship marketing, but only explored these two research areas separately (Palmer, 1996). However, over the past decade several researchers started to examine consumer brand relationships (CBR). It is a continuously growing field of interest in different industries and has now become a popular research topic for academic researchers (Keller, 2014). Fournier (1998) argues that “brands can and do serve as viable relationship partners” (p.344) and she argues that the brand can be seen as an active contributor to the relationship a consumer is establishing. Moreover, Fournier (1998) mentions that strong relationships bind consumers and their preferred brands. Thus, brands have shifted from being simple constructs that define products to being complex and beneficial relationship partners, which can drive financial equity and customer loyalty (Iglesias & Saleem, 2015). Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) point out that CBR research can be seen as interdisciplinary and multi-conceptual since a great variety of concepts and theories from different areas have been conducted.

Blackston’s (1993) book chapter about ‘Building brand relationships’, Fajer and Schouten’s (1995) paper investigating the ‘person-brand relationships’ and Fournier’s (1998) article on ‘consumers and their brands’ are landmarks in the research field of consumer brand relationships (CBR). The most commonly cited work is the original study by Fournier (1998) who defines a typology of 15 consumer-brand relationships (for instance ‘arranged marriages’, ‘best friendships’ or ‘kinships’). This framework aims to characterize consumer-brand relationships and is a main contribution to our understanding of the different forms of relationships consumer build with brands.

Following Fournier's (1998) study, many different streams of research have been carried out focusing on different aspects of the consumer brand relationship. It became clear that over time, developing concepts on the consumer-brand relationships have changed from more attitudinal views like commitment and loyalty to more specific constructs that qualify the brand relationship (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). Concepts cover the Brand Relationship Quality Model (BRQ Model) by Fournier (1998), which includes six dimensions that intend to measure the strength and depth of a consumer-brand relationship from an individual perspective (for example: partner quality, intimacy and love/passion). This model was constructed to show that consumers buying behavior is influenced by the perceived relationships customers have with brands.

Edson Escalas (2004) published a paper about the self-brand connection concept, which describes the degree to which consumers integrate the brand into their self-concepts, and they argue that customers have a strong attachment to a brand if they are projecting their self onto the brand. A study on brand attachment by Whan Park et al. (2010) developed a construct that measures "the strength of the bond connection the brand with the self" (p.2). In addition to this study, another work conducted by Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) focused on the brand attachment and more specifically described a construct that measures the strength of consumers' emotional attachments toward brands. Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012) came up with a consumer-brand relationship construct that goes beyond self-brand connection and attachment, and goes toward brand love. Before this paper, the brand love landscape had already been investigated and dominated by Ahuvia's (2005) work. Since then, even more studies dealt with the research on brand love (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012) and it became a very popular research field. Building on the work from Fournier (1998) about brand relationship quality, the study about brand attachment (Park et al., 2010) and the study about brand love (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012), Park, Eisingerich and Park (2013) proposed a new approach and developed a model called the Attachment-Aversion (AA) model. This model identifies "the process of how the relationship valence and salience influence customers' behavioral responses to a brand ..." (p. 229). The AA model tests both brand-self distance, meaning the closeness or distance between the self and the brand, and brand prominence, "the perceived memory accessibility of a brand to an individual" (p.231). According to this model, a consumer feels close to a brand when the brand is described as a means for self-expansion; called the brand attachment-relationship. When a consumer feels distant from a brand and the brand is perceived as a threat for self-contraction, the relationship is named brand aversion (Park, Eisingerich & Park, 2013). Their model gives new and exciting understanding into the area of brand relationships. Alba and Lutz (2013)

agree that the AA model possesses multi-functionality and that it can be used to better understand brand relationships. Fournier and Alvarez (2013) also praise Park, Eisingerich and Parks AA model as it accounts for the full spectrum of positive and negative relationships. To further validate the Attachment Aversion (AA) model, other demographic and psychographic factors should be studied, as only age was looked at in the introduction of the model (Park, Eisingerich, and Park, 2013).

A recent study by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) examined the consumer-brand relationship landscape and developed a brand feeling matrix in which they referred to appropriate concepts about CBR. This model was influenced by the work of Storbacka, Strandvik and Grönroos (1994) and highlights the emotional dimensions of CBR. As Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) state, the CBR can be grouped into the strengths of brand relationships, which can be either weak or strong, and into the consumer’s feeling toward a brand, that can be either negative or positive.

		Strengths of Brand Relationship	
		<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>
Feeling Towards Brand	<i>Positive</i>	(1) Brand Satisfaction	(2) Brand Love Brand Passion
	<i>Negative</i>	(3) Brand Avoidance	(4) Brand Hate Brand Divorce

Figure 2-1 Brand feeling matrix (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014)

By providing an appropriate customer-brand relationships constructs for each quadrant, it became clear that previous literature mostly focuses on positive feelings for brands. The model by Bloemer and Kasper (1995) for brand satisfaction (quadrant one) has been conducted and illustrates that consumers can be satisfied with a brand but do not love the brand or become loyal. As already mentioned, the brand love or brand passion concept has highly been researched, where customers have positive feelings for brands and a strong relationship (Ahuvia, 2005; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2007; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012).

Quadrant three includes concepts where consumers have weak and negative feelings for brands, a few studies access this research area of brand avoidance (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2012); a literature review on brand avoidance is covered in another section of the literature review. Most studies draw attention to the positive CBR. However, few studies have been conducted that assess the negative feelings consumers have for brands. More specifically, very few studies examine quadrant four, brand hate and brand divorce, where consumers have negative and strong feelings for brands (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014). The next subsection will provide a thorough literature review on brand hate and emotional marketing.

2.2 Brand Hate and Emotional Marketing

This section will go over the current literature on brand hate and emotions in marketing as understanding the emotional aspects of the consumer brand relationship is a key focus in this study.

Researchers widely agree that investigation into the hate side of the brand consumer relationship has been neglected (Dalli, Romani & Gistri, 2006; Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Romani, Grappi, & Dalli, 2012; Demirbag-Kaplan et. al., 2015; Zarantonello et. al., 2016) and recently the importance of brand hate has become apparent to many researchers (Zarantonello et. al., 2016). Fournier and Alvarez (2013) intelligently point out that negative brand relationships are also more common than positive relationships, which shows that there is a strong need to understand and research the negative aspect of the consumer brand relationship. What is more, they argue that there has been a biased focus on the positive relationship in marketing and that a dedicated focus on the phenomenon of negative relationships is needed (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013).

As mentioned in the previous section, Fournier (1998) was one of the first to study consumer relationship to try to develop some theory and a framework to better understand the types of relationships that consumers have with brands. The role that emotions play in marketing behavior was also understudied until Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999) took to exploring this topic. Their research gave a starting framework of how emotions can play a major role in the actions of consumers in advertising and marketing. While both of these studies were a great step in adding to the lack of research, they were of course a first stepping stones and left many questions unanswered.

Dalli, Romani, and Gistri (2006) studied brand dislike and were one of the first to give insight into the consumer point of view on brand dislike. As the authors wisely state, it is important to differentiate between product brands, user brands, and corporate brands when understanding consumer dislike. Their research was limited however, as it was one of the first to look at consumer dislike and was not an in depth analysis but more a first step in general ideas and understanding; further to this, the study did not address behaviors, but more general emotions of consumers. Their study had no clear distinction as to what lead to brand dislike and study results were subject to personal characteristics and context.

Grégoire and Fisher (2007) studied the “love becomes hate” (p.247) effect in regards to betrayal as a way of understanding customer actions. Looking at why customers retaliate is helpful in studies, as it gives insight into customer actions. The key insight that these two researchers have shrewdly noted, is that there is a difference between ‘Demands for Reparations’ and ‘Retaliating Behaviors’. From this, they theorize a model to help explain this difference. This theoretical model is a simple and easy way to understand some of the key dynamics and variables at play when love becomes hate in a customer-brand relationship.

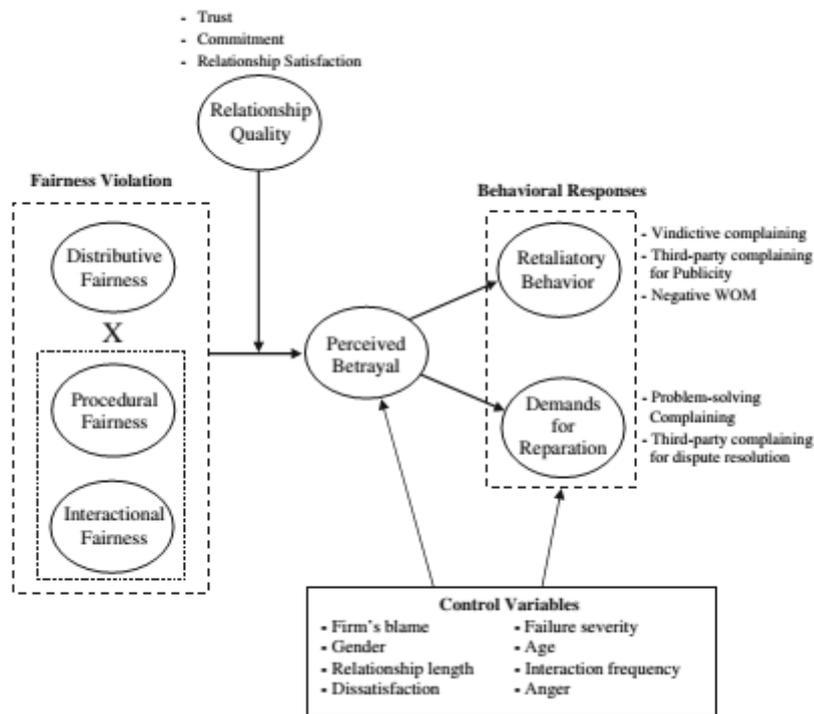


Figure 2-2 Theoretical model by Grégoire and Fisher's (2007) study of the “love becomes hate” effect (p. 249).

The researchers include multiple control variables, such as age, relationship length, gender, and others, which is something that has been neglected by other researchers in studies on brand hate and is an important addition. One area the researchers may have overlooked and may be lacking from this study, is the degree to which 'Demands for Reparations' and 'Retaliatory Behaviors' is different. This is covered in the study, but not to a significant amount and would be good for future expansion research, as it would help companies to understand what key actions to take with different customers. Lastly, Grégoire and Fisher (2007) give companies advice based on the information found in the study. These suggestions are wise and easy to follow, but they lack specification. For example, they suggest prevention tactics by more thoroughly understanding consumer desires and also setting up recovery procedures to better satisfy customer needs. Thus, an area of further study would be to elaborate on these ideas further, and also, the model should be tested again using a different study and data to assess its validity.

Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) study the brand hate effect over time and researched the love becomes hate phenomenon further. This study's major contribution was understanding the effect of time in understanding brand hate. The authors argued that the desire for revenge would decrease overtime and that the desire for avoidance would increase over time. Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) agree with the previous research of Grégoire and Fisher (2007) in that when consumers have a stronger relationship with a brand, they are more likely to take offense or feel betrayed after a service failure. This study made a contribution in our understanding of time and relationship strength in relation to brand hate relationships. Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) found that the relationship quality affects the desire for revenge over time, and that the desire for revenge does decrease over time, but those that had a stronger relationship maintain their desire for revenge longer. The desire for avoidance however, increases more quickly in high-relationship-quality customers than it does in low-relationship-quality customers. This is important to grasp, as it leads to understanding of how love can become hate. The authors also found that company quick responses to complaints can defuse the desire for revenge, but is most effective for consumers that had a strong relationship. This is a positive finding, and shows how the right action by companies can decrease the desire for revenge from customers. The key is for the company to judge the relationship accordingly, as Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) found that recovery measures do not necessarily work on consumers that had a lower quality relationship with the company. Romani, Grappi, and Dalli (2012) studied six different emotions: anger, discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness and worry, to study the negative emotional reactions of customers toward brands. However, the authors of this study might have to quickly chosen their target

emotions, since many of their studied participants chose other emotions that are not included in the six studied emotions, the study loses its validity. This was a decision made by Romani, Grappi, and Dalli (2012), but if more emotions were included, it could give a clearer understanding of consumer feelings as they chose to classify certain emotions with others, for example including disgust with dislike. Nevertheless, the study does give insight into the reactions of these six emotions that were chosen for the study, for example how sadness leads to little or no action, embarrassment also leads to little action, worry leads to brand switching, anger is involved in complaint situations, and dislike motivates negative behaviour more than the other emotions studied. The study is a healthy stepping stone to other research in understanding particular emotions in consumer-brand relationships.

Demirbag-Kaplan et. al. (2015) did a recent study into understanding the key emotional dynamic of consumer-brand hate. They studied the level of satisfaction needed to gain loyalty, and theorize that nostalgia plays a key role in customer brand happiness. The researchers shrewdly observe that “although consumers may dislike a brand, and may even be filled with hatred toward them, they may still continue to buy them” (p. 137); therefore, the study aims to investigate a neglected area in other research, if there are other reasons behind repurchase of disliked brands. They found that loyalty, even if a consumer dislikes the brand, comes down to three main criteria: Lack of alternatives, inertia or laziness to look for alternatives and lower cost; therefore, brand loyalty is not always an indicator of satisfaction. The authors also found that nostalgia, including cultural, personal and past nostalgia, can be a major motivator in continued attachment with a disliked brand. They even go as far to say that nostalgia can be a remedy for broken relationships between the brand and the consumer. The authors may have overlooked certain aspects of the study as only fourteen people were interviewed; thus, even though the study smartly points out the grey area of brand dislike but still repurchasing, a larger pool of subjects would need to be questioned to give the study stronger legitimacy.

Kavaliauskė and Simanavičiūtė (2015) study brand avoidance in detail as a phenomenon of anti-consumption and is discussed further in the section on brand avoidance. From an emotional perspective, the authors argues that the more dislike, anger, worry and embarrassment emotions grow, the more consumers avoid that brand because of different brand-related motives; such as unmet expectations, ideological incompatibility between consumers and brands, unacceptable trade of brand offerings, and symbolic incongruences between brands and consumers. Since the study results were not overly strong; this study could be further developed and explored by studying brand avoidance and emotions on a more

global basis with more respondents, as this study was carried out in only one country, Lithuania.

Zarantonello et. al. (2016) recently did a study on brand hate as they recognized that understanding consumer feelings would help companies respond effectively and maybe even prevent brand hate. Much like other researchers, Zarantonello et. al. (2016) look at certain feelings and emotions as they lead to brand hate, and much like Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) did, they then theorize that certain emotions lead to either active or passive brand hate, depending on if the hate leads to action or not. Zarantonello et. al. (2016) found that passive and active brand hate can be linked to certain emotions. They point out that active brand hate includes anger and disgust, while passive hate relates more to fear, disappointment, shame and dehumanization; further to this, the results of the study show that corporate wrongdoing and violation of expectations have a higher chance of brand hate actions like complaining, negative word of mouth, protest, and patronage reduction/cessation. The study is a major contribution as it showed that when consumers feel violated or that companies have acted wrongly, consumers are more likely to behave negatively toward companies. This means that we can begin to understand what emotions lead to more active anti-branding.

A great number of previous research studies were only conducted in one country (Romani, Grappi and Dalli, 2012; Park, Eisingerich, and Park, 2013; Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015; Kavaliauské and Simanavičiūtė, 2015) and/or in groups that are not overly diverse in daily life (Dalli, Romani, and Gistri, 2006) which is a major limitation as culture and consumption changes drastically from country to country. To best understand global feelings of brand hate, a sample population that covers many countries would give more validity and realism into understanding brand hate and should be considered for future research. Further to this, many of these studies had limitations on the emotions that were studied (Romani, Grappi & Dalli, 2012; Kavaliauské and Simanavičiūtė, 2015; Zarantonello et. al., 2016), and to fully examine the range of descriptive emotions consumers feel, more emotions should be included in future research to better understand the emotions consumers truly feel and to also explore the language people use themselves when describing their emotions.

2.3 Anti-Branding

After discussing the more emotional aspects of brand hate, it is important to look at the previous literature that specifically covers the anti-branding phenomenon. This section will look at the previous research that is more specific to anti-branding websites.

Even though research in the area of brand hate and anti-branding has been neglected, as previously mentioned, there are recent and new studies that give insight into different aspects of the anti-brand phenomenon (Østergaard, Hermansen & Fitchett, 2015). Harrison-Walker (2001) was one of the first to study anti-branding websites in particular. She stated that “the emergence of the Internet and its communication capabilities has given rise to a number of complaint sites that function as central forums for consumers to share their bad experiences with other consumers” (p. 397). Further to this, Holt (2002) explained that brands are now under attack since the rise of the new counterculture movement of consumers. Hollenbeck & Zinkhan (2006) agreed with Holt (2002) that anti-branding communities are forming and consumers are taking on these social activism roles by voicing their opposition toward certain corporations and brands. As wisely said by Hollenbeck & Zinkhan (2006) “today social movements are transpiring in virtual space, which set the stage for new forms of protest, organization, cooperation, and coalition building” (p. 480). This is further reiterated by Bailey (2004) who states “the internet has provided a forum through which consumers who are dissatisfied with various companies can vent their anger towards these corporations” (p. 169). Many scholars believe that the growth of the internet and consumer brand hate online makes this a particularly important area of study (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Awasthi, Sharma & Gulati, 2012).

The study by Harrison-Walker (2001) was the most closely related to ours, as she studied the United Airlines anti-brand website that we also studied. The findings of this landmark study aided understanding into what aspects upset consumers and drove them to the anti-branding site. For example, the study showed that employee rudeness, employee incompetence, baggage issues, receiving misinformation and other assorted reasons were the top reasons for complaints. Further to this, “many complainants expressed dissatisfaction with more than one aspect of the service” (p.402), as to say it was not just one problem. Even though some of these issues are unavoidable, like flight delays, many of the issues consumers discussed are avoidable, thus, prompting consumers to search for anti-branding sites and engage in negative word of mouth. Many consumers did lodge complaints with the customer service staff or they had tried to contact the company directly through phone, letter or e-mail but very few of them got a response from the company. Harrison-Walker (2001) argues that many companies take on a defensive role with these anti-brand sites and try to block consumers from sharing their negative opinions with others, but she smartly suggests that companies allow consumers to express themselves and do not attempt to block them sharing on anti-brand websites. “Consumer complaint forums are borne from the frustrations shared by a number of dissatisfied customers that feel they have no better way to voice their opinions and

make some sort of an impact” (p. 405). Harrison-Walker (2001) suggests that instead of companies using resources to block these anti-brand sites, they should spend resources on actually monitoring and responding to consumers on anti-brand sites. Further to this, she suggest that companies create a way for consumers to actually respond and complain directly to companies either through a website, call-centers, or any other way the company sees fit. Harrison-Walker’s (2001) main contribution is her suggestions on how companies can respond and actually turn customer complaints into a competitive advantage. She gives the example of analyzing and watching the site to find out gaps in service or using the data to find new ideas for service. She gives real and tangible suggestions to service companies on how they can actually improve their situation if they use these anti-brand websites to their advantage.

Bailey (2004) then studied consumer’s knowledge and awareness of corporate complaint websites and their impact on consumer’s behaviors. The study found that the amount of people that were aware of the anti-brand sites was not as high as one might think, only half of the participants had heard of corporate complaint websites and only 28% visited a site. This does not mean that companies should not pay attention however, as “when the respondents were aware of corporate complaint WWW sites they were likely to visit them, thereby exposing themselves to negative company information that could influence their perceptions of certain companies” (Bailey, 2004, p.179). What is most interesting however, is how people felt companies should respond to these sites, as most believed that companies should respond in some way to these sites, but should do so through their own website. These findings are in line with Harrison-Walker’s (2001) previous research and Bailey (2004) also concluded that companies should monitor the activity of these anti-brand sites. Further to this, Bailey (2004) found that most anti-branding site awareness came through word of mouth from family and friends and those that went to the sites read the comments in detail and were likely to tell their friends and family about it. This shows a pattern of how knowledge of these sites in spread, and possibly with the rise of social media and internet usage, this could go up even more. Lastly, Bailey (2004) found that the decision not to shop again after experiencing the anti-brand website was quite different between high complainers and low complainers, which Bailey (2004) wisely suggests is a good way for companies to use the information on these sites and determine strategies on how to best handle these customer concerns. The main limitation of Baileys (2004) study is the tested population, as it was conducted on bachelor students and may not be a true representation of the overall population. A study using a more true and randomized sample of the population would give the study more legitimacy but the study was still a groundbreaking and knowledgeable contribution to the research on the anti-branding phenomenon.

Hollenbeck & Zinkhan's (2006) study was to discover more about people that go to anti-branding websites. They found there were four main reasons that anti-brand communities form: "1) to provide a social community comprised of members with common moral obligations, 2) to provide a support network to achieve common goals, 3) to provide a way of coping with workplace difficulties and 4) to provide a resource hub for taking action" (p.480). Further to this, their results show that behavioral aspects play a key role in anti-branding activities. Behavioral aspects included: "1) publicizing marketplace inequalities (e.g., unethical marketing tactics, unethical corporate actions), 2) informing fellow members about the rewards associated with a restrictive lifestyle (e.g., voluntary simplicity), and 3) constructing a new collective identity (e.g., in opposition to prefabricated marketplace identities)" (p.480). They established that the common negative stance of those individuals actually unified members and built a community; therefore, giving them more power. The authors intelligently found that the internet gave them a place to put their activism into action and overall enhanced their participation and sharing. The study is a great exploration into what leads consumers to the anti-branding site and the overall community feeling in anti-branding websites. The main limitation is the fact that the three companies studied were all active in different industries; further to this, while they were all global companies, they also all had their roots in the United States.

Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) also felt it was extremely important to study anti-brand websites specifically and their impact on consumer consumption and brand value. They were smart to recognize that anti-brand websites are usually created by unhappy customers and is a clear showing of the consumer power shift that is also discussed by other researchers Labrecque et. al. (2013) and Deighton and Kornfeld (2009). Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) explain that anti-brand websites are triggered by two things: 'Consumer Dissatisfaction' and 'Consumer Empowerment'. They created and present a framework to explain the different aspects that go into anti-branding website creation.

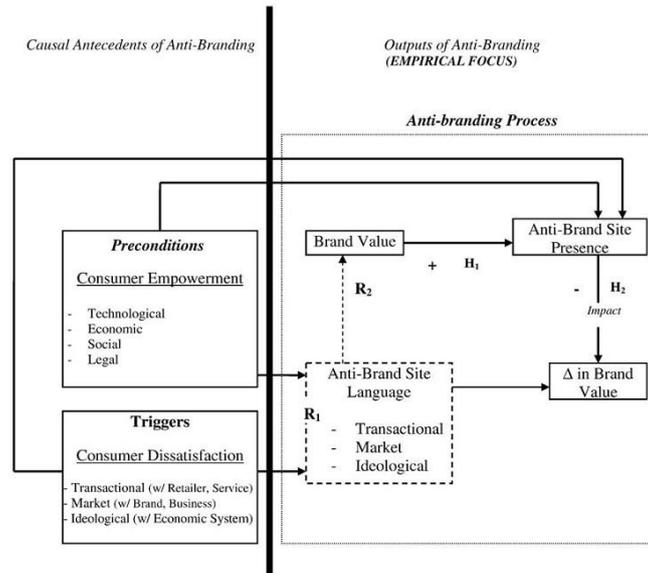


Figure 2-3 Anti-branding conceptual framework (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009)

What sets these researchers apart from the others, is they study the effect of anti-branding sites on brand value. They hoped to understand if there is a connection between brand value and likelihood of anti-branding sites forming, and further to this, if the presence of an anti-branding website could be associated with negative changes to the brand value. They found that strong brands do in fact “pay a price” (p.1123) and further to this that strong brands are more likely to be targeted for anti-brand websites. This is supported by Kucuk’s (2008) previous idea of the ‘negative double jeopardy’ phenomenon, meaning brands that have a higher value or higher position in the market attract more anti-brand websites. Østergaard, Hermansen and Fitchett (2015) also believed that strong brands are more vulnerable and that “one of the reasons why these brands often become so vulnerable to anti-branding objection is their visibility and their status as a kind of global cultural currency” (p. 61). Kucuk’s (2008) study found that there is a correlation between high brand ranking and increase in hate sites and further to this, brand consistency, meaning being listed frequently in brand rankings, also attracts more anti-brand activity. These findings are a major contribution and suggest that globally strong brands do experience more of a specific targeting for anti-branding activities and even though they might experience more luxuries as a leader, they also have more criticism and anti-branding consumers to effectively handle. Therefore, companies should include consumers in an open-dialogue, which will hopefully lead to mutual satisfaction of both parties (Kucuk, 2008).

Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) wanted to understand how language is used in anti-branding websites as they shrewdly noticed that “the language used in anti-brand sites is distinct from product evaluation and complaint forums” (p.1123). They found that language used did have a correlation with brand values and that three themes emerged: ‘Market’, ‘Ideological’ and ‘Transactional’. ‘Transactional’ means the actual transaction failures, ‘Ideological’ focuses on speech that is more personal and political in nature, and ‘Market’ has to do with more market related speech about the brand, consumers, competitors, business and other market related conversation. The authors found that market related speech was the strongest and correlates more with brand value (Krishnamurthy and Kucuk, 2009). The researchers made many wise advancements into our understanding of the relationship between brand value and anti-branding sites, but the study could be supported better with further discussion of the specific language used. It would be aided by further understanding of the emotional and feeling words used. Maybe this was included in the study, but was not considered in the discussion of the article. Further to this, the study could be further expanded by reaching out to anti-brand site creators and understanding their motivations behind creating and organizing the site.

After their first study, Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010) later looked into the learning processes of brand meaning in an anti-brand community. Specifically, they studied the Wal-Mart anti-branding community to discover how the members negotiate the meaning of the Wal-Mart brand. This study again is insightful as it lends understanding of how members in an anti-brand community communicate between one another and how that develops the brand meaning. This study was unique however, as it was not focused specifically on the anti-branding websites, but data collection included many different anti-brand activities and outlets, such as rallies, interviews, meetings and online complaint forums. The study found that activists learn the brand meaning as they negotiate. They authors argue that members negotiate and learn the meaning of the brand in three ways: 1) ‘Counterfactual thinking’, meaning that members learn by comparing alternate scenarios to a given situation. For example, by comparing the different scenarios’ of other community members. 2) ‘Discursive Storytelling’, which means sharing their stories of personal experience. 3) ‘Noncompulsory Observation’, which refers to the knowledge that someone gains through accidental exposure. Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (201) argue this usually happens when people looked for more information, or through incidental exposure at a demonstration or rally. This study is beneficial in exploring not only online behaviors, but encompasses many facets of the anti-branding movement and lends understanding into how community members learn from one another and other outside influences (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010).

Awasthi, Sharma and Gulati (2012) hoped to understand the long term impact of anti-branding on consumer perceptions and customer brand relationships. The researchers agree with Kucuk (2008) and Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) in that strong brands are targeted more often in anti-brand campaigns. The study by Awasthi, Sharma and Gulati (2012) focused on controversial practices of Coca-Cola and Pepsi in India and customers reactions to these corporate actions. The study found that customer perceptions of a brand and their usage of that brand play a significant role in the brand-consumer relationship. Maybe not all that surprising, respondents did believe that negative publicity would decrease the brand's value in the short term. But what is maybe a bit surprising, is even when consumers become aware of negative aspects of their favorite brands, most would still continue to buy the product and only 10% said they would never purchase it again. But when asked about the Pepsi/Coca-Cola situation specifically, more than half said they stopped using Coca-Cola and Pepsi after the incident in question. Awasthi, Sharma and Gulati (2012) found that even though many said they would continue using their favorite brand after finding out this negative information, when respondents were asked about their usage of a specific brand and in a specific situation, many said they would not. However, when asked if they started reusing the particular product in question, more than 90% said they started to repurchase the product, "thus negative publicity does not have a long lasting impact on the buying decision of the consumer" (p.59). This is an interesting conclusion to make. This research gives important insight into the brand-consumer relationship and understanding the value of emotional attachment and the strength of positive brand relationships. Further to this, the study suggests that over time, negative situations can be toned down and their impact can be less severe. As a follow up to the research, it would be interesting to examine constant negative attention. What Awasthi, Sharma and Gulati (2012) may have overlooked is the effect of constant negativity that is more consistent with anti-branding websites and communities, as the research only examined one incident and its impact on purchasing intent. What might be more interesting and true to the nature of anti-branding websites, would be to study this constant negativity and its effect on purchase decisions.

A study by Kaynak & Ekşi (2013) focuses on ethnocentrism, religiosity, environmental consciousness and health consciousness as having an impact on consumer's level of anti-branding efforts. Further to this, they believe that gender and education levels impact these four variables. The study did produce positive results and found that anti-branding tendencies of consumers could be understood by looking into their beliefs toward ethnocentrism, environmental consciousness and health consciousness but did the hypothesis toward religiosity was not supported. As the study is a different look at how consumers react toward

corporations and brands and the hindrances between the two parties, the researchers may have overlooked other factors involved and maybe a more open study would allow the theory to evolve on its own to fully understand all the factors at play in anti-branding tendencies.

Romani et al. (2015) studied anti-branding from more of an emotional aspect. They looked at how hate and empathy play a role in consumer anti-branding actions. As with previous research discussed in the brand hate section of the literature review, the authors of this study chose to define their idea of what hate is by focusing on a few emotions: Disgust, anger/fear and contempt. The authors propose that “feelings of hate function as stimulus to action. They result from consumer perceptions and evaluation of moral violations of a brand and signal that there are reasons to act against the brand its parent company in order to punish them, prevent them from harming others or give them what they deserve” (p. 662). Further to this idea, the authors are the first to study the role of empathy and believe that higher levels of empathy will elicit higher feelings of hate. The research did find that disgust, anger/fear and contempt were included in respondent's feelings of hate. Further to this, they found that “the greater the level of empathy, the stronger the negative feelings of hate in response to manipulated perceptions of moral violation by brand parent companies” (p. 669), which suggests that empathy does play a role in anti-branding feelings. Romani et al. (2015) agree with Kucuk (2008) and Harrison-Walker (2001) in that companies should not ignore these anti-brand actions of consumers and should focus on policies and prevention tactics; furthermore, “they should continuously monitor reported negative company behaviors and, in the case of activities judged as controversial or negative, they should plan effective strategies” (p. 669). The main limitation of the study, is only including four words to describe hate in the questionnaire. A more thorough and true representation of the feelings felt in regard to hate would be better understood if respondents could more freely express their feelings.

Many of these studied did provide new and groundbreaking research and theory into the understanding of the anti-branding phenomenon. While many did research consumer perceptions, behaviors, and actions in regards to anti-branding, few focused on developing and understanding the service side of the anti-branding phenomenon. This is a gap that the researchers will hope to fill through this study.

2.4 Digitalization in the Airline Industry

Since the study is focusing on anti-branding websites, which is a phenomenon on the internet that developed through the rise of digitization, the next subsection provides knowledge of digitalization in the airline industry, social media and consumer empowerment.

Travis (2001) and Karakaya and Barnes (2010) highlight that the rise of the internet in the late 90s has changed the environment in which companies operate dramatically. This involves the process of branding as well as the customer-relationship (Travis, 2001). Traditionally, branding techniques were defined by mass media marketing, whereas the new era is characterized by digitalization and globalization (Travis, 2001). Rowley (2004) and Travis (2001) discuss that within this modern economy it is therefore crucial to integrate different communication channels in companies' branding and marketing techniques. Rowley (2004) mentions that some argue that branding in the internet age might become less important by searching for best-value-for-money products or services regardless of the brands; however, she highlights the increasingly importance of branding for high value purchases in the digital era.

As stated by Rowley (2004), information based or service industries have been highly influenced by the internet evolution. Furthermore she mentions that various transactions and interactions at many stages in the customer relationship are nowadays being conducted digitally. According to Toh and Raven (2003) this is especially true for the airline industry, which has been at the leading edge of executing customer interactions through new media tools. Grančay (2013) states that air transportation is an interdependent industry where flexibility plays an important role. Moreover, he argues that only through adapting and reacting to new technologies and changes in the economy, an airline can stay competitive and successful. Grančay (2013) indicated that innovation is a crucial factor for airlines that involves constantly following new trends in customer communication and sales channels. According to Grančay (2013) the number and variety of those channels are steadily on the rise and are becoming more complex. Those online channels include social media, websites and web-based applications. Toh and Raven (2003) state that most airlines only focus on certain internet-marketing tools and discuss the importance for airlines to integrate all available internet-marketing tools into their strategy. The authors name this strategy Integrated Internet Marketing (IIM), which concentrates on all internet marketing techniques in order to meet customer needs and to maximize the airline's goals.

2.4.1 Social Media

One of the most relevant sub-groups of new media channels for airlines is social media. There are various definitions for social media; however, most commonly authors refer to social media as 'consumer-generated media' (Grančay, 2013). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) classify social media into five groups: virtual communities, reviews, blogs, social networks and media sharing sites. According to the authors, virtual communities are online sites where people share their experiences on a specific interest field, on reviews sites groups rate products or services and on so-called blogs, authors create personal content for public readers on daily life topics. Besides those various channels, Xiang and Gretzel (2010) argue that the most popular social media group are social networks such as Facebook or MySpace. Media sharing sites include sites as YouTube or Picasa. Airlines can use all these different social media channels for communicating with customers and the public (Grančay, 2013). This social media phenomenon can have a tremendously impact on a company's reputation and sales; therefore, according to Kietzmann et al. (2011) it is of the utmost importance to understand how to use them correctly. Grančay (2013) mentions that some channels are made for bi-directional communicating, whereas other social media sites are more suitable for one-way communication from airline to the public. Moreover, they argued that a well-organized social media communication strategy does not necessarily involve high financial costs and can increase the positive image of an airline (Grančay, 2013).

2.4.2 Consumer Power Growth

Throughout the literature, it became clear that all digital social media channels have made communication faster and changed the way consumer interact with companies (de Chernatony, 2006). In a study by Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011), it is reported that consumers today not only look for information on the internet, but also create or share their own content and raise their voice about brands on different media channels. This has already been investigated in a study in 2009 by Christodoulides, where he mentions that consumers are no longer only recipients of information but are becoming more active in communication with each other and the company. He points out that the one-to-many communication has been replaced by a many-to-many communication, where the consumers actively participate in the conversation online. For someone to have power, they need relevant content and sufficient reach (Labrecque et. al., 2013) and with the growth of digitalization consumers have this power. Kucuk and Krishnamurthy (2007) investigated this role of consumers and their power on the internet. In particular, they highlight that there has been a shift from supply power to consumer power. The authors discuss that due to the internet technology consumers are more

flexible, connected and mobile and are empowered with a greater amount of information. They wisely note that consumer power leads consumers to communicate with each other and to create solutions and new meanings about brands, which affects the company and forces them to change their decisions and future strategies. As a result, companies are often losing control over the new interactive world and are failing in creating brand awareness (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007). In today's world, consumers are able to interact with companies in real time and on a direct level. Kietzmann et. al. (2011) wisely noted that: "the power has been taken from those in marketing and public relations by the individuals and communities that create, share, and consume blogs, tweets, Facebook entries, movies, pictures, and so forth. Communication about brands happens, with or without permission of the firms in question" (p. 242).

Christodoulides (2009) argued that it is impossible for companies to have control over everything that is being said on the internet about their brand; therefore, Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) propose that the branding process online should be viewed as co-creation between the consumers and the firms. Further to this, Deighton and Kornfeld (2009) shrewdly noted that companies today have to shift to a system of interactivity, where marketers actively participate and efforts are more sincere. Companies should therefore monitor the plethora of online media and pay particular attention to consumer content (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, and Bloching, 2013).

2.5 Service Quality in the Airline Industry

As the purpose of the paper is to investigate the hate relationship by focusing on the airline industry, it is crucial to investigate the service quality aspect of industry, which is necessary to stay competitive and reach customer satisfaction.

According to Baker (2013) and Park, Robertson and Wu (2005) it has become crucial to provide high quality service within the service industry, and especially in the airline industry. Due to the intense competition between airlines, the field of service quality has been highly considered within the literature. It can be seen as a source of competitive advantage for airlines' sustainable growth, survival and customer satisfaction (Hung, Huang & Chen, 2003; Hussain, Nassar & Hussain, 2015; Hussain, 2016). In order to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction, a great level of quality service needs to be delivered, as it is seen as the basis for customer satisfaction (Clemens et al., 2008).

A variety of concepts have been created and discussed by several researchers that measure service quality; however, Baker (2013) argues that it became clear that there are two main facets that illustrate and influence service quality; the customer's expected service and the perceived service. Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons (2001) mention that customer satisfaction can be achieved through the difference between service perception and service expectation.

Grönroos (1984) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) were the real pioneers constituting the service quality construct. These authors highlight that perceived service quality is a result of the discrepancy of what consumers expect and their evaluation of a service (or perception). As stated by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) service can be seen as satisfactory if services are received as expected, but if services received exceed their expectations, their perceived service will be of high quality. Vice versa, when the service perceived is lower than expected, the service is considered as low quality and leads to customer dissatisfaction or customer complaints (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). Even though the definitions of service quality slightly differ from source to source, all definitions are defined from the customer perspective; meaning that customers are the single evaluator of service quality (Curry & Gao, 2012; Lewis, 1989).

The dimensions of service quality have also been highly discussed in the literature (Baker, 2013). Grönroos (1984) highlights two critical dimensions of service quality; the technical (the output or tangibles aspects of the service) and the functional (the process or performance of the service) quality. In a groundbreaking study, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) came up with five service quality dimensions, which are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. This procedure is known as SERVQUAL and is most commonly used. Alternatively, Rust and Oliver (1994) created a dimensional model and found three critical dimensions of service quality; the service product (technical quality), the service delivery (functional quality) and the service environment. Based on Rust and Oliver's (1994) work, Brady and Cronin (2001) identified primary dimensions for their model by applying the multidimensional view of service quality dimensions.

In a recent study by Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) the SERVQUAL framework has been adapted according to the airline industry. A modification is necessary as it is argued by Culiberg and Rojšek (2010) that the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model are industry-specific and cannot be applied to any service industry without adaptation. Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) explain that the airline service quality construct consists of six dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, security and safety and communications. The airline

service quality model approves four dimensions of the SERVQUAL model identified by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988); reliability, responsiveness, assurance and tangibles. The main difference between the five dimensional SERVQUAL model and the airline service quality model are two identified dimensions – security and safety and communication. Reliability means to perform the promised services in a precise and fully responsible way, without failure and negligence (An & Noh, 2009).

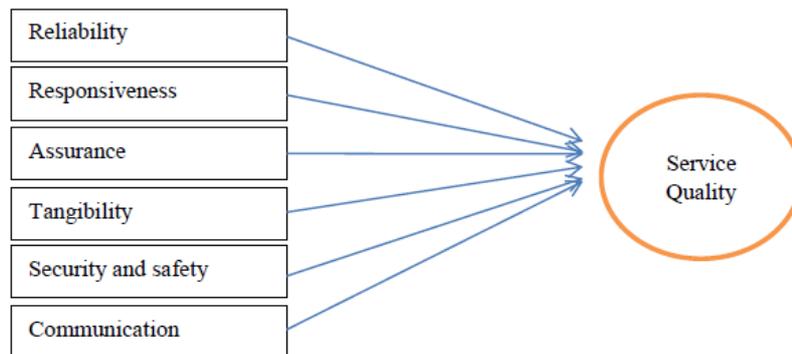


Figure 2-4 Airline service quality dimensions (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015)

Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) define reliability with four items: reaching the destination within the promised time, flight punctuality, efficiency of the check-in process and handling of lost luggage complaints. The authors discuss that service quality is a multidimensional construct with no exact number and nature of the dimensions, they do however explain and provide six service quality dimensions for the airline industry. According to Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015), airline companies should consider all these dimensions in order to reach customer satisfaction and improve overall service quality. Their study seems to be the first one defining service quality dimensions specifically for the airline industry. Bebko (2000) describes responsiveness as the provision of prompt service, the willingness to help passengers and the response of requests in a quick and immediate way. Four items have been operationalized for the airline service quality model: keeping passengers informed about delivery of services, updating passengers in case of any flight change or cancellation, the willingness to help and the attention to passengers' needs (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015). Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy on behalf of the employees as well as their capability to transfer trust and confidence (Buttle, 1996). To apply the dimension to the airline industry Hussain, Nasser & Hussain (2015) defined four definitions for assurance: courtesy towards customers, the employees' ability in providing service, employees' skillfulness to create confidence in passengers and employees' competence in responding to passengers' questions. Tangibility applies to the equipment, appearance of physical facilities and personnel materials (Lundstrom & Dixit, 2008). Within the airline service quality model conducted by Hussain, Nasser and

Hussain (2015), tangibility was investigated with eight items: cleanliness of the exterior of the airplane, cleanliness of the airplane interior, seat comfort, employee's attire, quality and variety of in-flight meals, variety of in-flight entertainment and installation of up-to-date technology. Furthermore, they mention that security and safety has become an important aspect when using airplanes and passengers are highly concerned about their safety as well as their luggage; therefore, it has been defined as the passenger's own personal safety and that of one's luggage. According to the authors effective communication is another crucial aspect for service quality within the airline industry. It can be defined as the skill of the cabin crew to communicate with passengers in various languages, important announcements during the flight and the pilot's communication with customers (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015). Even though the study contributes to the knowledge of customer satisfaction and service quality within the special area of the airline industry, it however has limitations as it was conducted in one country and only included one airline.

Our study will focus on the airline service quality model and the dimensions provided by Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015). Their study confirm the evidence indicating the direct relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Previous researchers in this field focuses on the impact on customer satisfaction and provides models and knowledge about the positive relationship (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015; Baker, 2013) however, our study will focus on the negative relationship and brand hate. Therefore, it is necessary to look more thoroughly into the aspect of customer dissatisfaction. Thus, the next subsection will provide a theoretical review on customer dissatisfaction and consumer complaint behavior.

2.6 Consumer Dissatisfaction and Consumer Complaint Behavior

This study focuses on the hate relationship between customers and brands and consequently, on negative consumer behavior. Therefore, the following subsection will provide knowledge about customer dissatisfaction and consumer complaint behavior (CCB).

Various researchers have argued that customer dissatisfaction is leading to a greater intention of consumer complaint behavior (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Oliver, 1987; Westbrook, 1987). Panda (2014) argues that complaining behaviors can be triggered by dissatisfaction people experience with a service or product. Although it seems that customer dissatisfaction is a basic requirement to start consumer complaint, Oliver (1987) pointed out that not necessarily every customer will complain. However, our study is interested in negative consumer communication

published on anti-branding websites; therefore, it is crucial to gain understanding about consumer complaint behavior.

2.6.1 Types of Complaining Behaviors

The field of consumer complaining behavior (CCB) has been a widely studied area for decades (Day & Landon, 1977; Hirschman, 1970; Singh, 1988, 1990a, 1990b). Hirschman's (1970) fundamental work within the field of CCB called 'Exit', 'Voice' and 'Loyalty' has inspired many researchers. In 1977, Day and Landon came up with a two-level hierarchical classification schema of CCB. The first level distinguishes between behavioral and non-behavioral responses (no action), whereas the second level differentiates between private actions (e.g. negative WOM) and public actions (e.g. take legal action). Boote (1998) adapted Hirschman's (1970) study and discussed four types of consumer complaint behaviors: 'Exit', 'Voice', 'Negative WOM', and 'Third-Party Action'. Exit refers to a "consumer who decides not to buy a product or service again, not to shop at a particular retailer or not to buy from a particular manufacturer again" (Boote, 1998, p. 142). Voice means "any attempt at all to change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 30). Negative WOM is "the communication of dissatisfaction to family and friends, which is often of a warning not to buy a certain product or to buy from a certain outlet" (Boote, 1998, p. 142-143). Third party is "the act of involving an outside agency to deal with dissatisfying episode – such as a consumer group or legal representative" (Boote, 1998, p. 143).

Singh (1990a) proposed four types of consumer complainers: 'Passives' (take no action), 'Voicers' (complain actively to the seller), 'Irates' (opt for private responses) and 'Activists' (engage in formal third-party complaining). It becomes clear that throughout the research most studies focus on different types of consumer complainers; however, less consider the channel choice of consumer actions. Mattila and Wirtz (2004) adapted Day and Landon's (1977) classification and expanded the channel choice into the model. If consumers decide to take formal complaint action, they can either choose between interactive (e.g. face-to-face or phone) and/or remote channels (e.g. written communication such as electronic messages).

Since this research paper draws attention to the negative communication on anti-branding websites, it becomes essential to understand why consumers start to complain and the reasons or motivators of consumer complaint behavior.

2.6.2 Motivators of Complaint Behavior

Several researchers studied the causes of consumer complaint behavior, which is mostly triggered by service failures and customer dissatisfaction (Bach & Kim, 2012). Prior research described two main reasons why people start complaining: 'Redress Seeking' (Blodgett, Hill & Tax, 1997) and 'Venting of Frustration' (Nyer, 1997). 'Redress seeking' is defined as the remedy of a problem; therefore, consumers in those situations are seeking compensation to the dissatisfactory incident and aim to get refund or fair damages depending on the situation to correct the dissatisfactory context (Mattila & Wirtz, 2004). According to Stiles (1987 cited in Mattila & Wirtz, 2004) venting is also known as catharsis in the CCB literature and refers to the release of stress that consumers experience in dissatisfying situations. The main purpose is to release feelings of distress, unhappiness or frustration in order to feel better or satisfied (Mattila & Wirtz, 2004). As for venting mostly no reply from the company is expected or desired, the customers tend to stay anonymous to prevent embarrassment or ugly confrontation with the firm (Mattila & Wirtz, 2004). Even though venting raises the level of dissatisfaction initially, Nyer (1997) argues that it is leading to an increased feeling of satisfaction.

Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) discussed that dissatisfied customers will either seek for redress or not seek for redress, but instead engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior. The authors moreover mention that complaining behavior can be seen as "as an opportunity to solidify and strengthen their relationships with their customers" (p. 39). The authors intelligently suggest that companies provide better complaint handling policies and also train employees to respond with courtesy and respect, which helps in maintaining customers. This is especially necessary as the authors argue that "complainants who receive a fair settlement, but who are treated rudely, most likely will vow never to shop there again, and are likely to tell their friends and relatives about their negative experience" (p. 38). Folkes (1984) and Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) discuss that customers that perceive the problem to be either stable or controllable are more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior. The study of Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) highlights an interesting aspect as it looks at the effects of customer service on consumer complaining behavior. However, the main limitation of the study is that it included 90% female respondents which makes it difficult to draw conclusions for both genders and further studies should be done to increase the validity of the study.

Another study by Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998) defines eight motives for consumer WOM, whereas four out of eight identify positive WOM. The motives for negative WOM are 'Altruism, 'Anxiety Reduction' (reducing frustration and anger), 'Vengeance' (to counter against

the company due to a negative experience) and 'Advice Seeking' (to get advice on how to solve a problem). 'Altruism' for negative WOM means "to prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered" (p. 530). A main contribution of Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998) suggest that employees should be friendly, caring and empathic in order to reach positive WOM, which is consistent with the research of Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995).

Kim, Grunig and Ni (2010) developed the theory of 'Communicative Action in Problem Solving' (CAPS). This theory applies if consumers' WOM communication and complaining behavior is described as dynamics of active information behaviors: 'information seeking', 'information forefending' and 'forwarding'. According to the theory, dissatisfied consumers are searching for information regarding the problem (information seeking) and become very selective about the importance and value since they are not able to keep all the available information (information forefending). Bach and Kim (2012) argue based on Kim, Grunig and Ni's (2010) CAPS theory, that if consumers feel that they are not successful in resolving the problems after trying every possible solution (e.g. not being able to get a refund), dissatisfaction will increase. Reaching that point will lead them to actively engage in negative WOM and share it with their social network and potential consumers of the service/product (information forwarding) (Bach & Kim, 2012).

Sometimes consumer complaint behavior can reach the point where customers actually stop buying a service (Boote, 1998), which is an important part to consider within this research study. Therefore, a literature review about brand avoidance will be followed in the next subsection.

2.7 Brand Avoidance

The field of anti-consumption and more specifically the topic of brand avoidance is becoming more important and interesting to researchers, consumers and managers (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b). An increasing number of studies have been conducted regarding the area of anti-consumption (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Lee, Fernandez & Hyman, 2007; Oliva, Oliver & MacMillan, 1992; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006); whereas recent literature focusses on the area of brand avoidance (Kavaliauské & Simanaviciuté, 2015; Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2012). Researching the topic about why consumers avoid certain brands became crucial as previous literature focuses on dissatisfaction and anti-consumption of certain products or service categories rather than avoiding specific brands (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b).

Previous research provide no formal definition about brand avoidance; however, articles by Oliva, Oliver and MacMillan (1992) and Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) mention the term brand avoidance (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a). Oliva, Oliver and MacMillan (1992) study the concept of dissatisfaction and use the term brand avoidance synonymously with the term brand switching. In their study, they describe that satisfaction leads to brand loyalty whereas dissatisfaction leads to brand avoidance or brand switching. However, Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009a) mention that brand avoidance and switching may seem similar but are two different concepts; and therefore, brand avoidance highlights the deliberate rejection of brands. The article by Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) explores an anti-Starbucks discourse and mentions brand avoidance within that context as the incidents in which consumers consciously decide to reject a brand. Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) were the pioneers in providing a formal definition of brand avoidance “as a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand” (p.422).

Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009a) and Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) were also one of the first to provide a classification of the motives and aid understanding of why consumers avoid brands; thus, they came up with types or reasons for brand avoidance. The authors argue that previous research only focuses on the uni-dimensional approach to brand avoidance meaning that it usually highlights only singular, separate reasons; however, they wisely articulate that brand avoidance can be defined as multi-faceted phenomenon and includes many reasons for brand avoidance. At first three types of brand avoidance were distinguished (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a) which were later on added by an additional category (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b). The first reason motivating consumers to avoid brands is described as ‘Experiential Avoidance’ or ‘unmet expectations’ (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b). It basically outlines that consumers avoid brands that fail to meet their expectations and is applicable for both product and service brands. In the service sector, the main reason for unmet expectations is the poor quality of the service provider’s performance, e.g. carelessly and unprofessionally provided service. Moreover, the unpleasant store environment/the place in which the service takes place or the hassle/inconvenience of a failed consumption experience can contribute to brand avoidance (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b; Kavaliauské & Simanaviciuté, 2015).

The second reason for brand avoidance according to Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009a) and Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) can be ‘symbolic incongruence’ or ‘identity avoidance’. This occurs when consumers do not want to be associated with their negative perceived brand

meanings or value because consumers feel certain brands are inauthentic. Moreover, the authors argue that consumers do not identify themselves with the brand's 'symbolically unappealing promises' and thus avoids certain brands. Symbolic incongruence generally represents the symbolic meanings that consumers perceive from a brand and how those meanings contradict with their self-concept. Some brands may represent a negative reference group, a lack of authenticity or a loss of individually (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b).

'Moral avoidance' or 'ideological incompatibility' demonstrates the third reason for brand avoidance (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a). According to the authors consumers avoid certain brands which have a negative impact on society and think it is their moral duty to preserve societal values. The two sub-themes that emerged from the literature are: 'country of origin effect' and 'anti-hegemony'. According to them 'country of origin effect' refers to when consumers avoid brands due to a feeling of animosity toward a particular country and therefore refuse to buy or consume a brand originating from this country. 'Anti-hegemony' refers to when brands are being avoided by consumers' resistance against dominant and strong companies in order to prevent the development of monopolies (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a; Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b).

Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) expand their existing work with a fourth reason: 'deficit-value avoidance' or 'functionally inadequate promises', which can appear when consumers avoid brands as they think it is not worth it to pay more for low-quality products or unattractive design or package products. Other consumers do not buy premium brands because they feel a high cost brand product is not adding any value (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b). Even though the studies by Lee, Motion and Conroy, (2009a) and Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) provide different reasons for brand avoidance, the main limitations of both studies is that they include a relatively small amount of respondents and studies are not conducted within one product or service category; thus, further investigation and study should be done to increase their merit.

Most of the literature about brand avoidance is focusing on different product categories such as grocery products (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011), fashion or clothing products (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Kim, Choo & Yoon, 2013), software or genetically modified products (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2012) and less consider service companies and their brands. Even though brand avoidance research pay less attention to service brands, a few studies have been conducted and focuses on fast food or restaurant chains (Krishnamurthy & Kuruk, 2009; Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008), coffeehouse chains (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006) or banks (Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008).

Thus far, no research study has focused on brand avoidance in the airline industry; but even though literature of service categories is still limited it can be argued that there is evidence that brand avoidance reasons can be distinctive for different service categories' brands (Kavaliauské & Simanaviciuté, 2015).

2.8 Chapter Summary

Throughout the literature review, the researchers focused on the relationship between the consumer and the brand and how digitization affects this relationship. Previous research on anti-branding was important to study as it developed the research focus of this study. Through the growth in digitalization and the internet, consumer power and how the airline industry reacts to consumers has changed. Social media also greatly changed how consumers and brands interact and was also important to explore. Lastly, research into how consumers and brands interact was a main focus of the literature review; therefore, previous literature on the consumer brand relationship (CBR), brand hate, brand avoidance, service quality in the airline industry, customer dissatisfaction and consumer complaint behavior were all included to understand gaps in the previous literature and to develop the specific focus of this study. The next section will cover our methodological approach and cover how the study was conducted.

3 Methodology

This section will cover our argumentation and methodological reasoning of the study. First, we outline our research philosophy, strategy and design using a qualitative exploratory research method and an inductive reasoning and grounded theory approach. The research design outlines the use of a multi-case study and then further outlines how netnography was used in data collection. Lastly, the sampling methods and selection criteria, coding method and data analysis is covered.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The applied research philosophy aided the researcher in choosing the right research design and will enhance understanding of the approach for the study. It involves two ways of thinking: ontology, which deals with the nature of the study, and epistemology, which is concerned with the creation of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In terms of ontology, this study is subjectivist in nature or also called social constructionism, meaning that “social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 110). Within this research, online communities are being observed; therefore, they play an active role in the creation of the social phenomena. Moreover, this describes an ongoing process of social interaction where these social phenomena are in a constant state of revision (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The epistemological position for this study is described as interpretivism, which means understanding the world through examination the participant’s interpretation of the world. Therefore, we refuse the scientific model of objectivism, which describes the reality as external and objective (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Through netnography it will be ensured to understand the beliefs, attitudes and the perception of the observed communities.

3.2 Research Strategy

Seeing that the aim of this research is to study the hate relationship towards brands where literature and theories are relatively limited, the type of research is exploratory in nature. Bryman and Bell (2011) mention that a more exploratory approach is favored when “a researcher is interested in a topic on which no or virtually no research has been done in the past” (p. 35). This is the case within this research since current research and literature particularly pays attention to the positive relationship of brands, whereas studies of the negative aspects are still very limited and have often been neglected (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk,

2009; Avery & Fourier, 2011; Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015; Bailey, 2004; Romani et al., 2015). Qualitative studies are special in that they are interpretive, situational, and personalistic; furthermore, individual ideas as well as seeing them from different views in a unique context is a special characteristic of qualitative studies (Stake, 2010). Moreover, we believe a qualitative approach will be most applicable for this research as it is more subjective in nature. For this study, it is important to investigate less tangible aspects, like human perceptions, and according to Stake (2010) qualitative is primarily about human perceptions and understanding. It is crucial to understand the reasons for consumer's attitudes and opinions (Neville, 2007; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) and this study will quite heavily rely on consumer perceptions of a brand. As pointed out by Bryman and Bell (2011), words are a crucial characteristic for qualitative studies. Further to this, one of the greatest things about qualitative studies is there is no right or wrong way, which is irritate by Stake's (2010) statement "there is no one way of qualitative thinking" (p.31) and this will allow us as the researchers to change and adapt our research process as we study it.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) mention that within an inductive approach "researchers collect data and develop theory as a result of the data analysis" (p.124). This research has an inductive approach with theoretical reasoning since it is important to scan through literature to get a broader perspective about the topic and about what has already been written before and during data selection and "is typically associated with a qualitative research approach" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.13). Strauss and Corbin (1990) also agree that literature plays an important role in grounded theory approach. The Straussian view of grounded theory argues that "the researcher should make him or herself aware of previous work conducted in the general field of research before starting to generate his or her own theory" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p. 141). This study will follow a systematic grounded theory approach and by studying the data, theory will be developed. Grounded theory approach allows researchers to begin with an area of interest, and then through studying the material relevant data is able to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) meaning that the development of the theory will come from what is found in the data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Following the grounded theory approach, the data will be coded into different component parts and put into different categories and subcategories. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the data and concepts will be constantly compared (Bryman & Bell, 2011) as theory, data collection and analysis stand in a close relationship with one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Then the researchers will look to find a point where theoretical saturation is reached, meaning the point where further review of the data does not reveal more insight into the categories and concepts, and the point where adding more data is no longer illuminating the concept being studied

(Bryman & Bell, 2011). A systematic grounded theory approach will be followed, but as pointed out by Strauss & Corbin (1990), creativity is an important element as it “enables the researcher to ask pertinent questions of the data and to make the kind of comparisons that elicit from the data new insights into phenomenon and novel theoretical formulations” (p. 31); therefore, the researchers will also allow for some flexibility and uniqueness in the study as it helps create and support more theoretical development.

3.3 Research Design

For this research study and considering our social constructionism ontological position and interpretivism epistemological approach, a case study was chosen, which is generally used in qualitative and exploratory studies (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Case studies are defined as a strategy to explore a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2014) and is most commonly considered for how, what and why questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). As the research questions in this study are what questions, a case study is an appropriate research design; further to this, case studies allow researchers to explore real life events (Yin, 2009). In business research, an increasingly popular design is a multiple-case study, which is defined as the study of two or more cases for comparison (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Yin (2014) argues that multiple-case studies may be more powerful and preferable to generalize findings than single cases. Moreover, multiple-case studies can provide richness to the empirical material and add additional insights (Eisenhardt, 1989). The study will need to be a multi-case study as one case does not allow the researchers to examine the differences and similarities between different websites. Yin (2009) also outlines that case studies are best when behaviors cannot be manipulated. Since observations will be done online, the actions being studied will have already happened; therefore, making it nearly impossible for the researchers to influence the results.

For this study, we looked at three companies that have to deal with anti-branding on the internet. The reason we have chosen three case companies is since, according to Eisenhardt (1989), “researchers should stop adding cases when theoretical saturation is reached” (p.545) so to say that learning is minimal from a new case because conclusions have been seen before. After looking at the data gathered from the three companies and doing an initial analysis, the researchers concluded that theoretical saturation had been reached and no further cases were added. As pointed out by Bryman and Bell (2011) a multiple-case study can either involve several cases, looking at them each individually, or as a cross-sectional design where cases are compared to one another. Through studying the three case companies, it becomes clear that the study is more like a cross-sectional design. This is mainly

because this study focuses more on creating general findings while less considering the unique contexts of each of the three cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.3.1 Primary and Secondary Sources

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) secondary data is material that has already been collected, whereas primary data is defined as gathering new material particularly for that purpose. This research study focuses on primary data collected through netnography. Through collecting primary sources, researchers can make sure to collect data to answer the specific research question and the purpose of the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Collecting primary data for a qualitative study can be done through observations, interviews or focus groups (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). This study will focus on observations on the internet, or more specifically, netnography.

As it is important to understand theories and literature that has already been written about the love/hate relationship, a deep theoretical review based on secondary sources will be done. This will be achieved by studying reliable sources as peer-reviewed articles within our field of study, such as the consumer brand relationship, consumer power growth, brand hate and anti-branding accessed from the Lund University database.

3.4 Netnography

The researchers will use netnography to obtain primary data. Netnography is also referred to as ethnography on the internet, which is a relatively new qualitative research approach and aims “to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communication” (Kozinets, 2002 p. 62). The researcher hope to understand consumers feelings of brand hate; therefore, netnography, which uses the publicly available information of online forums and websites to understand the decision process of online consumer communities, is an appropriate method of data collection (Kozinets, 2002). The internet has made communication for consumers more transparent and “it provides a place where anti-brand consumers can connect with one another. Virtual communities involve a combination of virtual interaction, social imagination, and identity” (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010, p. 332). Through forums and message boards, customers can share their comments and experiences publicly with other consumers. Finding information online is easy and collection can happen very quickly within in a short study frame, which is a crucial aspect since data collection time is extremely important (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, “netnography is faster, simpler and less expensive than traditional ethnography and is more naturalistic and unobtrusive than focus groups or interviews” (Kozinets, 2002, p. 61). With only a few weeks to collect the data

on a low student budget, netnography is the most logical form of data collection. Since this study is about the behaviors, thoughts, and actions of the participants, it would be best to study participants with no or as little interaction as possible. Netnography allows this to happen, to observe and study people naturally behave without obstruction (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography's accessibility, time-saving capabilities, and flexibility give it great strengths over other more traditional techniques (Xun and Reynolds, 2009). Further to this, evidence has shown that many people feel more comfortable sharing their true feelings online than in real life (Xun and Reynolds, 2009), which will allow the researchers to have the truest form of data.

3.4.1 Ethical Dimensions of Netnography

Using netnography as a method involves ethical concerns that researchers need to be aware of. As stated by Kozinets (2002, p. 65), "the consumers who originally created the data do not necessarily intend or welcome the data's use in research representations". This is a real risk, as some information is seen as sensitive and guidelines on consent are very unclear (Kozinets, 2002). Although a general and clear approach on how to deal with these ethical issues has not been developed yet, within this study the researchers act as ethically as possible to insure participants are treated fairly (Kozinets, R., 2002; Xun & Reynolds, 2010). The best way to do this is to make ourselves aware of the ethical concerns in any given situation and understand all implications of our choices (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Thus, the researchers in this study will take the advice of industry experts and follow site policies, as some have rules and regulations on limits to privacy (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and will only take information that is publicly available to us. Further to this, any names or contact information that is included in the messages gathered for analysis will be left out to allow those entrants to remain anonymous.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Sampling Methods & Selection Criteria

Anti-brand websites aim to criticize the brand through negative communication and easy to remember domains (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). In this research study, we will focus on anti-branding websites specifically. There are other outlets where consumers express their anger toward companies, such as social media, online forums, blogs and consumer review websites, but anti-branding websites are unique in that they are positioning themselves in a way that is directly against a specific brand (Bailey, 2004; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). In choosing the appropriate anti-branding websites for the study, the focus was on finding

companies that had a strong brand presence in a global sense. This is because strong brands are more likely to become targets of consumer activism through anti-brand websites (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Kucuk, 2008).

Previous research focuses primarily on strong brands or industry leaders across multiple industries (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Kucuk, 2008; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Romani et. al., 2015) or they focus on a single case corporation (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010) without the ability to draw cross-company comparisons within one industry. This research paper will aim to draw conclusions of a particular global service industry by focusing on the airline industry and anti-branding websites of airline companies. According to Dolinsky (1994) organizations that provide services are more likely to be targeted with complaints since services are highly variable and heterogeneous. Moreover, “such variation is likely to give rise to more perceived problems and, hence, more customer complaints” (Dolinsky, 1994, p. 27). The airline industry has become more competitive and consumers’ expectations have been steadily on the rise (Chen & Hu, 2013).

To first select the anti-brand websites to study, a set of criteria was made and used to search for the most appropriate sites. Using the Skytrax World's Top 100 Airlines in 2015 list (Skytrax, 2016) as a guidelines for airlines that may have anti-branding websites, the researchers checked the 100 top airlines for anti-branding websites by searching in Google *company name sucks* and *I hate company name*. Only actual anti-brand websites were considered, meaning blogs, social media accounts, or other complaint forums were not considered; further to this, the company name needed to appear in some form or another in the domain name of the anti-branding site. This was because the researchers aimed to focus on anti-branding sites specifically, and as Kucuk (2008) explains, “anti-brand sites purposefully use the targeted corporation’s brand name in their domain name to insult the corporation’s brand identity and to express their anger and frustrations while entertaining and educating consumers and audiences” (p. 210-211). The airlines used for the study also needed to be international carriers, as part of this study was on gaining a more international group of entrants. The aim with picking companies was also to choose companies with similar desired brand identities, saw themselves as luxury airlines and had similar business ideals on service quality; thus, we narrowed down the list by excluding low cost carrier anti-branding websites. Further to this, the anti-branding website had to appear on the first page of the Google results, meaning a website that has high viewership when searched. The researchers recognize that other anti-branding websites may exist in other languages, but for this study the data needed to be in English; therefore, searches in Google were only done in English and any other languages were not

considered. Lastly, we chose anti-branding websites that were the most recently active. Some airlines did have anti-brand sites, but they were inactive for many years, had only one or two stories, or the forum did not work. From this, the three anti-branding websites that best fit the criteria above were <http://britishairwayssucks.org> (British Airways Anti-brand Website), <http://untied.com/> (United Airlines Anti-brand Website) and whyaircanadasucks.com (Air Canada's Anti-brand Website).

3.5.2 Conducting Netnography

Within netnography data collection, two different types of data are distinguished: "(1) the data the researchers directly copy from the computer-mediated communications of online community members and (2) the data the researchers inscribe regarding their observations of the community and its members, interactions, and meanings" (Kozinets, 2002, p. 63). This research study focuses on the first form which is also referred to as archival netnographic data or simple observation study, which includes no involvement of the researchers and no knowledge of the airline companies and consumers that they were being observed (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Kozinets, 2010).

Pulling the most recent forum entries available, the researchers pulled approximately 50 pages of data from each of these three anti-branding sites. This was done as a measurement scale because the number of actual posts and dates of the entries varied from site to site, as some posts were longer than others and some sites were more active than others. Since this is uncontrollable in a netnography study, the aim was to gather 50 pages of actual text from each website. The 150 pages of text represented 192 posts of anti-United Airlines, 85 posts of anti-British Airways and 70 posts of anti-Air Canada.

The text was copied and demonstrated in a Microsoft Excel table which made both the data analysis and the coding procedure easier for the researchers. Further to the complaint entries taken from the anti-brand websites, website owners or hosts were contacted and asked a few simple questions on their motivations for creating the website. This allows the researchers to gain more knowledge for the research objective and to better understand motives and the reasons why someone would create an anti-branding website.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Coding Method

As previously discussed, a grounded theory approach was used for coding of the data and because of this approach, the data was gone over many times and further broken down into codes and categories until saturation was reached (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Throughout the coding process, there was a constant movement between data, codes, theory, and research question which allowed the theory and ideas to continually emerge and develop (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Relationships between codes were also explored so to further develop and support new theories and ideas (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Even though many coding computer programs (or Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software, CAQDAS) can be used and assist researchers in qualitative data analysis with complex and large data sets; this research study was employed manually. According to Kozinets (2010) manual data analysis works efficiently when the dataset is relative small and the researchers are organized and familiar with the field notes, which applies to this study. Moreover, coding by hand can be done with a personal and a much more detail oriented approach to the research (Kozinets, 2010).

An 'Open Coding' process, which Strauss & Corbin (1990) define as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (p. 61) and an 'Axial Coding' process, which is "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (p. 96) were both used in coding the data. 'Open Coding' requires asking questions about the data and analyzing the similarities or differences between different events and incidents and then comparing those phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and this was done in the first part of coding the data. To begin, data was printed out and researches read over the data to understand the first level of categories that emerged, which was guided by our literature review. Quite quickly we found that two main categories emerged: Reason for making the entry or their motivation for the communication, and the reason for the complaint or their story of what happened. From here these categories were further broken down into different codes, which are outlined in table 3-1.

CATEGORIES	CODE WORDS
<i>Reason for making entry/ their motivation for the communication on the anti- branding site</i>	Seeks compensation
	Never use company again and just sharing their story
	Tried Contact but did not gain wanted result
	Wants company to contact them
<i>Reason for complaint/ their story of what happened</i>	Felt neglected or ignored
	Customer service complaint
	Poor overall experience
	Flight cancelled or delayed
	Flight attendant complaint
	Negative in flight experience
	Downgraded or seat issue
	Baggage issue
	Special circumstance

Table 3-1 First level of data analysis and the categories and codes pulled from the data

Further to this, more categories relating to those first few categories began to develop and were pulled out of the data. Relating to these first few categories and after careful review of theory on brand hate, more categories relating to emotional characteristics were created. These being words describing the airline, and descriptive feeling or emotional words entrants used to describe how they felt. Lastly, a final category was created for sharing, both to friends and family and on social media as the researchers felt it was relevant to include as there is growing research and theories on consumers sharing their stories publicly. The data was read over and then re-checked multiple times. Coding was done using Microsoft Excel by putting a “yes” in all the code word cells that were applicable for that post, then data could be easily filtered and summarized by just filtering out all the blank cells and only showing the “yes” cells. For the words describing the airline and descriptive feeling categories, the researchers did not assume or put a “yes” in the column unless the complaint writer used that specific word. Meaning each and every word that complaint writers used to describe their feelings about the airline or the emotions they felt were included in the study. Giving the study the most true and unaltered findings in these categories. Table 3-2 shows the final account of all categories and code words in each category.

CATEGORIES	CODE WORDS		
<i>Reason for making entry/ their motivation for the communication on the anti- branding site</i>	Seeks compensation		
	Never use company again and just sharing their story		
	Tried Contact but did not gain wanted result		
	Wants company to contact them		
<i>Reason for complaint/ their story of what happened</i>	Felt neglected or ignored		
	Customer service complaint		
	Poor overall experience		
	Flight cancelled or delayed		
	Flight attendant complaint		
	Negative in flight experience		
	Downgraded or seat issue		
	Baggage issue		
	Special circumstance		
<i>Words describing the airline</i>	Rude	Became defensive	
	Does not care (not considerate)	Unhelpful	
	Unprofessional	Unfriendly	
	Shameful	Pathetic	
	Obnoxious	Disgraceful	
	Exploit customers	Arrogant	
	Greedy	Misleading	
	Miserable	Irresponsible	
	Lazy	Take customers for granted	
	Impolite	Impersonal	
	Lied	Bad attitude	
	Unfair	Incompetent	
	Lousy	Angry	
	Aggressive	No empathy	
	Unreliable	Impatient	
	Insulting	Dismissive	
	Deplorable	Heartless	
	Unreasonable	Embarrassment	
	Mean	Cruel	
	Atrocious	No apology	
	Horrendous	Unpleasant	
	Lack of awareness	Lack of understanding	
	Unprepared	Not trustworthy	
	Condescending	Harsh	
	Inefficient	Horrible	
	Terrible	Disaster	
	Mess	Idiots	
	Outrageous	Suck	
	Nasty	Disorganized	
	Ridiculous	Grumpy	
	Shabby	Swearing	
	Bad	Worst	
	Intolerable	Disgrace	
	Inconsiderate	Abomination	
	Not acceptable	Cheating	
	Awful	Discriminated	
	<i>Descriptive feeling words</i>	Angry	Mad

Disgust	Hate
Disappointed	Upset
Sad	Embarrassed
Dissatisfied	Humiliated
Unhappy	Mistreated
Frustrated	Disrespected
Livid	Appalling
Infuriated	Mortified
Annoyed	Shocked
Discouraged	Felt threatened
Regret	Loathe
Displeased	Ticked off/pissed off
Disregarded	Miserable
Disheartening	Scared
Painful	Harassed
Stressful	Confused
Insulted	Unbearable
Horrified	Cheated
Brutal	Furious
Devastated	
Sharing	Shared on social media
	Shared with Family and Friends

Table 3-2 Final table of all categories and codes pulled from the data

3.6.2 Analysis Development

Once the researchers felt that the data had been fully explored and developed the analysis was developed. Each company was analyzed separately, but also together to gain an overall understanding of the data. Calculations were done to assess each category and discover which code words were used most/least by entrants. More specifically, the number of “yes” entries were added up for each category. This data was then put into tables so the researchers could easily view the overall findings, rather than having to sort through the entire Microsoft Excel document. The tables acted as summaries and are located in the appendix as a reference for the reader. Following this, the researchers used the data and highlighted certain text that spoke well to the different attitudes and feelings brought up by those writing the complaints. These ‘excerpts’ as you could call them, were used to support the analysis and help the reader understand exactly what the data was saying. After this, two themes emerged and were further analyzed. These themes were then compared to one another and the relationship between different categories was explored. This helped the researchers draw conclusion and compare different categories to one another. These relationship tables are included in the thesis as they help the reader understand the differences between the two themes. Lastly, the researchers analyzed the information from the anti-branding site owners.

This last part of the study added another dimension to the analysis and aimed to answer the last research question.

In conclusion, the methodological approach described above was followed to create and build the best theoretical contribution possible and answer the specific research questions discussed in the introduction. In the next section, the findings and analysis of the data is discussed and gone through in detail to frame the theoretical contribution of the study.

4 Findings & Analysis

This section will present our empirical material and analysis. Firstly, the categories which were developed through our data analysis will be discussed. Our findings will be supported by providing 'excerpts' of the posts. Secondly, the two main themes that emerged will be presented and discussed. Lastly, the relationships between categories and code words will be shown.

Throughout the analysis, the researchers refer to each anti-brand website as either anti-British Airways, anti-Air Canada or anti-United Airlines. Readers should be aware that these names actually mean each company's anti-branding website being studied and refer to the data from these websites. These being <http://britishairwayssucks.org> (British Airways Anti-brand Website), <http://untied.com/> (United Airlines Anti-brand Website) and whyaircanadasucks.com (Air Canada's Anti-brand Website).

4.1 Reason for Making the Entry

As previously discussed, the reason for making the entry/the reason for their communication was one of the first categories discovered upon review of the data. Understanding what lead people to post on an anti-branding website is crucial in gaining insight into their motivations. Exploring their incentives and goals of the entry allows multiple stakeholders to understand the anti-branding phenomenon more clearly.

From the data analyzed, it is clear that desire for compensation is the most common goal for consumers across all three airlines. Many consumers felt that the company had not followed through to their desired level, in one way or another, and many consumers were simply trying to get their money back. Never use company again was close behind, which highlights that many consumers do go on these anti-branding websites when they are feeling more angry and want to get back at the company or share their story, but are not necessarily concerned with getting their money back. This is consistent with the findings of Grégoire and Fisher (2007), who found there is a split after perceived betrayal between either 'Demand for Reparations' or 'Retaliating Behaviors'. Tried contact also had a high number of posts. This information suggests that many consumers did first try to reach out to companies, and then after getting no response and as a secondary response, went onto the anti-branding website. This shows that a lot of these posts could have been avoided if companies had better systems in place to respond to customers. To further examine these different phenomenon, we break down the

three airlines to examine each one separately and compare them. The data shows many similarities but also some differences when comparing the three. anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada had the most similarities and many posts included either trying to contact the company or never using that company again. anti-United Airlines had seeks compensation as its highest goal for complaint writers. The next sections will further analyze each of the categories in the reason for making the entry category.

4.1.1 Tried Contact and Wants to be Contacted

By looking at these two similar categories, the data shows that many consumers did try to contact the company directly, and have either not gotten a response, or are unhappy with the response. For both anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada, tried contact was the most commonly mentioned. 44% of anti-British Airways posts and 47% of anti-Air Canada posts mentioned they had tried to contact the company directly, but wants to be contacted is much lower with only a few mentions between the two websites. What is interesting is tried contact is not as high with anti-United Airlines, with only 13%, but wants to be contacted by the company is higher for anti-United Airlines with 23%. This shows a big difference between the motivations for response between anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada, which were quite similar, and Anti-United Airlines.

By studying the language complaint writer's use, it is easy to see that many consumers are frustrated with not being able to get ahold of the company, specifically over the phone, and many find the long wait times unacceptable:

"I've sent numerous emails to executives, airports, customer relations...Their phone lines... well, I might aswell just throw my money down the drain, as they never pick up and actually cut you off after saying lines are busy and to call back at a more convenient time..." (#40, anti-British Airways)

"I called 10 times in one week. each time i was holding or at least 15 minutes. no answer. absolutely no answer. Very very annoying. Im astonished that such a huge company cant get their people to answer a XXX phone call." (#46, anti-British Airways)

"I can not even get one of your agents on the phone. When I finally did when the agent could not answer my question she hung up on me!!! Yes after waiting on hold for 30 minutes. This is the worst experience ever." (#39, anti-Air Canada)

Many writers also seem to believe that the company reviews this information, and this is another way for them to try get into contact with someone at the company. Many customers

see this as a way to get the company to respond to them, and some even threaten that if they do not receive a response, they will take the matter further or no longer use the airline:

“I haven’t received a reply from you... If I don’t hear from you another week, I will take this to small claims court” (#14, anti-United Airlines).

“Should you choose to ignore this email my friends and I are intent on pursuing this to a much further extent” (#31, anti-United Airlines)

“i will look forward for any response from united airline so can keep my believe that it's one of the best airlines” (#174, anti-United Airlines)

This suggests that many of these posts could be avoided by having better systems in place so that customers can reach the company directly. These findings agree with Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) findings that company quick responses can defuse the desire for revenge. A staggering number have tried to contact someone previously, suggesting these posts could be avoided. Further to this, the fact that tried contact is so much higher than wants to be contacted for anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada further illustrates this fact. With anti-United Airlines, even though the wants company to contact them is higher than tried contact, many still had tried contact but quite a few still wanted the company to reach out to them. This research is consistent with Harrison-Walker (2001) researcher that many had tried contact but very few got responses. Further to this, the findings here agree with Harrison-Walker (2001), Kucuk (2008) and Romani et al. (2015) that companies should not ignore customer complaints and should facilitate better ways for consumers to complain directly to the company. Many of the complaint writers did try to contact companies directly, and after getting no response, they turn to these anti-branding websites out of anger or desperation to get ahold of anyone that will hear them. They quite simply just want to be able to get ahold of someone that can help them with their issue.

4.1.2 Seeks Compensation

Seeks compensation was very high for anti-United Airlines, with 42% of posts seeking compensation and when looking at the data from the three sites together, we see that seeks compensation was the highest reason for complaints being written. Many of these consumers have felt dissatisfied or wronged in one way or another, and now want their money back and their lack of satisfaction on the matter, has led them to the anti-branding site:

"I WANT MY MONEY BACK you lying, cheating, crooks. I will not stop until we get our money back" (#2, anti-United Airlines)

"this ordeal was a horrible experience and I believe that I should have some compensation for my family and I" (#126, anti-United Airlines)

Many consumers also feel that it is the company's duty and responsibility to repay them:

"In a special situation like this, I would expect BA to take ownership of their mistake and go above and beyond and compensate me for the 91 Euros that I am asking for" (#21, anti-British Airways)

"We think it is extremely reasonable we be compensated for this and the mistreatment and neglect we received from your employees" (#31, anti-United Airlines)

Some complainants even threaten their use of the airline if they do not receive compensation:

"I just feel like there is a hassle every time I fly with united now and do not enjoy it anymore but would like to continue to fly with united if i'm compensated and treated right for all my inconveniences and all the delay issues are solved" (#32, anti-United Airlines)

"I will not use United again nor will I recommend to anyone, if I am not compensated...." (#38, anti-United Airlines)

Again these entries suggest that these posts could be avoided if companies had better systems in place for compensation requests. A lot of customers are simply trying to get their money back for seat issues, flight delays, or other customer service issues. This suggestion agrees with the study conducted by Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) who mention that customers who seek for redress should be satisfied by providing better complaint handling policies.

4.1.3 Never use Company Again

The never use company again posts have been fascinating in this research study. These posts give special insight and explanation into the motives and feelings consumers have when they are talking about a company and a brand in such a hateful way. With anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada, the numbers of never use company again posts were very similar with 41% posts for anti-British Airways and 40% for anti-Air Canada. anti-United Airlines was less with 18%, as anti-United Airlines posts were more about seeking compensation than swearing of that company all together. By looking at the language used, one is able to understand more clearly the emotions and feelings consumers go through when reaching a point where they would no longer use that company. These findings are coherent with Boote (1998) who

explains 'Exit' as one type of complaint behavior that refers to a "consumer who decides not to buy a product or service again..." (142) and Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b, p. 422) who define brand avoidance "as a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand":

*"My experience with United up to this point was great but after today I will never fly united.
You lost my business for life"* (#116, anti-United Airlines)

"Never again will I fly with Air Idiots They give Canada a bad name" (#3, anti-Air Canada)

*"From the disaster you have made of our holiday, we will never entrust our travel
arrangements to you again ... We suggest your slogan should be British Airways Takes No
Care of You"* (#1, anti-British Airways)

Many users also express not only will they not fly with that company again, they will make sure to share their story with others and warn them of the mistreatment they have received from the company. This agrees with Romani et. al. (2015) study in that feelings of hate can be a trigger or stimulus to action:

*"I would not recommend to anybody or anyone to ever use united I have never experienced
such a lousy service with the airlines"* (#190, anti-United Airlines)

*"Air Canada is my cause now, & I'll make sure that no one I know flies Air Canada for any
reason again."* (#16, anti-Air Canada)

Many also use more expressive and aggressive language when saying that they will not use the company again:

"I will never ever fly Air Canada again. Smug, arrogant thieves!" (#34, anti-Air Canada)

"Brutal experience and consistently miserable staff. Never, ever, again" (#10, anti-Air
Canada)

"If anything happens I am going to sue! [...] I will never fly united again. This was terrible..."
(#175, anti-United Airlines)

Many said they would even take extra measures to avoid the company all together, which shows the extent to which consumers are willing to go out of their way just to avoid the company:

*"I will NEVER fly BA again, in fact I would rather take a 16 hour flight via Abu Dhabi or
another Middle Eastern Country on a much comfier airline that actually offers proper service*

that a shorted 10 hour flight with unprofessional British Airways and their incompetent staff!"
(#65, anti-British Airways)

"Will never travel British Airways again... not even if the ticket is free... they can keep it" (#79,
anti-British Airways)

*"I will never fly again, i prefer to pay 3 times more that to be treated like i was. And will make
sure none of my family or friends do it"* (#6, anti-Air Canada)

In the next sections, the analysis will further explore these emotions, feelings and actions to aid understanding of what actually happened and the reason for the complaint.

4.2 What Happened or Reason for Complaint

As already mentioned, another category that emerged through the data analysis was what happened or the reason for complaint. The complaint reasons relate to the service quality dimensions of the SERQUAL model for the airline industry provided by Hussain, Nasser & Hussain (2015). Studying the complaint reasons is a crucial aspect to understand the causes of customer dissatisfaction and the reason for making the complaint on anti-branding websites.

The findings from all airlines combined show that the top three reasons for customer complaints are customer service complaint, flights cancelled or delayed and baggage issues. Customer service complaints were mentioned in over half of the posts studied, with 57% or 198 posts out of the 347. Other reasons that customers complained about included feeling neglected or ignored, poor overall travel experience, getting downgraded or having a seat issue, negative in flight experience (the plane interior, in-flight meal or in-flight entertainment), flight attendant complaint and special circumstance (racism, elderly people, traveling as a family, pregnancy, disabled people). These findings shows that it is not a special circumstance or random experience of just one customer that people are upset about, but many of the customer complaints are customer service and company performance mistakes.

Even when comparing the companies to one another, customer service complaint is the most common for each one, with anti-Air Canada having the highest percentage of 80% (56 posts). Flight cancelled or delayed is the second top reason for anti-Air Canada and anti-United Airlines, both having 39%. Interestingly, the top second reason for anti-British Airways is downgraded or seat issue, which accounts for 20%; however, downgraded or seat issue is much lower for anti-Air Canada (9%) and anti-United Airlines (9%). Flights being cancelled or delayed and baggage issues were the next biggest source of complaints for anti-United

Airlines. Flights being cancelled or delayed and poor overall experience were the next biggest sources of complaints for anti-Air Canada, and baggage issues was anti-British Airways third biggest issue.

Special circumstance is the least mentioned complaint reason for anti-British Airways (1%) and anti-Air Canada (1%), but is much higher for anti-United Airlines (12%). This category includes complaints regarding disabled people, elderly people and racism, which were the most commonly mentioned. Out of these three, racism complaints took of the majority with 7% and is highlighted the two examples below:

“i finally walked my way to get my name on the flight but this came with the price of letting people racially insult me, treat me like the last dirt on earth.” (#46, anti-United Airlines)

“She treated every other Caucasian customer with the upmost respect, but when dealing with me (half African American) she decided to show her true colors. United needs to address this racist issue immediately.” (#135, anti-United Airlines)

4.2.1 Consumer Service Complaint

Overall, the majority of customers complained about customer service issues and as previously stated, this was talked about the most on the anti-Air Canada site. This shows that customers feel mostly neglected and wronged on some level by the company's lack of customer service.

Through the literature review, it became clear that providing high quality service has become a crucial aspect within the service industry, and especially in the airline industry (Baker, 2013; Park, Robertson & Wu, 2005). The findings show that the three case airlines are lacking in providing high quality service as consumers are complaining about important quality aspects. The founded reasons can be categorized as complaints against the service quality dimensions of the SERQUAL model for the airline industry provided by Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015). The findings show that the three airlines are not considering all service quality dimensions presented by Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) and are therefore not reaching customer satisfaction.

The finding customer service complaint shows that companies are not providing prompt service and the willingness to help passengers which is however an important service

dimension called 'responsiveness' mentioned by Bebeko's (2000). People express their anger in regards to customer service, which is illustrated by the following examples:

"As you can guess we are all EXTREMELY frustrated with your customer service." (#110, anti-United Airlines)

"The lack of customer service was atrocious." (#21, anti-British Airways)

"Air Canada has the worst customer service." (#57, anti-Air Canada)

The findings show that customer service complaint can be defined as a reason to criticize the willingness to help, the attention to passengers' needs, courtesy towards customers and the employees' ability in providing service (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015). It becomes apparent that consumers complain about the lack of help, politeness and attention provided by the employees:

"I have never been treated so badly there wasn't an ounce of empathy or concern for the customers." (#95, anti-United Airlines)

"At every turn, we were treated with arrogant disregard and given no sympathy whatsoever." (#19, anti-Air Canada)

"Horrible help and absolutely no reimbursement. I couldn't ever imagine customer service would ever be this bad until now" (#33, anti-Air Canada)

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) service is considered of high quality if the perceived service quality is consistent with the customer's expectations and vice versa. The findings are in line with that statement as it shows that the service perceived is lower than expected, which leads to an experience of low service quality and to customer dissatisfaction or customer complaints (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). These findings show that customers are dissatisfied with the customer service received, since they communicate that they expected higher quality. Moreover, customers mention that they expect the airline companies to improve their customer service in order to raise customer satisfaction and further usage of the brands:

"This is yet another mistake that has come from your customer service department and I am not going to just let yet another mistake go by. I am also prepared to COMPLETELY STOP using your airline as I expect quality customer service that I don't have to continue checking to make sure they do their jobs correctly." (#50, anti-United Airlines)

“I would love to see if the United Airlines can improve its customer service. Otherwise, your customer complaints will increase drastically for sure and passengers will pick other excellent airlines like Delta, JetBlue, or even American Airlines.” (#147, anti-United Airlines)

“I fear they just don’t care and will continue to “no” customer service. I would like to see them raise it to “minimum” customer service as a start.” (#23, anti-Air Canada)

The findings show that entries could have been avoided by improving customer service which is in line with Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes’ (1995) study who mention that training employees to respond with courtesy and respect helps maintain customers.

4.2.2 Flight Cancelled or Delayed

The findings agree with Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes’ (1995) study who mention that reasons that are perceived controllable and avoidable will prompt consumers to engage in negative word-of-mouth or complaint behavior; whereas, the reason flight cancelled or delayed may sometimes be unavoidable. Even though customers are aware that airline companies have less control over flights being cancelled or delayed, companies need to make sure to update passengers in case of any flight change or cancellation, which is in line with the service quality dimension ‘Responsiveness’ provided by Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) and is further reiterated by complainants:

“ONCE AGAIN I AM NOT UPSET ABOUT THE DELAYED FLIGHT!!! I FLY ALL THE TIME AND I’M AWARE OF FLIGHT DELAYS. MY FRUSTRATIONS ARE FOLLOWING:

- NO EMAIL AND EXPLANATION AS TO FLIGHT GOT DELAYED AND WHY ?*
- NO DIRECTIVES TO HELP CUSTOMERS WHO ARE NOW STUCK IN ANOTHER COUNTRY NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO NEXT.” (#57, anti-Air Canada)*

4.2.3 Baggage Issue

The complaint reason baggage issue is mostly related to lost luggage or baggage mishandling. According to Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) safety and security is an important aspect for customers when traveling with an airplane and include not only the passenger’s safety but also the safety of someone’s luggage. The findings show that customers are very concerned about missing luggage and their personal belongings as they express it their concerns in detail. Complaining customers are afraid of not getting back their personal belongings as it seems irreplaceable for them, whereas others are angry about their luggage getting damaged:

“The total value of my belongings inside my luggage is more than double what my insurance are able to pay out. I have certain items inside which are completely irreplaceable.” (#28, anti-United Airlines)

“I only wish I had been made aware of its abysmal track record in baggage handling before I trusted them with my personal affects and Christmas gifts. BA thanks for ruining xmas.” (#6, anti-British Airways)

“I haven’t got my stuff back and it’s been a week. I have extremely important medications in that bag and that still doesn’t hurry them up. The BAGGAGE SERVICE is crap.” (#33, anti-Air Canada)

Besides those mentioned reasons in detail, customers complained about other service issues such as negative in-flight experience (the plane interior, in-flight meal or in-flight entertainment):

“In flight entertainment reminds me of 2006. No movie or video streaming in even a limited way.” (#64, anti-United Airlines)

Others complained about a certain flight attendant and the behavior of that specific person:

“The lead flight attendant/purser of this trip was extremely rude.” (#97, anti-United)

Moreover, some customer felt neglected or ignored or the complaint was due to the fact of getting downgraded or having a seat issue:

“He was ignored by all the other staff when he tried to speak to them and explain our situation” (#67, anti-Air Canada)

“I was downgraded against my will ... due to BA’s aggressive overselling of seats and my repeated demands for compensation produced no results” (#28, anti-British Airways)

As previously mentioned, many consumers were upset about multiple aspects of the service received. These findings are consistent with Harrison-Walker (2001) who mentions that not only one aspect of service issue angered people but multiple service issues.

4.3 Negative Words Describing the Airline

After the initial analysis of the first two categories described above, a category describing the emotional aspect of customers’ dissatisfaction was created. This category further explores

consumer's anger and dissatisfaction with the airline. In sum, 72 distinctive words were found highlighting the different nuances and meanings of the words.

The range of language used by customers is quite extensive. The findings from all airlines combined show that rude and unhelpful were the most commonly used words, which both had 53 mentions. Does not care was next with 45, worst had 25, no apology had 20, ridiculous had 15, unprofessional had 14, and horrible and shameful both had 10 posts. No empathy had 9, bad attitude and terrible had 8, incompetent and arrogant had 7, unfriendly, disgraceful, misleading, lied, swearing, and bad all had 6, pathetic and suck had 5, insulting and disaster had 4, person became defensive, miserable, impolite, unfair, dismissive, atrocious, mess, not acceptable all had 3, lazy, lousy, aggressive, heartless, unreasonable, embarrassment, mean, horrendous, lack of awareness, lack of understanding, not trustworthy, inefficient and disgrace all had 2, obnoxious, exploit customers, greedy, irresponsible, taking customers for granted, impersonal, angry, unreliable, impatient, deplorable, cruel, unpleasant, unprepared, condescending, harsh, idiots, outrageous, nasty, disorganized, grumpy, shabby, intolerable, inconsiderate, abomination, cheating and awful were only used once.

It is interesting that rude and unhelpful are the most commonly used to describe the airline's staff, and is consistent with previous findings that many consumers are upset about the treatment and customer service they received. These findings are consistent with the study by Harrison-Walker (2001) who also found that the most common reason for customer complaint on anti-branding websites is employee rudeness. The examples below illustrate how and in which context customer used the word rude:

"She was not only rude but seemed physically frustrated that I was bothering her with this matter. ...I felt she was extremely rude and inefficient at finding an alternative flight." (#141, anti-United Airlines)

"The agents are rude and grumpy (Get another job if you don't like what you do)." (#35, anti-British Airways)

"Not to mention that the staff are the rudest people I've ever dealt with." (#60, anti-Air Canada)

Moreover, customers mention the word unhelpful particularly regarding the staff as well, for example:

"When I asked in Mexico for the form the United people in Cancun had no idea and of no help. Not getting any help from the phone calls I have made." (#105, anti-United Airlines)

“This is shocking. Nobody to help; being ignored.” (#29, anti-Air Canada)

Furthermore, writers express their dissatisfaction with the airline in stating they do not care about the customers:

“I just feel like more care should have been given! (#56, anti-United Airlines)

“Because BA absolutely does not give a XXX about its passengers in this regard.” (#26, anti-British Airways)

By looking at all three companies individually, rude and the company does not care were the most commonly mentioned. For anti-British Airways, the top 3 were worst, rude and does not care. For anti-United Airlines, it was rude, unhelpful and does not care. Finally for anti-Air Canada it was unhelpful, does not care and rude. Customers describe employees as being rude and unhelpful and these feelings strengthen their disappointment with the company:

“The lady at the door was very rude and said she has no time to help us we needed to go to customer service.” (#12, anti-United Airlines)

“the agents at the ticket counter were extremely rude and unhelpful.” (#192, anti-United Airlines)

Interestingly, the word worst is used the most for anti-British Airways; however this word relates more to the negative experience of the airline in general and is not used when discussing staff shortcomings:

“I have to say, British Airways has been definitely the worst so far.” (#41, anti-British Airways)

“it was the worst 24 hours of my life.” (#48, anti-British Airways)

These findings are consistent with those of Harrison-Walker (2001) in which consumers are upset with many aspects of customer service, and further to this, many consumers see these issues as avoidable, which then prompts them to engage in anti-branding activities.

4.4 Descriptive Feeling Words

Another major area of study was to discover the descriptive feeling words people used in their messages. As mentioned in the methodology, the researchers did not assume or put a “yes” in the column unless the complaint writer used that specific word. What is interesting, is in the 347 posts, complaint writers use different descriptive feeling words 257 times.

The findings from all airlines combined show mistreated is the most commonly used word with 40 consumers mentioning that they felt mistreated. Next was disappointed with 27, frustrated with 24, disrespected and disgust with 19, upset with 15, unhappy with 13 and appalling with 12. Further to this, angry had 9, stressful had 7, disregarded and regret had 5, ticked off or pissed off had 4, embarrassed, humiliated, annoyed, felt threatened, scared and painful all had 3, hate, schooled, discouraged, displeased and harassed had 2, and devastated, furious, mad, brutal, cheated, horrified, unbearable, insulted, confused, disheartened, miserable, loathe, mortified, infuriated and livid were only used once. We can further see the similarities and differences by breaking down the most used words by airline.

When looking at the three airlines separately there is some deviation of the most used words, anti-United Airlines and anti-Air Canada both had mistreated and frustrated with quite higher numbers:

“I have never been treated so badly there wasn’t an ounce of empathy or concern for the customers” (#95, anti-United Airlines)

“I have never in my life been as mistreated as I was by Air Canada [...] We were extremely embarrassed and I missed my doctor’s appointment. Air Canada has caused us a great deal of stress both financially and mentally” (#67, anti-Air Canada)

“we are all EXTREMELY frustrated with your customer service” (#110, anti-United Airlines)

Anti-Air Canada and anti-British Airways had disgust as a major feeling, and lastly disappointed was another feeling expressed quite a bit:

“They are a complete and utter disgrace! I have received nothing but a completely disgusting 'service' from this so called 'superior' airline” (#40, anti-British Airways)

“For these reasons, we are very disappointed with the service we received and will no longer fly with United. We felt it appropriate to escalate the matter because no one should be trapped on board one of your flights and mistreated by your crew” (#119, anti-United Airlines)

Between the three, the words used are quite similar, showing that consumers writing the posts had similar feelings about the mistreatment they felt. By reviewing some of the language used by the writers, we can further explore and understand how they felt and their emotions they went through:

"I feel like I've been misled, cheated, and duped in an effort of BA to extort further cash, using my son as a tool. It is truly shameful and disgusting behavior" (#32, anti-British Airways)

"I have to say I am appalled and in disbelief at the service that I encountered with Air Canada this past February ... I was unbelievably insulted and appalled at the behaviour of your employee" (#27, anti-Air Canada)

The number of examples showing customers feelings is endless and most consumers express their feelings in their posts. What is very interesting, is the range of language used by writers, as seen from the above examples consumers use quite a few words in each post to describe their feelings. What is more, is the words that are used most commonly are not ones that have been focused on in previous literature. Kavaliauské and Simanavičiūtė (2015) studied dislike, anger, worry and embarrassment. Romani et. al. (2015) looked at disgust, anger/fear and contempt. Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2012) examined six emotions: anger: discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness and worry. The findings of this study are more consistent with the findings of Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2012), who found that worry and sadness do not lead to much action and embarrassment leads to little action. But the findings of this study do differ Romani, Grappi and Dalli who found that anger and dislike lead to more active hate. From this study, we see that dislike, anger, sadness, discontent, fear, contempt and worry were not used nearly as much by consumers when expressing their feelings and emotions. Anger is only mentioned 9 times, and embarrassed is even less with 3 times and these have been included as a major focus in previous research. While many of the words that complaint writers do use could be extensions of anger, like furious or mad, the findings show that the emotions felt in regards to brand hate are much more complex and detailed than previously thought, which highlights the need for more research into the different types of emotions. Zarantonello et. al. (2016) examined passive hate, being fear, disappointment, shame and dehumanization and active hate as anger and disgust. All of the complaint writers in this study can be seen as active, since they went on an anti-brand site and posted. The findings of this study suggest that disgust is a more active, which agrees with Zarantonello et. al's. (2016) previous research. But these findings are different than Zarantonello et. al's (2016) findings in that disappointment seems to be more active. Further to this, mistreated, disrespect and disgust seem to be very active brand hate emotions. These results highlight the further need for research into the complex and complicated emotions of brand hate to aid better understanding of the anti-branding relationship consumers have with brands.

4.5 Sharing

The final category that was created through data analysis was sharing, which relates to consumers sharing their stories publicly to both friends and family and on social media. Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) mention that consumers nowadays share their own content and raise their voice about brands on different media channels; therefore, the researchers included that category within data analysis. Consumers communicate that they have either posted their story on airlines' social media channels already or are willing to do so; both purposes seemed equally important and were included and counted by researchers.

The findings from all airlines combined show that the number of posts saying they shared it on social media or with friends and family, was not as high as some might think. Further to this, shared on social media and telling friends and family had the same amount of mentions, meaning that one was not significantly higher than the other. However, the researchers felt that this field is growing in interest, as de Chernatony (2006) argues that the internet and all digital social media channels have made communication faster and changed the way how consumer interact with companies, and furthermore, with Bailey (2004) who found that anti-brand awareness came through word of mouth from family and friends. Even when looking at the three airlines separately, the data between each one is very similar and there is not a big difference between the amount of times a consumer mentioned sharing with friends and family or posting on social media.

As already mentioned some customers have previously shared their story on social media channels, and point out that they have gone to the company's Facebook or Twitter page:

"I have gone on twitter and posted directly to their twitter feed and tagged @British_Airways, informing them of the issues, and even supplied my case number.....and yet I am still waiting to hear back from anyone at BA." (#65, anti-British Airways)

"So I posted on Air Canada's Facebook page, and their response was "glad to hear you made it". How lovely is that? They couldn't demonstrate their lack of customer service any better." (#58, anti-Air Canada)

These findings agree with Toh and Raven (2003), who mention that airline companies need to integrate all available internet-marketing tools into their strategy, and also with Grančay (2013), who mentions that airlines should have a well-organized social media communication strategy that can increase the positive image of an airline. The findings show that the three airlines do not have an online solution that satisfies consumers and customers still feel frustrated even

after going to the company's social media accounts; thus, it can be suggested that consumers continue to look for a way to lash out against the company and end up on the anti-branding site. These findings agree with Kucuk (2008) who suggests that companies should include consumers in an open-dialogue, which will hopefully lead to mutual satisfaction. One consumer even talks about how their post was removed by the company:

"Interesting how I get no responses from BA customer response, but when I posted on their facebook just now, my post was gone within 5 minutes!" (#50, anti-British Airways)

Many researchers agree that consumers should monitor consumer actions (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Bailey, 2004) and not block or ignore consumer anti-branding actions (Romani et al., 2015; Kucuk, 2008; Harrison-Walker, 2001). The findings of this study agree that companies should not ignore consumers as it drives consumers toward anti-branding actions.

Other consumers mention that they are now willing to share their story on social media channels as they are very disappointed and want to make sure that their story is heard by as many people as possible:

"I will be sure to get my voice heard on social media and make sure everyone I know NEVER flies United again." (#135, anti-United Airlines)

"I will definitely make this well know on social media, you have pushed me too far this time during a very sad period in my life." (#17, anti-British Airways)

"I have and will continue to post our story on news sites, social media, and any other outlet we can think of." (#67, anti-Air Canada)

Other writers mention that they will share their story with friends and family to make sure they know how they have been mistreated, and further to this, will not recommend the airline to anyone. This aspect of sharing is in line with Boote (1998), who argues "the communication of dissatisfaction to family and friends, which is often of a warning not to buy a certain product or to buy from a certain outlet" (p. 142-143). Moreover, the findings agree with the study by Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998) who mention that altruism is one of four motives for consumer complaint and means "to prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered" (p.530). The following examples show how writers communicate this negative word of mouth:

“After this terrible experience (to Montreal and back), I am definitely done with Air Canada, and I will make sure all my families, friends and colleagues know what I think and feel about Air Canada with my first hand experiences.” (#29, anti-Air Canada)

“I will spend more time discouraging other people to never take AC even for free as the airline treats you like dirt.” (#47, anti-British Airways)

After the analysis of the findings two themes emerged from the data. The next section of analysis will further explore the themes and relationships of these themes between the different categories studied.

4.6 Themes

Through reading the data multiple times and going back between literature, data and analysis, two main themes began to emerge. This section will introduce these two themes and then the relationship between these two themes and the other categories previously discussed in the analysis will be further explored. At the end, a table summary is provided showing the two main themes and the differences between them.

The two emerged themes are consistent with prior research that described two main reasons why people start complaining: ‘redress seeking’ (Blodgett, Hill & Tax, 1997) and ‘venting of frustration’ (Nyer, 1997).

4.6.1 Never Using Company Again

When reading through the consumer complaint entries, it is obvious to see that some consumers are very angry, and are more focused on the hating the brand and never using the company again. These consumers are not as focused on getting their money back or trying to get in contact with someone from the company, but are specifically focused on spreading their story. These findings are in line with previous literature within the field of customer complaint behavior in that the main purpose of ‘venting’ is to release feelings of distress, unhappiness or frustration in order to feel satisfied (Mattila & Wirtz, 2004) and with Sundaram, Mitra and Webster’s (1998) who mention anxiety reduction as one of negative WOM motives to reduce frustration and anger. These posts are more descriptive, especially about the harm done to them and the emotions felt; moreover, these posts are generally longer than those that are purely seeking compensation. This can even be seen by looking at the data from reason for making entry. Anti-United Airlines had the greatest number of posts collected, but most of those were about seeking compensation and were generally shorter, whereas anti-British Airways and anti-Air Canada had much longer posts and had more complaints about never

using the company again than they did seeks compensation. The complaints that are specifically about brand hate and never using the company again tend to focus more on sharing their story or making the company pay for their actions. As discussed previously in the section on never using the company again, many consumers not only express their hate for the company, but further express their frustrations:

“In fact, why do I HATE British Airways? Because British Airways does not give a XXX about its passengers [...] how BA handles the lost/delayed baggage situation that INFURIATES me and prompts me to swear off BA forever. Why? Because BA absolutely does not give a XXX about its passengers in this regard. To say that they could not care less is a gross understatement [...] Kind of disappointing, isn't it, that an outfit who claims that it is world-class, actually is third-world class” (#26, anti-British Airways)

“The check in counter staff were so rude and it was the worst 24 hours of my life. I hate British Airways they should be disbanded!” (#48, anti-British Airways)

Many consumers share their story to almost warn others and reach as many people as they can with their story:

“first i decided to boycott AC but boycott is not good enough instead i will spend more time discouraging other people to never take AC even for free as the airline treats you like dirt” (#47, anti-Air Canada).

“I will be sure to get my voice heard on social media and make sure everyone I know NEVER flies United again” (#135, anti-United Airlines)

As seen in the above examples and in the section on never using the company again, complaint writers use more aggressive language. They really express their anger fully and portray their emotions using a range of descriptive language.

4.6.2 Seek Compensation

The second theme that becomes obvious through the analysis of the findings, is that some consumer are communicating on anti-branding websites in order to get compensation. Those findings are coherent with Mattila and Wirtz (2004) that mention that ‘redress seeking’ is referred to as consumers that are seeking compensation to the dissatisfactory incident and aim to get refund or fair damages depending on the situation to correct the dissatisfactory context. Anti-United Airlines has the highest number of posts from customers seeking compensation. Consumers in these situations are less aggressive and hateful in their language

used. They even at times thank the reader for taking the time to look at their post. Furthermore, most of the customers expressing their desire for compensation have often already tried to company or/and want to be contacted. This becomes apparent as those writers mostly leave their full name, e-mail address or telephone number (the names have been changed and numbers X'd to protect consumer's anonymity):

“I look forward to some type of remedy to this completely unavoidable situation on multiple levels. Thank you, John Smith XXXXXXXX” (#7, anti-United Airlines)

“I believe that I am entitled to some form of compensation from the airline. I can be reached on my Dutch mobile (XXXXXX); I would appreciate an update as soon as possible. Regards John Smith” (#28, anti-United Airlines)

Through reading the seek compensation posts it becomes clear that those posts are more objective and use less aggressive and descriptive language.

4.7 Relationship Between Categories and Themes

This section will look at the relationship between the different categories and code words. By filtering the data further, the researchers examined if complaint writers discussed certain categories together more than others; thus, by filtering the data into “yes” for two categories, the relationships could be explored. Further to this, the relationship of these categories and code words in relation to the themes is examined.

4.7.1 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry

Relationship Between Reason for making entry	Number of posts	Percentage	Total number of posts
<i>Seeks Compensation and Tried Contact</i>	41	12%	347
<i>Seeks Compensation and wants to be contacted</i>	29	8%	347
<i>Never use again and tried contact</i>	29	8%	347
<i>Never use again and seeks compensation</i>	17	5%	347
<i>Tried Contact and wants to be contacted</i>	10	3%	347
<i>Never use again and wants to be contacted</i>	5	1%	347

Table 4-1 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry

By comparing the reasons for making entries to one another, we can see that seeks compensation and tried contact or wants to be contacted is quite high. This suggest that many customers have already tried contact, and now, having not received the desired outcome, have been lead to the anti-branding website. These findings further support the discussion in the previous section on reasons for making entry. For many complaint writers, they have probably tried to reach the company directly to get compensation, but now have reached the frustration point where they swear off that company all together. Interestingly, never use again and seeks compensation is not that high, supporting the ideas presented in the two themes. The relationship between never use company again and wants to be contacted further highlights that many consumers have gone to this anti-branding site to share their story, but do not necessarily have the goal of getting into contact with the company. It almost seems as though they have either given up on getting their money back or speaking to someone from the company, or they no longer care to try to fix the relationship. These entrants are purely there to share their story and warn others.

4.7.2 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry and What Happened

Relationship between Reason for making entry and what happened	Never use again		Seeks Compensation		Total number of posts
	Number of Posts	Percentage	Number of Posts	Percentage	
<i>Customer Service Complaint</i>	62	18%	61	18%	347
<i>Flight Cancelled or Delayed</i>	24	7%	60	17%	347
<i>Felt Neglected or Ignored</i>	22	6%	23	7%	347
<i>Baggage Issue</i>	22	6%	21	6%	347
<i>Poor Overall Experience</i>	22	6%	17	5%	347
<i>Flight Attendant Complaint</i>	14	4%	2	1%	347
<i>Negative in flight Experience</i>	14	4%	9	3%	347
<i>Downgraded or Seat Issue</i>	10	3%	15	4%	347
<i>Special Circumstance</i>	7	2%	6	2%	347

Table 4-2 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry and What Happened

The relationship between reason for making entry and what happened seems very similar. It becomes apparent that the main reasons why people would never use a company again or seek compensation is due to customer complaints. Interestingly though, the flight cancelled or delayed is very high for the theme seeks compensation. This shows that people are not overly angry about the issue flight cancelled or delayed but just want to be compensated for it. In general, it becomes clear that customer service complaints is the main complaint reason for both themes.

4.7.3 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry and Negative Words Describing the Airline

Relationship between Reason for entry and negative words describing the airline	Never use again		Seeks Compensation		Total number of posts
	Number of Posts	Percentage	Number of Posts	Percentage	
<i>Doesn't Care</i>	24	7%	10	3%	347
<i>Rude</i>	19	5%	16	5%	347
<i>Unhelpful</i>	18	5%	13	4%	347
<i>Worst</i>	10	3%	5	1%	347

Table 4-3 Relationship Between Reason for Making Entry and Negative Words Describing the Airline

The relationship between reason for making entry and negative words describing the airline has some differences; however, overall many similarities can be seen in the amount of times mentioned. The main difference seen is that the never use company again theme has more mentions across all the four words describing the airline then seeks compensation does. This suggests that the never use company again posts are maybe slightly more descriptive in their language than those that are seeking compensation. For the theme never use again the feeling that the company does not care is the strongest, but rude and unhelpful are close behind. These findings agree with Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) study who mentioned that customers who are treated rudely are most likely to stop using the company. The word rude and unhelpful were the strongest mentioned negative feelings for the theme seeks compensation. Generally, the top three negative words for both themes underlie more the behavior of the airline employees, as previously discussed.

4.7.4 Relationship Between Reason for Entry and Sharing

Relationship between Reason for entry and Sharing	Never use again		Seeks Compensation		Total number of posts
	Number of Posts	Percentage	Number of Posts	Percentage	
<i>Shared on Social Media</i>	9	3%	8	2%	347
<i>Shared with Friends and Family</i>	14	4%	2	1%	347

Table 4-4 Relationship Between Reason for Entry and Sharing

By comparing sharing and the two themes, we can see that customers who say they will never use the company again are more likely to share their story, especially with friends and family. This supports our findings that consumers that are more hateful toward the company are more interested in sharing their story with others.

4.7.5 Relationship Between Reason for Entry and Descriptive Feeling Words

Relationship between Reason for entry and descriptive feeling words	Never use again		Seeks Compensation		Total number of posts
	Number of Posts	Percentage	Number of Posts	Percentage	
<i>Mistreated</i>	13	4%	10	3%	347
<i>Disgusted</i>	7	2%	6	2%	347
<i>Disrespected</i>	6	2%	7	2%	347
<i>Frustrated</i>	5	2%	7	2%	347
<i>Dissapointed</i>	4	1%	8	2%	347

Table 4-5 Relationship Between Reason for Entry and Descriptive Feeling Words

Relationship between reason for making entry and descriptive feeling words is again quite similar between the two themes. A feeling of mistreatment is strongest in both of these two themes. These findings shows that people are able to express their feelings not only out of extreme hatred or when want to get back at the company, but also in times when perceived quality and expectations were not met. While the way they express themselves is slightly different, both groups are able to express their feelings toward the airline companies.

The table below summarizes the two themes discussed in the above analysis and provides a quick visual understanding of the differences between the two themes.

Summary of Two Themes		
	Goal of the post	Language used
<i>Never Using Company Again</i>	- negative WOM	- aggressive
	- share their story	- descriptive
	- to warn others	- more hate and anger
	- make companies pay	- longer posts
<i>Seeks Compensation</i>	- get a refund	- to the point
		- more objective
	- get into contact with the company	- shorter posts

Table 4-6 Summary of Two Themes

4.8 Secondary Analysis – Creators of Anti-branding Websites

Further to the analysis above, our aim was to gain further insight into what motivates someone to start an anti-branding site. We contacted the owners of each of the three anti-brand websites studied and asked them their motivations for creating the site, how they started the site and if they started it alone or if they were supported by other individuals or groups. The owners of <http://britishairwayssucks.org> (anti-British Airways) and <http://untied.com/> (anti-United Airlines) both responded saying they started the website on their own and were not influenced by other parties in the initial creation of the site. Further to this, they directed us to their full story and motivations located on their websites. whyaircanadasucks.com (anti-Air Canada) website owner did not get back to our attempts to connect, but through further review of the site, we found some information from when they started the site. These three stories were then analyzed and the following information was found.

4.8.1 The United.com Site Creator

The experience started in 1996 with the website creator was taking a trip with the airline and had a negative experience. After trying to contact the company and complain, and getting no desired response from the airline, they turned to the internet and put their story on their University web page and:

“Within a few days, I'd received several letters from other passengers with similar experiences, and I added these to my web page. Within a week, a search for "United Airlines" in the Altavista search engine (back then, the equivalent of Google) brought up my web page as the first result” (#193, anti-United Airlines)

After this, the site owner did receive a letter from United Airlines threatening legal action and lawyers contacted the University about the web page. The site owner decided to remove the site from the University page, as it was not the Universities burden, and interestingly, received e-mails from people asking where the site went. One writer even wrote a cheque to the host, so that they could keep the site going and became untied.com:

“The new site quickly grew into a collection of letters from other passengers describing poor service, employee incompetence, general indifference to customers, and also started attracting letters from United's own employees who had suffered abuse from their management” (#193, anti-United Airlines).

After this, and with the help of financial contributors and other readers, the site owner kept the website going. They updated it with new complaint forms, and at the request of other readers, a browsable database was created. The motivations and feelings are summed up well by the site creator:

“[I] believe that consumers should not be intimidated by powerful companies who attempt to silence their criticism through the common tactic of legal threats, and I stood my ground. The more mail I received from other former passengers and employees who had been mistreated by the airline, the more I was determined to continue spending hundreds of hours of my time maintaining the web site. UAL was taking the predictable route of trying to silence a critic rather than deal with their problems constructively” (#193, anti-United Airlines)

4.8.2 The britishairwayssucks.org Site Creator

Much like the Untied.com site creator, the britishairwayssucks.org creator started by having a disappointing customer service experience with British Airways. They had multiple customer service issues, including flight delays, unhelpful staff, baggage issues and extra costs incurred because of these issues. They tried to submit a claim, and much like the previous story, never got the desired response from the company:

“It's very frustrating when the "customer service" department stops responding to your enquiries and it seems there is very little you can do. I eventually gave up hope of ever

receiving a cheque from British Airways. I registered britishairwaysucks.org and created this website to tell my story about British Airways, to allow others to tell their stories about British Airways and to warn other travellers. It's not much of a comfort but I realise now that my experience of British Airways "customer service" is not an isolated incident" (#85, anti-British Airways).

This highlights that out of frustration, a site was born.

4.8.3 The whyaircanadasucks.com Site Creator

The whyaircanadasucks owner is not as clear about their story and initial motivations for creating and maintaining the websites, but by reviewing their post, we are able to get a general idea of their feelings on the company and why they created the site:

"this site is dedicated to those who have flown with them ... Yes folks you as paying passengers have rights that must be respected by the airlines ... So know your rights when you are being mistreated by an airline. You have them and you should not only know them but make sure the airline follows them!" (#71, Air Canada).

All three discuss the mistreatment of the Airline Company and have the stance that it is their duty to inform other customers about this mistreatment. This is interesting, as mistreated was the most commonly used feeling word by all complaint writers, as found in the previous analysis. Both the anti-United Airlines and the anti-British Airways site were born out of consumer's frustration, and wanted to give others with similar experiences a place to express their dissatisfaction as well. Both felt wronged by the company and initially tried contact with the airline directly, and after feeling ignored they took the situation further. These findings further reiterate Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) argument that company quick responses can defuse the desire for revenge. The findings of this study continue to highlight that many of these situations are completely avoidable. From the statements from site creators, it appears that if the company had just responded to them and dealt with the problem, the sites would not have been created. The anti-United Airlines site owner does discuss getting help from others to keep the site going, but it appears that all of these sites were born out of one individual's frustration with a company's lack of caring or resolution.

This secondary analysis also supports Zarantonello et. al. (2016) findings that corporate wrongdoings and violations of expectations have a higher chance of brand hate actions and Romani et. al. (2015) idea that hate can be a stimulus to anti-branding actions. The stories

here suggest that the site owners were wronged by the company, and then searched for an alternative way to receive satisfaction. Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) found that anti-brand sites start for a number of reasons, as discussed in the literature review. The stories from these anti-brand site creators agree with three out of four of Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) reasons. These being “to provide a social community comprised of members with common moral obligations, to provide a support network to achieve common goals and to provide a resource hub for taking action” (p.480) However, these sites are less about dealing with workplace difficulties, which is the fourth reason stated by Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006). Further to this, these stories agree with Hollenbeck & Zinkhan (2006) idea that a common negative stance of individuals can actually unify members and build a community. Especially in the case of Untied.com site owner, the website probably would have died if it was not for other individual’s encouragement to keep it going.

4.9 Discussion

This section will discuss the contributions of the findings and further consider the two themes developed in the analysis. Then connections between theory and analysis will be drawn and discussed.

Through analyzing the findings and results of the study, two themes quickly emerged and were found; those consumers that would never use the company again, and those consumers that were seeking compensation. The two emerged themes are consistent with prior research that described two main reasons why people start complaining: ‘redress seeking’ (Blodgett, Hill & Tax, 1997) and ‘venting of frustration’ (Nyer, 1997). The findings are also consistent with those of Grégoire and Fisher (2007) who found there is a difference between either ‘Demand for Reparations’ and ‘Retaliating Behaviors’. This study however builds upon and outlines the differences between these two themes, as this was a gap in the previous research of Grégoire and Fisher (2007) and is a major contribution of the study.

The two themes also build upon the study of Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) who also studied the language of anti-branding sites and found that most of the conversations were ‘Market’ related, meaning discussion about the brand and other market related conversation, ‘Transactional’ related, which are about the actual transaction failures, or ‘Ideological’ related, which are more personal or political in nature. The results of this study find that many of the posts were about transaction or compensation issues and then secondly about brand hate or never using the company again, which is different to the study of Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) who found market related conversation was the most common. Further to this, the

analysis of the posts do not contain any political or freedom of rights related conversation, which again slightly differs from Krishnamurthy and Kucuk's (2009) previous research. This suggests that there may be differences between different types of anti-branding sites and their overall purpose.

One of the main contributions of this study, are the results showing how many of these posts could be avoided. Many consumers had tried to contact the company previously, and after receiving no response or an unsatisfying response from the company, they turned to the anti-branding website.

Even after review of the website creator's stories, it is found that many sites were only created out of frustration after the consumers could not contact the company, which is also an avoidable situation. This is consistent with previous research of Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) and Harrison-Walker (2001). The findings show that companies should not ignore their customers as it only drives them toward more hate and anti-branding behaviours, which again is consistent with previous research (Romani et. al., 2015; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Kucuk, 2008).

These findings further agree with the consumer complaint type proposed by Singh (1990a) called 'Voicers', who actively complain to the seller. He explains another type that refers to 'Irates' (opt for private responses) which concurs with an additional finding of this study: consumers mention that they would like to be contacted and posted on the anti-branding website in order to get a response. However, this study has been unable to demonstrate that consumers are engaging in formal third-party complaining which is mentioned as the fourth type of complaining type by Singh (1990a). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that this might be a next step for consumers if companies ignore their complaint, which may increase customers' dissatisfaction and anger.

The results of the study are fairly consistent with the landmark study done by Harrison-Walker (2001) and further build upon the findings of her initial study of anti-branding sites. Even though the study by Harrison-Walker (2001) was done over fifteen years ago, many of the results are still consistent today. Many consumers in this study were upset with customer service issues they saw as avoidable, such as employee rudeness, baggage issues, company being unhelpful and the company not caring. As also found by Harrison-Walker (2001) it was usually not just one aspect of the service that angered customers, but many were upset with multiple customer service issues. These findings further highlight those of Harrison-Walker (2001)

Zarantonello et. al. (2016) that when consumers are frustrated with customer service or feel that the company has acted wrongly, consumers are then prompted to anti-branding activities.

The findings on customer complaint issues further show that companies are not providing high quality service and agrees with the literature about service quality that highlights the importance to provide high quality in order to reach customer satisfaction (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015). The top service issues of this study include customer service complaint, flight cancelled or delayed and baggage issue and are covered in the service quality dimension for the airline industry (Hussain, Nasser & Hussain, 2015). Thus, it can be suggested that airline companies should follow the provided airline quality dimensions of Hussain, Nasser and Hussain (2015) to achieve customer satisfaction and avoid consumer complaints.

The brand avoidance aspect has been considered by the study through the theme never use company again. The findings show that consumers express their desire of avoiding the company due to service issues. This is in line with Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b) who define brand avoidance “as a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand” (p.422). Even though, the authors mention that brand avoidance can be defined as multi-faceted phenomenon and includes many reasons for brand avoidance, this study only agrees with their first reason of brand avoidance called ‘unmet expectations’. This reason of brand avoidance within the service sector is due to poor quality of the service provider’s performance, e.g. carelessly and unprofessionally provided service (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b).

When analyzing the more emotional side of the posts, the study finds that there is quite a range in emotion. Complaint writers used a very diverse amount of words in their explanation of how they feel, which has been lacking in previous research. What is more, the specific emotions chosen in previous studies were not the most commonly used by complainants in this study. Many previous researchers focus on anger as a main driver, and while consumers might feel angry, the study found that consumers use different words to express their emotions. The findings of this study contradict the findings of Zarantonello et. al. (2015) who found that disappointment is seen as more passive hate, but in this study, the findings show that disappointed is much more active. While the findings do agree with Romani, Grappi and Dall’i (2012) previous research on embarrassment, sadness and worry in that they do not inspire as much action, and anger as inspiring more negative WOM, the results of this study highlight that many complainants do not use the word angry. While consumers maybe do feel angry,

their choices of language included words like mistreated, disappointed, frustrated, disrespected and disgusted much more commonly.

Through the analysis of the stories from the anti-branding site creators, the researchers found that the sites were created out of consumer frustrations and were created by one individual. Then, through a sense of community from other consumers that had similar experiences, the sites grew and gained support. This is consistent with Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) who found that a common negative stance of the individuals actually built a community and unified the members who were writing posts. The findings of this study are consistent with Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) who found that anti-branding sites provide a social community, a support network, and a resource hub for consumers with common goals; moreover, the internet gave them a place to vent their frustrations with one another and connected them. The sites analyzed in the study did have a community with like-minded consumers, but the anti-branding sites in this study seemed to be less about building a community of members that discussed issues frequently, and more of a community that does not interact but simply is unified through common experiences and feelings about a particular company. Further to this, the stories analyzed did not seem to be written by former employees nor were the sites created by former employees. This highlights some differences from Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) who argued that there are more community related aspects with anti-branding sites and that employee issues were a common topic of discussion.

Our main findings contribute to literature within the field of customer complaint behavior, which helped understanding of consumers' motives for posting on anti-branding websites. Seeking compensation was a main theme found through analysis of the data. According to this finding, it can be suggested that companies should fairly reimburse customers and provide respectful behavior, which shows a great opportunity for companies to strengthen their customer relationships. This further supports the study of Blodgett, Wakefield and Barnes (1995) who argue that companies should respond to those complaints where customers are seeking compensation in order to keep the customers. Moreover, those customers that receive a fair settlement and who are treated with respect are even likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior (Blodgett, Wakefield & Barnes, 1995).

The study gives some insight into the different types of consumer complainers explained by several authors (Boote, 1998; Singh, 1990a). Bach and Kim (2012) argue that consumers' dissatisfaction will increase when they are not able to get a refund. This will reach a point and will lead them to actively engage in negative WOM and share it with their social network and

potential consumers of the service/product (information forwarding) (Bach & Kim, 2012). Our findings are in line with this statement since many customers claimed to start sharing their negative experiences with friends or family or on social media, especially in the case of those who expressed they would never use the company again. This finding is consistent with Bailey (2004) who found that anti-branding site awareness did come from word of mouth through family and friends. Moreover, this finding supports Boote's (1998) third type of consumer complaint behavior, which refers to negative WOM, or "the communication of dissatisfaction to family and friends..." (p. 142-143) and Sundaram, Mitra and Webster's (1998) motive for negative WOM or altruism.

The statement by Toh and Raven (2003) who highlight that airlines need to integrate all available internet-marketing tools into their strategy is in line with our findings on consumer sharing and is very helpful in understanding the previous literature on digitalization. Consumers mention that they have already shared or/and want to share their story on the airlines' social media channels. Thus, it can be argued that companies need to address customers on every possible channel.

When searching for applicable websites to study, the researchers did notice that stronger airline brands did seem to consistently have more anti-branding site hits on Google and the three companies that were chosen for the study are all strong brands. However, the study is unable to draw conclusions or further support Kucuk (2008) literature that strong brands are more consistently targeted, or Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009), who found that strong brands do indeed "pay a price" (p.1123). Moreover, this study was unable to aid further understanding into the effects on brand value previously studied by Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) and would be an opportunity for future research and expansion of this study.

Although the results of this study are unable to look at the effect over time and the love becomes hate phenomenon, which has been covered by others in previous research (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Awasthi, Sharma & Gulati, 2012), our findings do suggest that when consumers feel extremely hateful and wronged by a company, they would continue to never use that company again. Through studying the never use company again theme, it seems more clear that those who feel truly hateful would consistently avoid that company all together. While this seems to be the case, it would be an area of future research to be sure of consumer's actions.

The study does give some insight into the love can become hate phenomenon studied by Grégoire and Fisher (2007) and Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) in that the results show that many consumers who felt wronged by a service failure were more likely to become hateful and seek out anti-branding activities. The study is unable to measure the strength of the consumer brand relationship before they posted, but as all of the complaint writers had used the company, it can be said that they did have some sort of relationship. Then after feeling wronged by the company, either through a service failure or feeling ignored after not being able to get a hold of the company, the consumers did seek out alternative actions including negative word of mouth. This further strengthens the findings of Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009), who argue that those with stronger relationships are more likely to feel betrayed, but the study is unable to examine this fully and would be an areas for expansive research.

5 Conclusion

This section will discuss each research question and summarize the main findings and contributions of the study. Then the theoretical contributions and managerial contributions of the study will be examined and lastly, the limitations and areas for future research are discussed.

The study has made a major contribution into understanding brand hate and the triggers that elicit anti-branding actions from consumers. The purpose of this study, was to draw further understanding and investigate the hate relationship between a particular company and consumers and to develop theory in this area of study that has grown in relevance. By analyzing both previous literature and primary data gathered through netnography from the three anti-branding case study websites within the airline industry, the researchers aimed to answer the research questions outlined in the introduction. In the next three subsections, the researchers will show the findings in regards to each research question.

RQ 1: What motivates consumers to post on an anti-branding website? What do they hope to achieve?

The study results showed two main themes or motivations for consumers posting on an anti-branding website; complainants that seek compensation, and complainants that are more hateful and say they will never use the company again.

Seeks Compensation - The seeks compensation theme was comprised of consumers that were hoping to get a hold of the company and receive a refund that the consumer felt the company owed them. The analysis of the findings show that posts seeking compensation were the most common motivation for complainants posting to the anti-branding website. Many of these consumers had previously tried to contact the company, and after receiving unsatisfactory or no responses, went on to the anti-branding website. Many complaint writers were hoping that by posting to the anti-branding website, someone from the airline company would get back to them. These seek compensation posts were more objective, less aggressive, and were simply there to request compensation for their perceived losses.

Never Use Company Again - The other main theme that emerged from the data, were those consumers that were more hateful and said they would never use the company again. The results of the study found that those who said they would never use the company again were not hoping to contact the company or receive a refund like in the other theme. These complainants were focused on negative word of mouth and were specifically there to share their story, warn others, and make the company pay for their actions. These posts were generally longer, more descriptive, and had a much more aggressive and hateful tone to them. These consumers are motivated by their feelings of hate, as the conclusions show they do not have an alternative motive, like seeking compensation or getting into contact with the company. These complainant's want to share their story of mistreatment with as many people as possible, and quite clearly, want to hurt the brand image of the company.

These findings highlight that not all consumers may feel hateful toward the company and are more focused on compensation, but they still felt lead to the anti-branding website as a way of acting out after receiving an unacceptable response from the company. Further to this, if companies did reach out to these complainant's and satisfied their desires, the consumer brand relationship could be healed. For those complainants that do feel more hate, the conclusion can be drawn that these consumer relationships are now at the point where companies could not recover them through any sort of company efforts; therefore, companies should focus their efforts on addressing consumer complaints before they reach the point of brand hate or where consumers say they will never use the company again.

RQ 2: What motivates consumers to communicate negatively about a brand? What actually happened that motivated them to reach out and publicly write on an anti-branding site?

By analyzing our data, we identified nine reasons that motivate consumers to start communicating negatively about a brand; all were due to the lack of service that the studied companies provided. Customer service complaint, flight cancelled or delayed and baggage issue were the most common service issues and were followed by feeling neglected or ignored, poor overall experience, downgraded or seat issue, negative in flight experience, flight attendant complaint and special circumstance.

This finding shows that all three airline companies are mostly lacking in providing good customer service; however it becomes clear that consumers' motivation to start communicating negatively on anti-branding websites was not because of one aspect of service issue, but due

to multiple service issues that angered people. Consumers were especially frustrated as they felt that many of these issues were avoidable; thus, prompting consumers to search for anti-branding sites and engage in negative word-of-mouth.

RQ 3: What motivates someone to start an anti-branding website?

Understanding the stories and motivations of the individuals that actually created the anti-branding websites was a major contribution of the study. All of three anti-branding site creators discussed how they felt mistreated by the airlines, which shows how many of the anti-branding sites were born from consumer frustrations. The anti-United Airlines and the anti-British Airways sites in particular both started after the consumers felt wronged by the company and after trying to contact the company directly, felt ignored or that the company did not care to give them a satisfactory answer. The anti-branding sites were created out of one individual feeling frustrated with a company's lack of response or resolution, and while the anti-United Airlines creator did receive help to keep the site going, the sites were originally motivated and created by one consumer looking for a way to act out. Further to this, after creating the sites they found that other consumers had similar negative experiences and this built a community of individuals, which without the internet, would have probably never crossed paths. This sense of community gave the site creators motivation to maintain the site and keep it going for other consumers to share their stories as well.

This analysis and findings further reiterate that many of these situations are avoidable and that consumer anti-branding actions could be mitigated if companies act quickly. There was not a large team behind creating and maintaining these sites, but was simply one individual consumer who after feeling mistreated and frustrated by the company, sought out an alternative way to express themselves, which lead them to creating an anti-branding website specifically dedicated to negative word of mouth of a particular brand.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the research domain of brand hate and anti-branding and is the first to examine the language used by customers of multiple case companies that operate globally but in one service industry, namely the airline industry. The research is built on existing theories on brand hate and emotional marketing, anti-branding and consumer complaint behavior. It contributes specifically to the landmark study conducted by Harrison-Walker (2001) about anti-branding sites and it builds upon her findings. Moreover, this study seems to be similar to

literature about brand hate and emotional marketing; however, it appears to be the first one examining a wide range of emotions and words complaint writers use when expressing themselves, which has been lacking in previous research. Furthermore, this study found that consumers use different words to express their emotions and highlights that consumers do not express their emotions as angry as much as previous research would suggest. The anti-branding websites in this study seemed to have less of a community characteristic where users discuss different issues with one another which is different from previous research that highlighted the community related aspect of anti-branding sites.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Many previous researchers agree that companies should not ignore consumer complaints (Romani et. al., 2015; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Bailey, 2004; Kucuk 2008) and our findings further reiterate that companies should not ignore consumer complaints as many of the complainants posted on the anti-branding website after initially trying to contact the company. We also agree with previous researchers, who argue that companies should facilitate better response systems and recovery procedures to satisfy consumer desires (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Grégoire & Fisher, 2007) and in a more timely fashion as quick responses defuse consumers need to act out (Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux, 2009). As many of the consumers had tried to contact the company previously, better company complaint management could lessen the amount of anti-branding activities against their company's brand. Further to this, better compensation request management could reduce the number of anti-branding posts. As Harrison-Walker (2001) also found, many consumers were angry about multiple customer service issues and many consumers complained that employees were rude, unhelpful, and did not care. These findings suggest that companies should also put more resources into customer service and better training for employees on how to properly handle consumer complaints.

Based on the issues found in the analysis and to lessen the amount of anti-branding activities, we suggest that companies create a digital communication plan to handle consumer complaints. This would include four parts: 1) More phone customer service representatives who are properly trained to handle consumer complaints, 2) a digital complaint management system located on the company website that is user friendly and easy for consumers to quickly submit their complaint, 3) more social media staff that respond to consumer concerns and are given the authority to help consumers and respond quickly, and 4) one background or intranet system that organizes all complaints and allows staff to easily and quickly manage and handle complaints. Further to this, we suggest that companies put more resources into notifying consumers and providing information. Many of our findings showed that consumers were angry

about a lack of information from the airline; therefore, companies should work to integrate better awareness systems for when information changes or flight delays happen. This could be done through sms text, email, and social media notifications.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

With this study, there were limitations to the conclusions that could be drawn based on the data that was collected. As the information was gathered through netnography, the main limitation of the study is the ability to understand complainants demographic, geographic, or psychographic details; therefore, no conclusions can be drawn in these areas and would be an area for expansion research to better understand complainant's background in relation to the anti-branding activities. Previous research focuses on brand hate over time (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009) but our research was unable to draw specific conclusions as it is unknown how long after the consumer's experience with the airline they decided to post on the anti-branding site. Further to this, the long term impact of anti-branding, which was studied by Awasthi, Sharma and Gulati (2012) is unknown in this study, as we are unable to draw conclusions on how long consumers continue to hate the brand, or if any consumers have changed their feelings toward the company. Both of these areas would be opportunities for future research. By asking the respondents who wrote the posts how they now feel about the company, and if their feelings have at all changed would add to the existing study. This study does not examine the effect of anti-branding activities on brand value, as studied by Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2008) and again would be an important area for future research as it would further aid understanding into the effect of anti-branding in a particular industry.

The aim of the study was to examine anti-branding websites in particular, but complaints and brand hate do happen on social media, blogs, complaint forums, and review sites. To further add to the study, other online channels could be examined. This study gives insight into one particular industry, but for future studies, other industries should be examined to assess if there are differences or similarities between anti-branding activities in different industries and to further develop the theory. Another area of future research, would be to understand the effect of constant negativity that is more consistent with anti-branding websites. As this study looks at complainant's reactions and feelings at one point in time, the effect of constant negativity on consumers brand perceptions would be an interesting development and addition to the existing study.

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Appendix A

All Airlines Anti-Branding Site Combined			
Reasons for making the entry	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>seeks compensation</i>	33%	113	347
<i>never use company again</i>	28%	98	347
<i>tried contact</i>	27%	93	347
<i>wants company to contact them</i>	14%	50	347

Table A-1 Reason for Making the Entry, All Airlines Anti-branding combined

British Airways Anti-Branding Site			
Reasons for making the entry	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>tried contact</i>	44%	37	85
<i>never use company again</i>	41%	35	85
<i>seeks compensation</i>	22%	19	85
<i>wants company to contact them</i>	1%	1	85

Table A-2 Reason for Making the Entry, anti-British Airways

Air Canada Anti-Branding Site			
Reasons for making the entry	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>tried contact</i>	47%	33	70
<i>never use company again</i>	40%	28	70
<i>seeks compensation</i>	20%	14	70
<i>wants company to contact them</i>	7%	5	70

Table A-3 Reason for Making the Entry, anti-Air Canada

United Airlines Anti-Branding Site			
Reasons for making the entry	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>seeks compensation</i>	42%	80	192
<i>wants company to contact them</i>	23%	44	192
<i>Never use company again</i>	18%	35	192
<i>Tried Contact</i>	13%	23	192

Table A-4 Reason for Making the Entry, anti-United Airlines

All Airlines Anti-Branding Site Combined			
What happened or reason for complaint	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Customer service complaint</i>	57%	198	347
<i>flight cancelled or delayed</i>	35%	121	347
<i>baggage issue</i>	21%	72	347
<i>Felt Neglected or Ignored</i>	18%	63	347
<i>Poor overall experience</i>	16%	55	347
<i>Downgrade or seat issue</i>	12%	40	347
<i>negative in flight exp.</i>	11%	38	347
<i>flight attendant complaint</i>	10%	36	347
<i>special circumstance</i>	7%	25	347

Table A-5 What happened or Reason for Complaint, All Airlines Anti-branding combined

British Airways Anti-Branding Site			
What happened or reason for complaint	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Customer service complaint</i>	59%	50	85
<i>Downgrade or seat issue</i>	20%	17	85
<i>baggage issue</i>	20%	17	85
<i>flight cancelled or delayed</i>	22%	19	85
<i>Felt Neglected or Ignored</i>	22%	19	85
<i>Poor overall experience</i>	15%	13	85
<i>negative in flight exp.</i>	13%	11	85
<i>flight attendant complaint</i>	11%	9	85
<i>special circumstance</i>	1%	1	85

Table A-6 What happened or Reason for Complaint, anti-British Airways

Air Canada Anti-Branding Site			
What happened or reason for complaint	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Customer service complaint</i>	80%	56	70
<i>flight cancelled or delayed</i>	39%	27	70
<i>Poor overall experience</i>	29%	20	70
<i>Baggae Issue</i>	26%	18	70
<i>Felt Neglected or Ignored</i>	23%	16	70
<i>negative in flight exp.</i>	14%	10	70
<i>flight attendant complaint</i>	10%	7	70
<i>Downgraded or Seat Issue</i>	9%	6	70
<i>special circumstance</i>	1%	1	70

Table A-7 What happened or Reason for Complaint, anti-Air Canada

United Airlines Anti-Branding Site			
What happened or reason for complaint	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Customer service complaint</i>	48%	92	192
<i>flight cancelled or delayed</i>	39%	75	192
<i>Baggae Issue</i>	19%	37	192
<i>Felt Neglected or Ignored</i>	15%	28	192
<i>Special Circumstance</i>	12%	23	192
<i>Poor Overall Experience</i>	11%	22	192
<i>flight attendant complaint</i>	10%	20	192
<i>Negative in flight exp.</i>	9%	17	192
<i>Downgraded or Seat Issue</i>	9%	17	192

Table A-8 What happened or Reason for Complaint, anti-United Airlines

All Airlines Anti-Branding Site Combined			
Negative words describing the airline	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Rude</i>	15%	53	347
<i>Unhelpful</i>	15%	53	347
<i>Doesn't care</i>	13%	45	347
<i>Worst</i>	7%	25	347
<i>no apology</i>	6%	20	347
<i>Ridiculous</i>	4%	15	347
<i>Unprofessional</i>	4%	14	347
<i>Horrible</i>	3%	10	347
<i>Shameful</i>	3%	10	347

Table A-9 Negative Words Describing the Airline, All Airlines Anti-branding Combined

British Airways Anti-Branding Site			
Negative words describing the airline	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Worst</i>	16%	14	85
<i>Rude</i>	11%	9	85
<i>Doesn't Care</i>	11%	9	85
<i>Shameful</i>	8%	7	85
<i>Suck</i>	5%	4	85
<i>Unhelpful</i>	5%	4	85
<i>Disgraceful</i>	5%	4	85

Table A-10 Negative Words Describing the Airline, anti-British Airways

Air Canada Anti-Branding Site			
Negative words describing the airline	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Unhelpful</i>	29%	20	70
<i>Doesn't Care</i>	19%	13	70
<i>Rude</i>	17%	12	70
<i>Worst</i>	10%	7	70
<i>Ridiculous</i>	10%	7	70
<i>No apology</i>	9%	6	70

Table A-11 Negative Words Describing the Airline, anti-Air Canada

United Airlines Anti-Branding Site			
Negative words describing the airline	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Rude</i>	17%	32	192
<i>Unhelpful</i>	15%	29	192
<i>Doesn't Care</i>	12%	23	192
<i>No Apology</i>	6%	12	192
<i>Unprofessional</i>	6%	11	192
<i>Bad attitude</i>	4%	7	192

Table A-12 Negative Words Describing the Airline, anti-United Airlines

All Airlines Anti-Branding Site Combined			
Descriptive feeling words	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Mistreated</i>	12%	40	347
<i>Disappointed</i>	8%	27	347
<i>Frustrated</i>	7%	24	347
<i>Fisrespected</i>	5%	19	347
<i>Disgust</i>	5%	19	347
<i>Upset</i>	4%	15	347
<i>Unhappy</i>	4%	13	347
<i>Appalling</i>	3%	12	347

Table A-13 Descriptive Feeling Words, All Airlines Anti-branding Combined

British Airways Anti-Branding Site			
Descriptive feeling words	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Disgust</i>	9%	8	85
<i>Disappointed</i>	6%	5	85
<i>Frustrated</i>	5%	4	85
<i>Appalling</i>	5%	4	85
<i>Unhappy</i>	4%	3	85
<i>Disrespected</i>	4%	3	85

Table A-14 Descriptive Feeling Words, anti-British Airways

Air Canada Anti-Branding Site			
Descriptive feeling words	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Mistreated</i>	11%	8	70
<i>Frustrated</i>	9%	6	70
<i>Disgust</i>	6%	4	70
<i>Disrespected</i>	4%	3	70
<i>Disappointed</i>	6%	3	70
<i>Upset</i>	6%	3	70

Table A-15 Descriptive Feeling Words, anti-Air Canada

United Airlines Anti-Branding Site			
Descriptive feeling words	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Mistreated</i>	16%	30	192
<i>Disappointed</i>	10%	19	192
<i>Frustrated</i>	7%	14	192
<i>Disrespected</i>	7%	13	192
<i>Upset</i>	6%	11	192
<i>Uphappy</i>	4%	8	192
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	4%	8	192

Table A-16 Descriptive Feeling Words, anti-United Airlines

All Airlines Anti-Branding Site Combined			
Sharing	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Shared on social media</i>	5%	18	347
<i>Tell Friends and Family</i>	5%	17	347

Table A-17 Sharing, All Airlines Anti-branding combined

British Airways Anti-Branding Site			
Sharing	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Shared on social media</i>	7%	6	85
<i>Tell friends and family</i>	5%	4	85

Table A-18 Sharing, anti-British Airways

Air Canada Anti-Branding Site			
Sharing	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Tell friends and family</i>	11%	8	70
<i>Shared on Social Media</i>	10%	7	70

Table A-19 Sharing, anti-Air Canada

United Airlines Anti-Branding Site			
Sharing	Percentage	Number of Posts	Total Number of Posts
<i>Tell friends and family</i>	3%	5	192
<i>Shared on Social Media</i>	3%	5	192

Table A-20 Sharing, anti-United Airlines